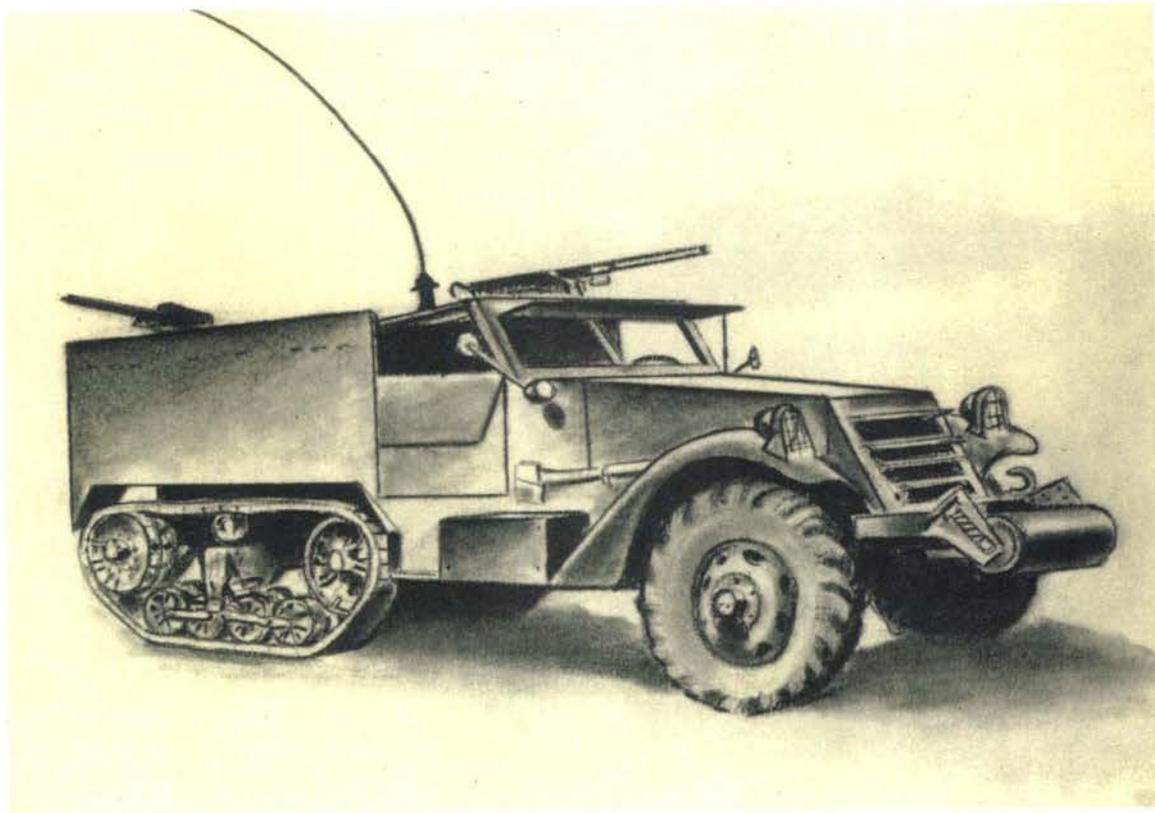


**HISTORY
Of
COMPANY "B" NINTH ARMORED
INFANTRY BATTALION
SIXTH ARMORED DIVISION**



**Col. JIM MONCRIEF
and OTHER MEMBERS
of
COMPANY "B"**



HISTORY
OF
COMPANY "B"

(February 15, 1942 — September 15, 1945)

**NINTH ARMORED INFANTRY
BATTALION**

SIXTH ARMORED DIVISION

**Compiled by: James S. Moncrief, Jr.,
Company Commander, Company "B",
upon activation in 1942**

**Contributions made by: Edwin Clark, Clarence McCurry, Milton
Moncrief, Robert Wheeler, Ralph Grogan, Al Legerat, Joe
Bogdan, Dee Williamson, Paul Kuzma, Glenn Blenman, Lynn
Johnson, and Henry Goble, members of Company "B";**

and by:

**Wendell Williamson and Roger Connor, ("Second
Generation" members") sons of members of Company "B";**

and by:

**Mrs. Sue Parrish Henderson, sister of Byron Parrish, member of
Company "B".**

INTRODUCTION

When "old soldiers" get together, their wartime experiences become the principle topic of conversation. For former members of Company "B", there is no exception to this common practice. Company "B" of the Ninth Armored Infantry Battalion, of the Sixth Armored Division fought in WW II in Europe, playing a major role in the Battle of the "Bulge" and in the capture of Frankfurt on the Main. In its almost ten months of combat, the Company suffered 185% casualties. Surviving members, on the occasion of the annual reunion of the Company each year find that their experiences are, indeed, significant contributions to the history of WW II.

Stemming from the desire of the surviving members to recall people, events, or incidents to which they were exposed during their assignment to Company "B", this book has evolved. Since the experiences of these former members of an Infantry Unit in combat, is so similar to those of many other servicemen, the scope of interest in these experiences becomes larger.

The contents of this book are largely based on the memories of individuals, or notes preserved from those days. No attempt has been made to verify its information with that which may be in various previously published documents.

The primary objective of this publication is to present "under one cover" as much of the history of the Company as possible; and to present it in such a manner that the members of the Company can relate to its specifics. Also, it is a written record which can be appreciated by the immediate family of members of the Company, and retained for future generations to remind them of the role played by their forefather in making the history of his generation.

HISTORY
OF
COMPANY "B"

9TH ARMORED INFANTRY
BATTALION

SIXTH ARMORED DIVISION

by -- Jim Moncrief with
Other Members of Company B

With the composition of this History, fifty four years after the end of World War II, the surviving Members of Company "B" 9th Armored Infantry Battalion pay their respect and honor to the following proud and heroic Veterans of the same organization who gave their lives in the service of their country during that war. This History is dedicated to the cherished memory of those fallen comrades.

Members of Company B 9th Armored Infantry Battalion who were killed in action (KIA) or died as a result of wounds (DOW) suffered in combat:

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----|---------|
| PFC Arley D. Henderson | KIA | 8/9/44 |
| PFC Oscar F. Blair | DOW | 8/9/44 |
| Capt. John W. Melbourne | KIA | 8/9/44 |
| Pvt. Edward A. Novack | KIA | 8/9/44 |
| PFC Robert D Riley | DOW | 8/20/44 |
| TSgt Enoch E. Kelley | KIA | 10/1/44 |
| PFC Walter Rinas | KIA | 10/1/44 |
| PFC Homer I. Malott | KIA | 10/1/44 |

| | | |
|------------------------------|-----|----------|
| Cpl. Junior Kelley | KIA | 10/1/44 |
| Pvt. John M. Santillo | KIA | 10/1/44 |
| PFC Howard W. Cisco | KIA | 10/1/44 |
| Pvt. Archer G. Cory | KIA | 10/1/44 |
| Pvt. Urban A. Cavalier | KIA | 10/1/44 |
| Pvt. John J. Habursky | KIA | 10/1/44 |
| PFC Glenn Moorman | KIA | 10/1/44 |
| PFC Albert F. Wilt | KIA | 10/1/44 |
| Pvt. Bruno J. Kozubowski | KIA | 10/1/44 |
| SSgt James H. Smith | KIA | 11/11/44 |
| Pvt. Glenn Coleman | KIA | 11/11/44 |
| PFC Robert N. Hamilton | KIA | 11/12/44 |
| TSgt Kellis L. Madison | KIA | 11/12/44 |
| Pvt. Ivan Franklin | KIA | 11/12/44 |
| Sgt. Robert H. Johnson | KIA | 11/12/44 |
| T/5 Robert S. Nicely | KIA | 11/12/44 |
| PFC Anthony Antinoro | KIA | 11/12/44 |
| Pvt. Samuel McInturff | KIA | 11/12/44 |
| Pvt. George B. Webber | KIA | 11/12/44 |
| PFC Wayne P. Benson | KIA | 11/12/44 |
| T/5 Lawrence Miller | KIA | 11/14/44 |
| 1st. Lt. Emmett E. Martin | KIA | 11/12/44 |
| S/Sgt Henry F. Boehrsen | KIA | 11/25/44 |
| PFC Edmond M. Jones | KIA | 11/25/44 |
| Pvt. James P. Hogan | KIA | 11/26/44 |
| PFC Arthur Phillips | KIA | 11/26/44 |
| 1st. Lt. Joseph J. Hemingway | KIA | 11/26/44 |
| PFC Stanley L. Boe | KIA | 11/26/44 |
| PFC Robert A. Brown | KIA | 11/26/44 |
| PFC Dewey Medlin | KIA | 11/26/44 |
| PFC James W. Savage | KIA | 11/26/44 |
| PFC Leo H. Vogel | KIA | 11/26/44 |
| Pvt. Sherman Gordin | KIA | 11/26/44 |
| PFC Fred Brown | DOW | 11/27/44 |
| PFC Michael Zolyak | DOW | 11/27/44 |
| T/Sgt Lewis F. Hutto | KIA | 12/5/44 |
| PFC William D. Holmes | KIA | 1/2/45 |
| Pvt. Charles A. Tower | KIA | 1/2/45 |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|---------|
| T/4 John A. Nanasko | KIA | 1/2/45 |
| S/Sgt. Gordon Z. Smith | KIA | 1/4/45 |
| PFC Ralph M. Frye | KIA | 1/4/45 |
| Pvt. Paul W. Gambill | KIA | 1/4/45 |
| PFC Joseph A. Roginski | KIA | 1/4/45 |
| PFC Samuel E. McDaniel | KIA | 1/4/45 |
| Cpl. John J. Yanisky | KIA | 1/4/45 |
| Pvt. Chester A. Cola | KIA | 1/4/45 |
| Pvt. Louis R. DePaolo | KIA | 1/4/45 |
| Pvt. George R. Connor | KIA | 1/4/45 |
| S/Sgt. Venoy Baker | KIA | 1/4/45 |
| PFC Edward J. McNerney | KIA | 1/4/45 |
| Pvt. Richard J. Miller | KIA | 1/4/45 |
| PFC Donald K. England | KIA | 1/12/45 |
| Pvt. Charles Villanueva | KIA | 1/11/45 |
| 1st Lt. Maurice W. Fowler | KIA | 1/16/45 |
| Pvt. Forest C. De Bolt | KIA | 1/18/45 |
| Pvt. Ardell J. Halleburton | KIA | 1/22/45 |
| Cpl. Joseph R. Benton | KIA | 1/25/45 |
| PFC Sidney J. Watson | KIA | 2/8/45 |
| Pvt. Joseph Csordas | KIA | 2/8/45 |
| Pvt. Francis J. Hesek | KIA | 2/9/45 |
| PFC Gordon H. Kraft | KIA | 2/8/45 |
| Pvt. William F. King | KIA | 1/13/45 |
| Pvt. Irving B. Wasersteing | KIA | 2/22/45 |
| Pvt. Leonard L. Dahlen | KIA | 2/22/45 |
| T/4 Erving M. Blanchard | KIA | 2/22/45 |
| 2nd Lt. John Adikes, Jr. | KIA | 2/21/45 |
| PFC William J. Ernst | KIA | 2/28/45 |
| Pvt. Charles T. Davis | KIA | 2/28/45 |
| Sgt. Louis J. Ehlinger | KIA | 2/28/45 |
| PFC John C. Lorenc | KIA | 2/28/45 |
| PFC Virgil V. Park | KIA | 2/28/45 |
| Pvt. Alden E. Hoffmann | DOW | 3/3/45 |
| Pvt Clarence E. Gunnerson, Jr. | KIA | 3/27/45 |
| PFC Theodore A. Penhollow | KIA | 3/27/45 |
| Pvt. Marcus L. Pace | KIA | 3/27/45 |
| 2nd Lt. Richard G. Persohn | KIA | 4/1/45 |

PFC John K. Black, Jr. KIA 4/5/45
PFC Robert R. McLaughlin DOW 4/29/45

EARLY DAYS ---- COMPANY "E"

On 15 February 1942 the Sixth Armored Division was activated at Ft. Knox, Ky. The combat elements of an armored division consisted of two tank regiments, one infantry regiment and three artillery battalions. The 50th Armored Infantry Regiment was the organic Infantry unit of the 6th Armored Division at that time. As a result of the reorganization of all Armored Divisions in late 1943, the 44th, 9th, and 50th Armored Infantry Battalions, which fought WW II as integral units of the Sixth Armored Division, emanated from the First, Second, and Third Battalions of the original 50th Armored Infantry Regiment.

In early 1942, as a Captain, I was ordered to Ft. Knox to join the newly formed Sixth Armored Division. Coming from the Second Armored Division (commanded by Brig. Gen. George S. Patton) via the Command and General Staff School, at Ft. Leavenworth, Ka., I was assigned to the Sixth with further assignment to the 50th Armd Inf Regt. I joined the regiment in early March 1942. At that time, the regiment had only a cadre of officers and enlisted personnel. Since, at that time, there were insufficient number of officers for all positions in the regiment, I was assigned as Company Commander of two companies, Company E and Company F, of the Second Battalion.

As my memory permits 59 years later, the officer assignment within the regiment at that time was as follows:

Commanding officer: Col. James Taylor
Executive Officer: Lt. Col. Harry Hanson
Adjutant (S-1): Capt. Brad Means
Intelligence Officer (S-2) Capt. Thomas Fickett
Operations Officer (S-3) Capt. William Booth
Supply Officer (S-4) Lt. Gerald Ragsdale

First Battalion:

Commanding Officer: Capt. Harberger
C. O. Company A: Capt. Lewis E. McCorison

Company B: Lt. John R. Johnson

Company C: Lt. George Fry

Second Battalion:

Commanding Officer: Lt. Col. Elmer Droste

C. O. Company D: Capt Donald Hall

C. O. Company E: Capt. James S. Moncrief, Jr.

C. O. Company F: Capt. James S. Moncrief, Jr.

Third Battalion:

Commanding Officer: Lt. Col. Switzer

C. O. Company G: Lt. Joe Langston

C. O. Company H: Capt. Audley Smith

C. O. Company I: Lt. Paul Root

Commanding Officer Service Company: Lt. James McNab

Regimental Personnel Officer: Lt. Jack C. Williams

Regimental Chaplain: Captain Williams

The enlisted members of the cadre of E Company included First Sgt. Norman, Supply Sgt. Wilmer T. Jones, Motor Sgt. Cullen Combs, Mess Sgt. John S. Harper, Platoon Sergeants: Elwood S. Allen, George P. Gross, and Foster P. Houser; Squad Leaders: J. D. Taylor, Enoch Kelly, Dennis Dusher, and Lombardini; Cooks: Stagner and Cook; and Personnel Clerk: Cpl. Ed. Clark. There might have been other members of the original cadre, but after 57 years, their names cannot be recalled.

Since there were so few soldiers assigned to each company, there was little training going on. Each Company was being issued some supplies, so the supply sergeants were very busy. In connection with the supplies, there was a lot of "moonlight requisitioning" taking place in those early days. Since I had command of the two companies, I had to be careful that the "moonlight" operations were not taking place between Companies E and F.

While the Division was still at Knox, the 50th received more officers. Soon, I was relieved of command of Company F by Capt. Robert Moffett.

It was never intended that the Sixth Armored Division remain at Ft. Knox, so in the spring of 1942, the Division moved to Camp Chaffee, Ark., near Ft. Smith. Chaffee was a newly constructed cantonment type camp with its wooden barracks having been just completed. Soon after arrival at our new home, the Sixth Armd Div began to receive its "fillers", recruits fresh from the Reception Centers from all over the United States. Thus, Company E of the 50th Armd Inf Regt began to look more like an Army "outfit"- complete with soldiers.

Unfortunately, the division did not receive its full Table of Organization complement of officers and non-commissioned officers prior to receiving the recruits. Therefore Company Commanders had to improvise wherever possible. Barracks Leaders and acting non-coms were detailed from among the newly arrived recruits.

With the assignment of troops to the Company, a training program began in earnest. Most of the new arrivals had received no basic training, so the company's program was very elementary, but the new soldiers were kept busy every hour of the day. Included on the training schedule for each day was an hour of I&E (Information and Education), intended to insure that the troops were abreast of current world and national events related to the war effort. Included in the I&E hour each day was a brief history and description of some country in the world. One of the assigned countries was India. Knocking myself out to gather enough information for an acceptable presentation, I was flabbergasted to

find that one of the recruits, a college trained man, had spent two years as a teenager in India since his father's business required him to live there. Moral of story: Exhaust all possibilities to obtain the best qualified instructor.

Among the early arrivals of new recruits was a man from Sylvania, Georgia, where my parents had moved during my junior year in College. I had never lived there except for parts of two summers, so did not know many people. While there during one summer, I played baseball on the local team. At Camp Chaffee, when walking down the company street one day I saw this soldier, coming from the opposite direction, preparing to "throw a mean salute." While some distance away, I noticed his right arm stiffening up as it still hung alongside of his body. Only a recruit has to **prepare** to salute. Then as he approached me, with every muscle in his body becoming involved, he saluted. I returned his salute, and simultaneously did a "double take" turning to see that the soldier had turned at the same time. Abandoning all military bearing, he asked, "Ain't you Jimmy Moncrief?" Although a flash of recognition came to me, I could not remember where I had seen him before. When I answered "well, yes, I am", he told me that he was from Sylvania and had seen me playing ball there. After a brief conversation about those old days in Sylvania, he said: "It was sho' good to run into you - and I'll tell yo' Pa that I saw you the very next time I see him." Unfortunately, I do not know what happened to Pvt. Green, my fellow Sylvanian.

Well, so much for that touch of "human interest".

During the early part of the summer of 1942, the men of the 50th Armd Inf Regt, including Company E, were subjected to a very heavy training schedule. All were exposed to intense work with individual weapons, vehicles, and equipment while in

barracks surroundings. I was really enjoying the strenuous outdoor activity, the early organizing of the company, selecting potential leaders as future Non-Commissioned Officers from among the recruits, and the other challenging and invigorating duties of a Company Commander.

Among the new soldiers assigned to Company E was one raw-boned giant of a man named Kellis Madison, from Mississippi. Madison had lived his relatively few years around a saw mill and had ramrodded the mill workers or lumbermen with whom he worked since his early years. He was accustomed to taking charge of the situation, any situation, and getting the job done, never seeking advice or assistance from anyone. His approach to life appeared to be based on the premise that no problem was too difficult for him to tackle. Possessing a world of common sense more than offset his lack of formal education.

From the moment he got off the bus bringing him into camp, Madison "took charge" of the group in which he found himself. He gave instructions -- where to go, what to do, how to handle the newly assigned personal equipment, etc -- to everyone in earshot. Furthermore, because of the casual and matter-of-fact demeanor; his contemporaries, including college graduates and sophisticated city-slickers, were carrying out his directives. He was a *natural leader*. My first choice of a recruit to be in charge of a barracks was Madison.

With the passage of time, company commanders were authorized to recommend a very limited number of the recruits to be non-commissioned officers. The number-one man on my list was Madison for the grade of Sergeant. My recommendation was denied on the basis of his woefully poor formal educational background. I was very disappointed.

After two negative responses to my subsequent requests for his appointment, in an eyeball-to-eyeball conversation with my regimental commander, Col. Harry Hanson, I stated: "I would rather have Madison as a sergeant in combat than any man in the regiment, including Ph.D. and Master degree graduates from college." Finally, my persuasion and persistence paid dividends. The Colonel issued orders making Madison a Sergeant.

As a platoon leader, Sgt. Madison was very successful. His platoon played a significant role in the company's advance against the Germans through France. He distinguished himself by leading his platoon in establishing a bridgehead across the Neid River in November 1944. Soon thereafter, Madison and several members of his platoon were killed when the house in which they were seeking warmth from the near-freezing rain was shelled by German artillery.

Just about the time that the Company began to take the shape of an organization, with platoon leaders, non-commissioned officers, and other elements of the Company in place and beginning to work, I was transferred from the Company. As a Reserve Captain, I had far more active duty than other reserve officers of similar rank. I had two years of CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) duty, one year in the Regular army under the Thomason Act, and just recently completed the Command and General Staff College, plus my duty as the adjutant of a tank regiment in the Second Armored Division. Although my choice was to remain as a Company Commander - and who knows, maybe becoming a Battalion Commander - I was earmarked as a Staff Officer, and was named the Regimental Adjutant by Col. Hanson.

Lt. (later to become Captain) Alex Ransome was named as Company Commander of Company E, when I became Regimental Adjutant (S-1) in April 1942. My tour of duty as Adjutant did not last but about two months, as I was named the Division G-1 (Personnel), a member of the General Staff of the Division, in which capacity I remained throughout the European War.

Due to the rapid expansion of the Army, and particularly of the Armored Forces, there was a continual turnover of officers because so many were being ordered to the newly formed armored divisions. For several months, there was a new Armored Division being activated each month. This accounted for the changes within the 50th Armd. Inf. Regt.

Capt. Ransome was the C. O. of Company E for the remainder of the time which the 6th AD was stationed at Camp Chaffee, to include its participation in the Maneuvers of 1942 in Louisiana. Although not fully equipped nor adequately trained, the division was ordered to the maneuvers in order to get the experience. During this time, the men of Company E learned much about soldiering as a result of living for an extended period of time in the field, long road marches; and some incidental knowledge of tactics, and communications. Officers and Non Commissioned Officers experienced the function of commanding their respective troops in tactical situations. The men became acquainted with their equipment from mess kits, to weapons, to vehicles during these maneuvers.

Soon after returning to Chaffee, the Division moved by rail to the Desert Training Center (DTC) near Indio, California. The DTC, initially commanded by Gen. Patton, had been established for the purpose of training all the U. S. Armored Divisions in the tactics of desert warfare. Undoubtedly, at the time, it was believed

that the U. S. would be faced with making its major effort in the deserts of North Africa. Ironically, the two American armored divisions (the First and Second) which actually fought in North Africa did not have the opportunity of training in the California desert. Most of the remaining armored divisions did receive training at DTC. In any case, there was no finer training site for armored units. With no farmer's fences, no bridges, no restrictions on use of public roads, and gunnery ranges immediately available - the training was ideal. The troops became tough and smart.

During the five or six months spent on the California desert, the men of Company E became hardened to the conditions of living in the field, and were well prepared for combat. In January of 1943 Capt. John W. Melbourne replaced Capt Ransome as Company Commander.

In March 1943, the now "rough and ready" Super Sixth was transferred to Camp Cooke, Calif. In addition to a rigid training program, emphasizing strenuous physical exercises where 25 mile hikes with full pack were commonplace, the troops of the division patrolled about 200 miles of the coast along the Pacific.

COMPANY "B" IS BORN

In October 1943, soon after Brig. Gen. Robert W. Grow assumed command of the 6th AD, all armored divisions still in the States were ordered to reorganize. In order to obtain more flexibility in the deployment of its troops, regiments were eliminated; the fighting elements of the division now became three tank, three infantry, and three artillery battalions, with the necessary support units comprising the division.

The reorganization was a huge undertaking, but accomplished without undue shuffling of personnel within a company sized unit. Within the infantry regiment an absolute minimum of shuffling was necessary; the First Battalion of the 50th Armored Infantry Regiment became the 44th Armored Infantry Battalion, the Second Battalion (of which Company E was an integral part) became the 9th Armored Infantry Battalion, and the Third Battalion became the 50th Armored Infantry Battalion. Thus, Company E of the now non-existent 50th Armored Infantry Regiment was renamed Company B of the 9th Armored Infantry Battalion.

The new Table of Organization (T/O&E) of each Infantry Company was changed to include a 4th Platoon which became known as the Anti-Tank Platoon with three 50 Caliber Machine Guns.

While speaking of the organization of an armored division, with its ratio of Tanks, Infantry, and Artillery troops; and without going into the many details to explain the reasons for such, let me simply say: that through much research, study of the German Panzer units, etc, the Department of the Army had concluded that

the organization placed into effect in 1943 was deemed to be the best adaptable for combat use than any organization which could possibly be devised. Armored Infantry units require support from tanks and artillery. Tanks, without infantry support are very vulnerable, therefore, must have Infantry and Artillery. To be adequate support in modern combat, each must be highly mobile.

Therein lies the main difference between straight Infantry organizations and the Armored Infantry units. The Armored Infantry is mounted on halftracks. Once on the scene of combat, all infantry, whether Airborne, Armored or "doughboy" Infantry outfits, operate, more or less, in the same fashion. To arrive at the scene, Airborne Infantry may be dropped from the sky; the Armored Infantry arrives by armored vehicle, the halftrack; while the straight Infantryman, depending on the distance and tactical situation, arrives on the scene either by foot or, in some cases, by truck transportation to a nearby area. Thus, the halftrack is considered a basic fundamental to the Armored Infantry unit.

Very significant in the history of Company "B", there was another personnel change within the Company which was accomplished just prior to the reorganization. Wilmer Jones who had been the company's Supply Sergeant since it's activation, after consultation with the Company Commander, Capt. Melborne, was transferred from Supply and made a Platoon Sergeant. Two months after the company entered combat, in the absence of a Platoon Officer, Jones was given a battle field commission, and made the Platoon Lieutenant. In January 1945, Jones was promoted to First Lieutenant. He remained as a Platoon Lieutenant until February 1945 when he became Company Commander. He remained the Company Commander until September 1945 when the Company was deactivated.

In November 1943, the Sixth Armored Division was alerted to be shipped overseas. During the last two months of 1943 the men of Company B were granted, on a rotational basis, a furlough so that they could visit their respective homes and to put their personal affairs in order before leaving for overseas duty. Simultaneously, steps were taken to insure that the division was completely filled to its T/O&E (Tables of Organization and Equipment) strength. In the process, Company B was assigned a sizable group of men from Camp Polk, La - soldiers of the 535th AIB, most of whom had been in the Army for 6 to 9 months, and had trained together at Camp Polk. Among this group were Robert Wheeler, Milton Moncrief, Paul Kuzma, Glenn Blenman, Virgil Lux, Mike Katish, John Santillo, Fred Brown, Frank Stansha, Joe Sabo, Louis Testa, Mike Filek, Robert Baker, Max J. Bohanan, and Mike Vodhanel.

ENGLAND

Company B of the 9th AIB, along with the other troops of the Sixth Armored Division, moved across the country by "troop train" from Camp Cooke, Calif to Camp Shanks, N. Y. in late January 1944. In early February the division moved from the facilities of the New York Harbor to various vessels for shipment to England and/or Scotland. The 9th AIB was aboard the U.S.S. Samuel Chase, and moved out onto the Atlantic on 2/11/44. Landing at Glasgow, Scotland on 2/22/44, the battalion went, by train, to the area of Cheltenham, England where it was to be billeted. Company B was stationed at Sandywell Park, about 100 miles west of London.

Soon after the arrival in England, Lt. Col. Thomas Godfrey became the Battalion Commander of the 9th AIB, replacing Lt. Col. Elmer Droste, who became commander of the Trains Command of the Super Sixth.

Glenn Blenman reports that "immediately upon arriving in our new quarters in England, there was a shortage of food. I guess the Quartermaster was just not issuing the allotted amount of rations to the company." Other members of the Company have, in a friendly and teasing manner, indicated that the Mess Sergeant, Jokie Bilcze, in spite of this "food shortage" was always able to furnish ample food to his friend, Charlie Bates; and even on occasion had steaks for a few of his friends.

Due to the restrictions (lack of open space, farmer's fences, etc) training of all the units of the division was somewhat limited. For the men of Company B, gunnery and range work as well as

strenuous physical training was emphasized. Lectures, with appropriate training aids, dealing with ancillary subjects such as aircraft identification, evacuation of the wounded, handling of Prisoners of War, and dealing with the civilian people in France were conducted.

On 0800 July 17 1944, according to the records maintained by Sgt. Robert Wheeler, a member of Company B, the 9th AIB moved from the comforts of English living at Sandywell Park to Lymington, arriving at 1800. As further reported by Wheeler, the Company departed on the 21st at 0500 from Lymington and arrived at the southern port city of Southampton at 0930, in preparation for movement to France. The men of B Company boarded LSTs and crossed the English Channel, landing at Utah Beach in France.

(Editor's Note: Up to this point in the History of Company B, I have been, with some help from Ed Clark, Robert Wheeler and Milt Moncrief, able to resurrect from memory. For the remainder, I will be able to reconstruct the "big picture", placing the Division and the 9th AIB (and to a lesser extent, Company "B") in the combat area from information obtained from *The Combat Record of the Sixth Armored Division* which was compiled by the G-3 Section of the Super Sixth and published in 1945 in Aschaffensburg Germany. Written as directed by Gen. Grow, this book reflects the general's vision and appreciation that the factual history of the Division would be of great value in the preservation of the history of its activities in WWII. But the "big picture" will not relate the real History of Company B.

Due to the fact that I was not on the scene - on the ground where the actual combat was taking place - my attempt to present the history of Company B in combat would be a terrible injustice to the many brave and courageous men of Company B. My feeble effort would be a "hand-me-down", artificial version of the "eyeball-to-eyeball" combat experience. Even more significantly, the close personal relationship which existed and the bond of friendship cemented among the members of the Company while

under the stress of combat would not receive the emphasis it deserves. In order to present a more realistic view and to get the eyeball recollections which constitute the real History of Company B, I have called on the surviving veterans of the Company to contribute their remembrances of people, situations (tactical and personal), incidents, and events which made the history of Company B from 1 August 1944 to 9 May 1945.

The former members who have made contributions to this history are: Ed Clark, Milton Moncrief, Robert Wheeler, "Duke" McCurry, Ralph Grogan, Al ("Legs") Legarat, Paul Kuzma, Joe Bogdan, Lynn Johnson, Glenn Blenman, Dee Williamson, and Henry Goble.

Their comments will be incorporated in the remainder of the script used in the composition of this document. Also, I have drawn on the material prepared by a second generation "Super Sixer", Wendell Williamson, son of Dee and Fonda Williamson. Wendell has been attending the Annual Reunion of Company "B" since his early childhood, listening to the various members of the Company telling of their experiences in combat. In 1985 he compiled these into his excellent "*Story of Company "B"*" I am grateful to Wendell for permitting me to use his material.

The compilation of the list of those Killed In Action, the Casualties, the Deceased, and the names of those surviving members of Company B would have been impossible without the valuable assistance of Ed Clark, the former Company Clerk of Company B. The compilation of the Replacements and their dates of assignment to the Company was done by Dee Williamson.

The Appendix section of the book is intended to reflect general and related information of interest. The Appendix also contains the complete "stories" of their respective wartime experiences as written by several members of the Company: Milton Moncrief, Joe Bogdon, "Legs" Lagerat, and "Duke" McCurry. Also in the Appendix is a story of twin brothers, Ben and Byron Parrish, the latter a member of Company B, written by their sister, Mrs. Sue Parrish Henderson of Smithfield, N. C.

Representing the Second Generation of Company B, Roger Connor's poignant story of his search and discovery of his father's assignment and activity with Company B are reproduced in the Appendix.

I truly appreciate the valuable contribution of each of the above .

Without the efforts and active participation of so many of you, the compilation of the History of Company B would not have been possible..

----- Jim Moncrief

C O M B A T

The first taste of combat involving Company B of the 9th Armored Infantry Battalion took place around Granville on the Cotentin Peninsula, when the Battalion advanced southward along the coast during the last days of July 1944. Elements of the 6th Armored Division had a hand in breaking through the famed "Hedge Row" defense of the Germans. On 1 August Company "B" played a major role in capturing the town of Pontorson. Milt Moncrief reports that "it was like a Hollywood production. A P-47 flew over and strafed ahead of our column. Every half-track of my platoon was firing on both sides of the road keeping the Germans pinned down. I saw my first close-up of an "88". Our small arms fire kept the Germans off the gun of the 88. We advanced to a hill and took up defensive positions. We heard later that the next company advancing through the same area had to dismount from their half-tracks and fight their way through."

During the period between 1 and 12 August the battalion marched toward and deployed around Brest. While some units of the Division suffered some losses during this period, Company B had it relatively easy. The most serious combat was against the enemy which attacked the division at its rear. The Germans which we had by-passed in the "rat-race" to get to Brest were now attempting to get through our lines to regain contact with the Germans who were in the city of Brest, holding that prominent, and at the moment very significant, port city.

Robert Wheeler, a squad leader in the 2nd. platoon, tells of his experience in those early days of combat. "We had just been committed to combat. It was around the 1st of August when my

squad was going down this little road when Sgt. Frank Gajan, my platoon sergeant was shot in the chest by a 20 mm. I pulled him over into the ditch and yelled for the Medic. I never expected to see him again because of the huge hole in his chest. Soon after that, we started to Brest, about 250 miles. We went around and through the German lines to reach Brest. On the 9th of August, while I was preparing some breakfast, the Germans who were in some hedgerows zeroed in on us. I got hit in the leg and was sent to an Aid Station. The doctor there tried to get me to stand up. I could not stand so he ordered me to be evacuated. The ambulance was stopped at this German outpost (the Germans, seeking to regain contact with their forces in Brest, were closing up after we had bypassed them). We did not know what was going to happen to us. The German guards inspected the ambulance, (Note: as the U.S. marked ambulance was going through the German check-point) but when they found a wounded German soldier being evacuated along with us, they allowed the ambulance to proceed. I ended up in the hospital in England. I could not believe it, but there I saw Sgt. Gajan. We were both returned to duty with Company B on 14 November 1944."

Initially, the 6th Armored Division was scheduled to attack and capture Brest, so that the port could be used to receive the shipments of supplies arriving in France, rather than bring everything over the beaches. But it was soon determined that more than one division would be required to take the city; so orders were received by the 6th Armored Division to "contain Brest" with one Combat Command, and to send another Combat Command south and east to Lorient. (*Stars and Stripes*, the GI newspaper quickly dubbed the 6th Armored troops as the "Brassiere Boys" as they were containing Brest). Around the middle of August, the 9th AIB was part of a Combat Command which moved

from Brest to the vicinity of Lorient, where the mission was similar to that which it had at Brest: to "contain" Lorient.

In Lorient, heavy and continuous patrol duty was the order of the day. Our job was to insure that the German forces were contained in the city of Lorient. Although our casualties were relatively light, our Company Commander, Capt. Melbourne, was killed during a patrol skirmish. Lt. Donald C. Shallcross became our Company Commander replacing Capt. Melbourne.

Ed Clark, who as Company Clerk, was the custodian of all the individual records of the members of the Company, as well as being responsible for keeping the Daily "Morning Report" (the official record of the daily happenings, locations, and status of the Company), relates this story which occurred in the vicinity of Lorient. "On August 20th, Sgt. (Shorty) James A. Sarsfield did not think we were seeing enough action, so he went out looking for more. That was the last we ever heard from him. He was carried on the Morning Report as "missing in action" (MIA). As the war was drawing near to its end, the U. S. (Eisenhower's SHAEF Headquarters) made a deal to exchange POWs (those US. POWs held by the Germans in Lorient). I read in the Stars and Stripes that Sarsfield was one of the prisoners exchanged. Sarsfield died 15 February 1991."

In the latter part of September 1944, the 9th AIB, along with the remainder of the Division, moved farther east toward Germany to the vicinity of Nancy France. Company B would be fighting and slogging in mud for the next two months along the Seille and Han Rivers. During a war, it is tough enough to survive the enemy guns firing at you; but it was a miracle that our troops lived through the elements of weather that existed during September and October in 1944. It was beginning to get cold. Rain and more

rain. Rivers were out of their banks. Sleeping -- what little sleep one could get -- in wet, cold, blankets and bedding rolls -- was impossible.

Like all infantrymen, the men of Company B were rapidly learning that the life of a combat infantry soldier was tough. From any viewpoint, either mentally, physically, or emotionally, the requirements were much more demanding than any stateside soldier had ever imagined. It was much tougher than the realistic state-side training he received. The combat infantryman doesn't know nor care too much of where he is on a map. He has no knowledge of "The Big Picture". His "picture" is very small. His knowledge and cares are confined and focused on the situation at the moment. His location, as well as his operation, can best be described in terms such as edge of woods, clump of bushes, hedgerow, yards, feet, ditch, foxhole, fence, hill, barn, and house rather than in miles, azimuths, degrees west or east, zones, names of cities or towns, routes of approach, or main lines of resistance. He is not unduly concerned to which Combat Command or Combat Team he is assigned. His "Team" is limited to the four or five fellow soldiers who he can see and with whom he is constantly mutually inter and intra dependent.

In addition to those Killed in Action (KIA), listed elsewhere herein, Company B suffered other casualties because of being wounded in combat. In the first two months of combat, those casualties are listed as follows:

| Name | Date of Evacuation | Date of Return to duty |
|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| St. Sgt Frank P. Gajan | 1 Aug 1944 | 14 Nov 1944 |
| PFC Robeart E. Barrow | 1 Aug 1944 | |

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Pvt. Glenn Hudgens | 1 Aug 1944 | 21 Nov 1944 |
| Pvt. Virgil Lux | 1 Aug 1944 | 10 Aug 1944 |
| Pfc. Robert P. Hester | 1 Aug 1944 | |
| Pfc. Francis J. Hoholik | 1 Aug 1944 | 14 Nov 1944 |
| Pfc Gordon H. Kraft | 12 Aug 1944 | 21 Nov 1944 |
| Pvt. Robert L. Buchanan | 9 Aug 1944 | |
| Pfc Broward Lee | 9 Aug 1944 | |
| Pfc Micheal Katich | 9 Aug 1944 | 14 Nov 1944 |
| Sgt Robert V. Wheeler | 9 Aug 1944 | 14 Nov 1945 |
| Pfc Matthew Hendrihofsky | 9 Aug 1944 | 13 Sept 1944 |
| Pfc Thomas H Murphy | 9 Aug 1944 | 4 Sept 1944 |
| S/Sgt Foster P. Houser | 9 Aug 1944 | 14 Nov 1944 |
| Pfc Chester S. Anderson | 9 Aug 1944 | |
| Pfc Robert W. Harper | 18 Aug 1944 | 23 Jan 1945 |
| Sgt. James Sarsfield | Missing in Action (MIA) | 20 Aug 1944 |
| S/Sgt Nick Munas | 25 Aug 1944 | |
| Pfc Henry Hendzih | 11 Sept 1944 | |
| Pfc Frand D. Andrews | 11 Sept 1944 | 12 Sept 1944 |

Replacements assigned to Company B during the period
August 1 -- October 1, 1944:

| | | |
|-----------------------|------------|-------------------------|
| | 12 August: | |
| Pvt. Mike G. Chesley | | James A. Donovan |
| Pvt. Alfred L. Cote | | |
| | 18 August | |
| Cpl. Elmer K. Stites | | Pfc. Arthur C. Rahnburg |
| Pfc. John E. Burns | | Pvt. Cecil J. Dykes |
| Pvt. Charles A. Brock | | Pvt. Daniel J. Clifford |
| | 24 August | |
| T/5 Lynn A. Johnson | | Pvt. Howard T. Ackerman |

29 August

lSgt. Henry H. Christian
Pvt. Sherman Gordon
Pvt. Charles W. Ritter

Pvt. Samuel McInturff
Pvt. Virgil V. Park

17 September 1944

Pfc. Zygmunt J. Borowka
Pfc. Charles E. Clark
Pvt. Kenneth R. Buenneke
Pvt. Thomas W. Cone
Pvt. John C. Crawford

Pfc. Emile L. Bourassa
Pvt. David Broughton
Pvt. Glenn Coleman
Pvt. Arthur G. Corey

28 September

Pfc. Walter Pachekailo

30 September

Pvt. Bruno J. Kozubowski

SEILLE RIVER CAMPAIGN

During the period 17-28 September, Company B was in the Reserve Command, and was not heavily engaged. On October 1st. the division launched a major attack through the 35th Infantry Division to restore the Corps Main Line of Resistance (MLR), and to secure the Seille River Bridgehead. The 9th AIB encountered heavy artillery fire, and small arms and mines. Ralph Grogan gives a very graphic and personal view.

“As we advanced, there was heavy gunfire and German tanks everywhere. The headquarters half-track, to which I was assigned, was moving forward when it was hit by “88” shells from the German tanks. There were 13 of us on the half-track which was heavily loaded with ammunition. As the “88” shells hit, the half-track caught on fire, and exploded. I was blown from the half-track. Upon a quick examination, I knew that my back and left leg had been hit badly. I remember being picked up and moved to a litter at the back of the track while the bombing was still occurring all around us. There were nine fellow soldiers killed instantly. The four survivors were: Lynn Johnson, Edgar Guill (the driver of the half-track), Lt. Otto Braunscheiger, and me. From this horrible scene, I was taken to a “tent hospital” behind the lines for immediate medical attention. I stayed there overnight, then was taken the next day to a hospital in France. While in the hospital, I was told that I was a very lucky soldier -- I could have been paralyzed due to all of the shrapnel in my back.”

Grogan was hospitalized in France and Wales until 26 December 1944. After spending three weeks on a journey from Replacement Depot to Replacement Depot (the “Repple Depple” System) , he eventually returned to Company B on 18

January 1945. He remained with his unit until 4 March 1945, when he was granted a 45 day leave of absence, the first in the Company to receive such recognition.

According to the records of the Morning Reports of Company B, copies of which were retained by Edwin F. Clark, Company Clerk, October 1, 1944 was the second worst day in the history of the Company. Twelve of its members were killed in action (KIA) on that date. Nine of the twelve casualties on that fateful day were in Grogan's half-track.

Although no major offensive effort was made in October, the fighting continued. Heavy patrol duty and small "local" attacks continued throughout the period. Dee Williamson, then a nineteen year old Replacement reported to duty with Company B on 2 October, and the next day participated in a "local" attack which he described as very successful, "with many prisoners taken and few casualties suffered. At that time, I thought, at that rate, the war would be over soon, and I was secretly glad I had gotten into action before it ended."

November was another month of rain and mud in the Gremercy (called "Grimace" by the soldiers) Forest. Adding more misery to the living conditions was the fact that the temperature began to drop some and the cold made the problems of mere existence even worse.

Since mid September, the gasoline supply of Gen. Patton's Third Army, of which the Super Sixth was a part, had not been sufficient to sustain the aggressive forward movement of the Army. By economizing on the use of gasoline during September and October, as well as accumulating hundreds of thousands of gallons either captured from the Germans or that which was, as

That day, 11th of November 1944, in addition to being one of the toughest days of combat for Company B, brought about a very significant event in its history. Lt. Col. Godfrey, who commanded the 9th Armored Infantry Battalion was relieved from command. According to Col. Hines, the commander of Combat Command A, of which Godfrey's Task Force was a part, Godfrey was somewhat reluctant and slow in moving his Task Force to the bridge site at Han Sur Neid. Some officers claimed that Godfrey in the face of extremely heavy fire, held his forces back until after darkness in order not to sacrifice too many men. Many of the men of Company B viewed Godfrey's action as a courageous decision to save their lives in the face of overwhelming odds. Major Milton Stablein was named the Battalion Commander, but was killed by fragments from an artillery shell three days later as the Battalion was advancing. Lt. Col. Frank Britton then became the Battalion Commander.

The attack eastward continued on 12th and 13th of November. Company B played a significant role in the capture of the towns of Vatimont and Arraincourt. On the 14th the entire 9th Armored Infantry Battalion passed into Division Reserve.

During the period between the 13th and 23rd of November, the 9th AIB was not heavily engaged in combat, but was filling gaps in the front line between two adjoining infantry divisions; as well as protecting the flanks of our own 6th Armored Division.

Now in the vicinity of Brulange and Leyviller, the Company was beginning to face the strongly defended "Maginot Line" that had been constructed by the Germans. These strongly defended positions together with the extreme weather conditions slowed the action. Cross country action by tanks was almost impossible. The

few roads were almost impassable, and any action was hindered by mud and minefields.

On November 14th Sgts. Wheeler and Cajan, both of whom had been wounded in the Brest area, returned to duty with the Company. Wheeler reports that "we were all set to have a good hot turkey dinner for Thanksgiving, but the kitchen crew took a direct hit, so we got a cold turkey sandwich."

Soon after he reported back for duty with Company B, Wheeler emphasizes the cold and wet weather conditions when he says that his "squad slept inside a barn on a warm manure pile."

Wendell Williamson reports that "November 1944 was a terrible month for Company B. They lost many good officers. One was shell-shocked and never returned to the line. Another, First Lieutenant Joe Hemingway, did an exceptional job directing artillery fire on his first day of combat. The Company Commander (Capt. Shallcross) had become a casualty, but Lt. Hemingway rose to the occasion. Unfortunately, Hemingway himself was killed the following day, ending whatever hopes the men might have had for a promising new commanding officer."

Wheeler reports that soon after joining the Company, Lt. Hemingway had asked him, "what makes these men stay up here and fight" ? Wheeler was wounded for the second time by shrapnel from shells being fired into some woods where he and Lt. Hemingway were seeking cover behind some trees. Hemingway received a direct hit and was instantly killed, while Wheeler suffered a foot injury. In the same action, James Savage was hit in the neck and killed while moving from one tree to another.

The month of November ended with Company B being attached to Combat Team 69 in Combat Command A consolidating an observation post in a Maginot Line fort near Hoste-Bas on the road to Puttelange.

At the outset of December, the 9th AIB was assigned to Combat Command A, with a mission of maintaining contact with the 80th Infantry Division. We were situated on the west bank of the Maderbach River. The company was involved in active and daily patrol activities.

Throughout the first three weeks of December, the Division continued its mission of maintaining pressure on the Germans while at the same time advancing and insuring a solid front with the 35th and 80th Infantry Divisions. The advance was toward the city of Sarreguemines . During this period Company B found itself operating in the vicinity of Diebling, Lixing Les Rouhling, Welferding, and Gaubiving. The major effort at this time was to drive the Germans back into defensive positions within the Siegfried Line, and to contain them.

On the 21st of December, an enemy patrol surrounded an outpost of the 9th AIB , and a platoon was quickly dispatched to the area. The enemy patrol was quickly routed and retreated into a woods where it was heavily shelled. The 410th Regiment of the 103rd Infantry Division relieved the 9th AIB on the line on the 23rd and 24th of December.

Casualties (other than KIAs) suffered during the period between 1 September and 20 December 1944 by Company B are listed below:

| Name | Date of Evacuation | Date of Return to duty |
|------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
|------|-----------------------|---------------------------|

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Pvt. Tony A. Rozales | 25 Sept 1944 | |
| Tech 5 Edgar I. Guill | 1 Oct 1944 | 6 Oct 1944 |
| Pfc John E. Burns | 1 Oct 1944 | 4 Oct 1944 |
| Pfc Eugene R. Brooks | 1 Oct 1944 | 2 Oct 1944 |
| Tech 5 Lynn Johnson | 1 Oct 1944 | 14 Nov 1944 |
| Pfc Willie Hicks | 1 Oct 1944 | |
| Pvt Virgil Park | 1 Oct 1944 | 11 Oct 1944 |
| Pvt Thomas Edwards | 1 Oct 1944 | |
| Pfc. Murl H. Boston | 1 Oct 1944 | 26 Dec 1944 |
| Pvt Cecil W.. Dykes | 1 Oct 1944 | 12 Oct 44 |
| Pvt Theodore R. Lusk | 1 Oct 1944 | 27 Oct 1944 |
| Pfc Thomas H. Murphy | 1 Oct 1944 | 39 Oct 1944 |
| T/Sgt Thomas E. Tennant | 1 Oct 1944 | 14 Nov 1944 |
| 1st Lt. Otto Braunschweiger | 1 Oct 1944 | |
| Pfc Ralph Grogan | 1 Oct 1944 | 20 Jan 1945 |
| Sgt Ross E. Gardner | 1 Oct 1944 | |
| Pfc Emile L. Bourassa | 1 Oct 1944 | 29 Jan 11945 |
| Pfc Carlton Cagle | 1 Oct 1944 | 14 Nov 1945 |
| Pfc Edward T. Dyer | 1 Oct 1944 | 26 Dec 1945 |
| Pvt Dominick Iovanamoni | 9 Oct 1944 | |
| Pvt Louis E. Starcher | 8 Oct 1944 | |
| Pfc Otto Reppuhn | 8 Oct 1944 | |
| Pfc Johnnie M Bivens | 3 Nov 1944 | |
| Pvt. Edward A. Erdman | 11 Nov 1944 | |
| Pfc Frank J Brozovich | 11 Nov 1944 | 6 Feb 1945 |
| Pfc Charles T. Hartman | 11 Nov 1944 | |
| Cpl James S. Klamik | 11 Nov 1944 | |
| Pfc Bennie P Dillingham | 11 Nov 1944 | |
| Pvt Elbert L. Lolley | 11 Nov 1944 | |
| Pfc John Bolton | 11 Nov 1944 | |
| Sgt Orville W Martin | 12 Nov 1944 | |
| Pfc J. L. Shoalmine | 12 Nov 1944 | |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Pfc Michael C Florentino | 12 Nov 1944 | |
| Pvt Harry J Lubobonski | 12 Nov 1944 | |
| Pfc Charles C. Ferguson | 12 Nov 1944 | |
| 1st Lt Donald C. Shallcross | 12 Nov 1944 | |
| S/Sgt George Wilson | 12 Nov 1944 | |
| Pfc Robert H Baker | 12 Nov 1944 | |
| Cpl Virgil Lux | 12 Nov 1944 | 24 Apr 1945 |
| Pfc Hascal Copass | 13 Nov 1944 | 3 May 1945 |
| Pvt Albert E. Freeman | 13 Nov 1944 | |
| Pvt Cecil W. Dykes | 13 Nov 1944 | |
| S/Sgt Henry W. Arff | 13 Nov 1944 | |
| Pvt Jessie M Murray | 12 Nov 1944 | 19 Feb 1945 |
| Pfc Lance B. Gravely | 13 Nov 1944 | |
| Pfc Henry E Ford | 13 Nov 1944 | 13 Dec 1944 |
| Pvt Wendell O Roberts | 13 Nov 1944 | |
| S/Sgt Joseph Cl O'Brein | 12 Nov 1944 | |
| Pvt George W Galbreath | 12 Nov 1944 | |
| 1st Lt Royce V. Wells | 13 Nov 1944 | 22 Nov 1944 |
| Cppl John F Beltz | 14 Nov 1944 | |
| Pfc John W. Mizener | 14 Nov 1944 | |
| Pfc Ernest Roma | 14 Nov 1944 | 24 Apr 1945 |
| Pvt James A Donovan | 11 Nov 1944 | 27 Feb 1945 |
| Pvt Charles T Randall | 22 Nov 1944 | |
| Pfc Michael Katich | 25 Nov 1944 | 30 Nov 1944 |
| Pfc Matthew Hendrihofsky | 25 Nov 1944 | |
| Pvt John C. Crawford | 25 Nov 1944 | |
| Pfc Paul B Cycak | 25 Nov 1944 | |
| Pvt Jose E Fajardo | 25 Nov 1944 | 29 Jan 1945 |
| Pfc Thomas P. Kelly | 25 Nov 1944 | |
| Pvt Charles A Brock | 25 Nov 1944 | |
| Pvt Vernon N Underwood | 25 Nov 1944 | |
| Pvt Arthur E. Johnson | 26 Nov 1944 | 15 Mar 1945 |
| Pvt Dewey W. Lane | 26 Nov 1944 | 4 Jan 1945 |

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Pvt Roy F Owens | 26 Nov 1944 | 4 Jan 1945 |
| Pvt Raymond Sterrett | 26 Nov 1944 | |
| S/Sgt John C. Sperock | 26 Nov 1944 | 10 May 1945 |
| Sgt Elmer K Stites | 26 Nov 1944 | |
| Sgt Robert V Wheeler | 26 Nov 1944 | 29 Mar 1945 |
| Cpl George R Denison | 26 Nov 1944 | |
| Pfc Zygment J Browko | 26 Nov 1944 | 4 Jan 1945 |
| Pfc William J Ernst | 26 Nov 1944 | 16 Feb 1945 |
| Pfc Robert A Miller | 26 Nov 1944 | |
| Pfc Robert C. Sanders | 26 Nov 1944 | |
| Pfc Frank E. Twist | 26 Nov 1944 | |
| Pvt William C, Allmon | 26 Nov 1944 | 29 Mar 1945 |
| Pvt Jack F Cagle | 26 Nov 1944 | |
| Pvt Alfred L. Cote | 26 Nov 1944 | |
| T/Sgt Paul H. Lambert | 26 Nov 1944 | |
| Pvt Glenn Hudgens | 26 Nov 1944 | 29 Nov 1944 |
| Pvt Johannan Jockumsen | 26 Nov 1944 | 30 Nov 1944 |
| S/Sgt Louis J. Testa | 26 Nov 1944 | |
| Pfc Vernon W. Bubolz | 26 Nov 1944 | 6 May 1945 |
| Pfc James R. Evans | 26 Nov 1944 | 24 Dec 1944 |
| Pvt William F Tilton | 26 Nov 1944 | |
| Sgt John J., Jewett | 26 Nov 1944 | |
| Pvt. Stanley K. Light | 26 Nov 1944 | |
| Pvt. William C. Huth | 26 Nov 1944 | |
| Pvt Russell R Spain | 26 Nov 1944 | 15 Mar 1945 |
| Pvt. Frank DiSalvo | 26 Nov 1944 | 28 Nov 1944 |
| Pfc Gilbert R. Lane | 26 Nov 1944 | 27 Nov 1944 |
| Sgt Glenn Blennon | 27 Nov 1944 | |
| Pvt. Alfred B Shoemaker | 27 Nov 1944 | |
| Sgt. Edward J. Dorman | 28 Nov 1944 | |
| Pfc Jimmy J. Bordo | 26 Nov 1944 | |
| Pfc Leroy Hall | 26 Nov 1944 | |
| S/Sgt Thomas R Bearden | 5 Dec 1944 | 7 Jan 1945 |

Pfc Richard T. Whittle 5 Dec 1944 22 Dec 1944
1st Lt. Hubert L. Hennessey 5 Dec 1944

Replacements assigned to Comapny B during the period 1
October --- 20 December 1944:

3 October 1944

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Pvt. Jimmie M. Drury | Pvt. George W. Ord |
| Pvt. Russel R. Spain | Pvt. Charles A. Tower |
| Pvt. Dee R. Williamson | Pvt. Clifford V. Wood |

4 October

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Pvt. William C. Murray | Pvt. Jack A. Urso |
|------------------------|-------------------|

5 October

| | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Pfc. Paul Jackson | Pfc. Henry F. Laubach |
| Pfc. Samuel McDaniel | Pfc. George J. Storrie |

6 October

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Cpl. John F. Beltz | Cpl. Robert A. Binda |
| Cpl. Clarence R. Blackwood | Pfc. Harleth A. Staton |
| Pvt. Otto Beisswanger | Pvt. John K. Black |
| Pvt. Fred Bolger | Pvt. Frank Esposito |

6 October

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Pvt. Jasper Fain | Pvt. Clifford W. Fisher |
| 1st Lt. Royce V. Wells | |

8 October

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Pfc. Randolph M. Kieffar | Pvt. Joseph A. Roginski |
| T/5 Joseph T. Cheopolis | Pfc. Vernon W. Bubolz |
| Pfc. Lowell R. Leister | Pvt. Charles F. Campbell |
| Pvt. John R. Delk | |

15 October

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Pvt. Vernon N Underwood | Pvt. Wilbert H. Vohs |
| Pvt. Harold V. Watson | |

23 October

Pvt. Roy F. Owens
Pvt. James E. Sorrel

Pvt. Marcus Pace

27 October

Pvt. William D. Holmes

Pvt. Robert J. Hepburn

28 October

Pvt. Dewey W. Lane

Pvt. Robert R. Goldenstein

14 November

Sgt. Edward J. Dorman

Pfc. James H. Spearman

16 November

Pvt. Famous L. Hill
Pvt. Sherwood C. Howard
Pvt. William C. Huth
Pvt. Daniel J. Jaroszewski
Pvt. Arthur Johnson
Pvt. Wyatt Phillips
Pvt. Raymond E. Sterrett
Pvt. William F. Tilton

Pvt. James A. Hollibaugh
Pvt. Robert C. Hughes
Pvt. Carlos Ingram
Pvt. Johannas Jockumsen
Pvt. James E. McMurtery
Pvt. Charles T. Randall
Pvt. Clarence C. Stout

17 November

T/5 Roy W. Krohn
Pvt. William Demy

Pfc. Frank M. Baker
Pvt. Vernon W. Head

18 November

1st Lt. Joseph J. Heminway
Cpl. George R. Denison
Pfc Stanley L. Boe
Pfc. Jesus a. Desantos
Pfc. Guy W. Engbretsen
Pfc. Robert Fisher
Pvt. Paul Adams
Pvt. Denver A. Davidson
Pvt. Frank Disalvo
Pvt. Donald K. England
Pvt. Alfred B. Shoemaker

S/Sgt Amel Barger
Pfc. Lawrence Antimi
Pfc. Robert A. Brown
Pfc. Gaspar C. Devita
Pfc. William J. Ernst
Pfc. Harold Wagner
Pvt. Robert E. Berngen
Pvt. Robert M. Davis
Pvt. Vincent Ditrapani
Pvt. Albert F Fitzpatrick

20 November

Capt. John L. Rice 1st Lt. George E. Tollofson
2nd Lt. Charles G. Picard

23 November

Pvt. William C. Allmon Pvt. Leon F. Benson
Pvt. Arthur J. Boreali

26 November

Pvt. Benton Benson Pvt. Drexler L. Benton
Pvt. Edward R. Best Pvt. John R. Brown
Pvt. Kelly Johnson

19 November

Pvt. Chester A. Cola Pvt. George R. Connor
Pvt. Raymond Waskom Pvt. Harold M. Williams
Pvt. Lester E. Wooster Pvt. Nicholas Zappone

4 December

Pfc. Bernard Heisman, Jr Pvt Jacob P. Wenz, Jr

5 December

T/Sgt Sylvester L. Swan S/Sgt Russell F. Oren
Pvt. Edgar H. Huffman Pvt. John R. Lair

6 December

Pvt. Joe R. Smith Pfc. Hans G. Tollefson
Pvt. Edward L. Showler Pfc. Samuel M. Lerman
Pvt. Paul F. Camp Pvt. Nicholas Martinkovich
Pvt. Leo W. Kluetsch Pvt. Frederick A. Klages
Pvt. Texas V. Jones Pvt. Alexander R. King
Pvt. Earl C. Haskell Pvr. Paul W. Gambill
Pvt. Joseph A. Fuccello Pvt. Alvin H. Donnan
Pvt. Wilburn L. Carrell Pvt. Clarence R. Carlson
Pvt. Earl T. True

10 December

Pvt. Irving B. Waserstein

18 December

T/5 Joseph D. Duncan Pvt. Leo A. Czaplicki

Pvt. Gordon H. Elvidge
Pvt. William H. Freise
Pvt. John R. Hillery
T/5 John C. Howlett
Pfc David Kaplan
Pvt. Joseph E. Barbee
Pvt. Paul F. Buettner
Pfc Elvin N. Cantrell
T/5 Frederick Carmen
Pvt. James O. Westfall
Pvt. James M. Young
Pvt. Menetto E. McLean
T/5 Hallie Phillips
Pvt. Roy E. Renfro
Pvt. Joseph Szeveczyk
T/5 John F. Vanlandingham
T/5 Walter E. Weaver
Pvt. Walter E. Wellock
Pfc. John H. Lapeze, Jr
Pvt. Maurice E. LeSieur
Sgt. Elmer A. Miller
Pvt. James I. Oldham
Pfc. William R. Peregoy

1st Lt. Robert O. Sweet

Pvt. Alfred H. Fischer
Pvt. Sylvester L. Guido
Pvt. Lenvil Holbrook
S/Sgt Edward F. Joyce
T/5 Lawson B. Altman
Pfc Clyde F. Brewer
Pvt. Raymond W. Burgess
T/5 Hirem Caudill
Pfc. Eugene T. Donnelly
Pvt. William F. Wickham
Pvt. John P. Lira
Pvt. George R. Behnke
Pfc Bertram W. Pittis
Pvt. Stephen S. Slawski
Pvt. Walter G. Thompson
Pvt. Charles Villeneuve
Pvt. Willard S. Wedin
Pvt. William V. Lane
T/5 Alvin G. Legerat
T/5 James R. McClure
T/4 John A. Nanasko
Pfc. Theodore A. Penhollow

29 December

2nd Lt. Walter C. Jacobsen

BASTOGNE -- "BATTLE OF THE BULGE"

The German breakthrough in the Ardennes ended the Saar defensive action of the 6th Armored Division, and its units began its move northward by moving back from the Sarreguemines area to Metz. Pending the move north to the Bastogne area, the Division was placed in strategic reserve under the XX Corps. Thus, Company B spent the day before Christmas resting and refitting for action. Dee Williamson reports that "I changed my uniform for the first time in two and a half months and threw the old one away. An elderly French Woman scrubbed the mud off the boots of all the members of my squad; and offered them each a piece of pie for Christmas. We declined the pie with thanks, because she had probably been saving for months for that pie."

On Christmas day, a hot dinner was served while the Company was at Metz. Before the mess kits could be cleaned, the Company mounted their half-tracks for the move to Bastogne. Assigned to Combat Command A, the 9th AIB, went through Luxembourg and Mersch closing in its bivouac near the village of Fels. Company B was now entering the "Battle of the Bulge". Combat Command A took positions facing east along the front line formerly held by the 9th Armd. Division.

Elements of several U.S. divisions were operating in a very narrow wedge leading into Bastogne, which had been spearheaded by the 4th Armored Division. The 5th and 80th Infantry Divisions along with the 6th Armored were driving north towards Bastogne, while at the same time were widening the passageway into Bastogne. Since it had become evident that the enemy was making no strong move south toward Luxembourg, orders were given for the 5th Inf Div to relieve the 6th Armd Div on the right and the

80th Inf Div to relieve the 6th Armd on the right. Thus the 6th was now moved over to the attack directly northward to Bastogne. The mission of the 6th was to widen the corridor created by the 4th and to "bite deeply" into the German flank.

Al ("Legs") Legerat, who had joined Company B as a "re-tread" replacement less than a month before, recalls that "the men of Company B were in a wooded area. Some of the men of Company A brought up their vehicles which, along with 3 medium tanks of one of the tank battalions, were knocked out the following morning. Most of the vehicles of Company B and Company C were not damaged as they were outside of the range of the shelling. Although my feet were frozen, I kept soldiering as best I could until almost the end of January. That was the order of Gen Dwight Eisenhower: No soldier that could still pull a trigger would be evacuated." (Note: See Legerat's complete story in Appendix)

The weather, which had been a very formidable adversary from October through December, was now at its worst. The temperatures were constantly below freezing. The roads were iced over and covered with repeated snow storms, and the tanks and half tracks of the division were skidding off into the ditches. Frequently, orders for a well developed plan of attack would have to be changed or canceled in the midst of the operation because troops were delayed by the ice and snow on the roads. Further, the congestion created by the movement of elements of the several divisions in the limited road space available created more unforeseen and abnormal problems. On one occasion the movement of an entire Combat Command was blocked by vehicles of the 11th Armored Division. Such delays prevented efficient coordinated attacks, which had to be delayed.

On the 2nd, 3rd and 4th of January, Company B was involved in the heaviest fighting experienced during the war. The fourth of January was the worst day in the history of the Company in combat. There were 13 men killed in action on that date; and the company suffered 35% in casualties.

Milt Moncrief states that "during the period of the first three days of January my company faced the bitterest fighting we had yet encountered since entering the war in July. Aside from the combat, the weather was the worst we had seen - freezing cold and heavy snow. On Jan. 3rd, we were making an attack on the Germans in the late afternoon in the vicinity of Wardin. My platoon was stationed in some woods just outside the town and during the night we were subjected to heavy artillery and mortar fire. In the early morning after I had been awakened from my short nap, a mortar shell hit about three feet from me and shrapnel hit my left leg, shattering the shin bone.

Company medics were summoned and they patched me up. Sgt. Ball, who was next to me caught shrapnel in his buttocks. The medics called for a stretcher and more help. They picked me up and carried me to the back of the woods. The Germans were just across the road and were firing at us when we emerged from the edge of the woods. The Medics carried me back into the woods. Placing me in the front seat of the Company jeep, they were going to make a run for it; but another mortar barrage stopped us short. A Captain from "A" Company and Sgt. Ball got hit in this second barrage. When the barrage subsided somewhat, with Ball and the Captain in the back seat of the jeep, Parrish, the driver, made a dash for the main road. Because of the slippery, snow covered road, the jeep hit a ditch and got stuck preventing our escape." Moncrief was taken prisoner. (Editor's note: Milt Moncrief's complete story can be found in the Appendix of the book. Parrish,

mentioned above, is believed to have been captured shortly after the action described by Milt Moncrief. See appendix for story of Byron Parrish.)

The *Combat Record of the Sixth Armored Division* reports that “during the day (Jan 4th) orders were issued fragmentarily for withdrawal from the most advanced salients in order to straighten and shorten the line ----- “. Further. “this day marked the only withdrawal of any consequence by the Division under enemy pressure during the war, and even this would not have forced had the line not been over-extended.”

Combat Command A, of which the 9th AIB was a part, was ordered to pull back to a better defensive line, because the command was spread too far with only three battalions to defend a 12,000 yard front. Just as the troops in Task Force Britton were in the process of withdrawing to a new defensive line, the Germans made a major thrust aimed directly at B Company. All of the 9th AIB suffered heavy casualties.

Wendell Williamson relates what his father and other members of Company B had passed along to him: “when morning (4th January) came there was a great deal of small-arms fire to the right, where the 44th Armored Infantry Battalion was located. The men of Company B thought the 44th was attacking and prepared to support it, but it soon became clear that the 44th was being attacked and was losing ground. Company B was isolated. They began to withdraw to maintain contact with the 44th, but at that point the Germans opened on them with what my father later described as the most terrific bombardment he ever saw the Germans produce. After the bombardment my father began working frantically to dig his foxhole deeper, and wasn't paying attention to what was going on in front of him until someone

yelled, "You better move! They're coming right there!" He looked up and saw a large number of German soldiers advancing toward him through the snow, firing their automatic weapons. They were supported by two Tiger tanks. He dropped his shovel and grabbed his rifle and began running, along with many other members of Company B."

The *Combat Record of the Sixth Armored Division* states: "at 1700, preceded by a 20-minute concentration of 150mm artillery and Nebelwerfer fire, the enemy launched a major counterattack. It hit along the boundary between CT 9 and CT 44 and a force of SS troops came from Wardin into the woods behind CT9's position. A strong force estimated at a regiment, spearheaded by ten Tiger Royal tanks and ten self-propelled guns, drove in against our line. CT 9, however, promptly and strongly organized a defensive line. While at times the situation was precarious, at no point was the enemy successful in making a breakthrough."

It can be seen that Company B which was part of CT 9 during this operation was in the middle of some rough fighting. It is no wonder that some of the men became separated from their platoons. Dee Williamson recalls that he "ended up in a battalion headquarters and spent the night guarding a group of combat engineers who were cutting trees across roads leading into German-held territory, lest the Germans renew their attack the following day.

Williamson and Hubert Gressler found their way back to Company B the next day to find that they had been reported missing in action. They were the only members of their squad to return.. The Company suffered very heavy losses during the period from 3-5 January.

While we are unable to identify a specific date, it is believed that the actions described by Private First Class Francis Hoholik, who was on furlough much later, in an interview with his hometown (Manistique, Michigan) newspaper, pertained to the action of 3-5 of January 1945. PFC Hoholik was the jeep driver for the Company Commander. His statement: "For nearly two weeks it was downright hell. The Jerries, trying to exploit their superiority in numbers and to keep up the momentum of their initial drive, hammered us unmercifully with artillery and fire from tanks and smash our lines with their infantry. They counter attacked night and day. We shot them down by the hundred but they still kept coming at us. My weapon was a Thompson submachine gun and I had it in action almost constantly, killing Krauts sometimes at ranges of only 30 or 50 yards. Every American soldier in that area fought like a hero, but the man whose actions stand out most vividly in my memory is Technical Sergeant Paul Kuzma of Campbell Ohio. At one point, which my company had been holding alone, the Jerries attacked in great force. All of our officers had become casualties. Sergeant Kuzma took over what was left of the company. He was everywhere, rallying the men, pointing out targets to them, picking up ammunition from casualties and distributing it to the men who were running low on it, keeping us going sometimes by the sheer force of his will. Because of his leadership and his example, we stopped that attack cold."

During this period the three battalions of artillery of the division maintained an almost continual blanket of shells pouring into the German positions. From statements made by prisoners, this fire was very effective. Large numbers of enemy troops were either killed or wounded and many tanks and other vehicles were destroyed.

From the above description, it can be seen that the town of Wardin was the center of activity for Company B during the early days of January. If it became necessary to name a city which most represented the history of Company B, it would have to be Wardin, Belgium.

On the 6th of January the situation became more stable. Although the troops of the 6th AD had sustained heavy losses since arriving in the Bastogne area, they were able to consolidate their positions between the 6th and 9th of January. The turning point in the Ardennes campaign had now arrived. In its attempt to retake Bastogne, the Germans exhausted themselves in unavailing and constant assaults. Now the 6th AD, which had borne the brunt of those assaults, was ready to punch back; and while the enemy was able to put up stubborn resistance, he was never able to penetrate the 6th Armored Division.

On the 9th and 10th of January it was planned that the 4th Armored Division would replace the 6th, but from the results of patrols and information obtained from prisoners it was estimated that the enemy was making at least a partial withdrawal along this front. In order to take advantage of this withdrawal and maintain contact with the enemy, Combat Command A, of which the 9th AIB was a part, drove forward along its entire front. Combat Team (CT) 9 attacked and advanced through the woods southwest of Wardin. Many of the enemy were killed or taken prisoner in the advance .

Williamson reports that his "platoon of 16 men went through the woods unopposed for some distance, capturing two German mortars, and taking seven German prisoners. At that point, the German artillery woke up and began plastering the area with shells, and my platoon decided to pull back and find the rest of the

battalion. I had taken only 10 or 120 steps back in the direction I had come when a shell hit a tree behind me and exploded. I felt a piece of shrapnel jab through the back of my left leg like a red-hot poker. I touched the wound and found that it was deep; but I had to keep going or I would have been captured.

When we reached the rest of the battalion, another wounded fellow and I were given the job of taking the prisoners back. I ended up at a Field Hospital in an ancient monastery in Bastogne. I was later transferred to France and then to England, and did not return to Company B until several weeks after the war ended.”

The defense of the Germans had become much weaker, and the 6th AD continued to advance. CT9 succeeded in taking the high ground northwest of Longvilly and northeast of Rau de Michamps, where on the 17th of January it fought off heavy counterattack consisting of tanks, SP guns and infantry.

During these early days of January the U. S. forces were fighting over the same ground over which the Germans had marched into Bastogne back in December. Due to the extreme cold weather and the accumulation of the ice and snow; many bodies of German soldiers, who were killed in skirmishes enroute to Bastogne, were uncovered by the U. S. forces. Likewise, the bodies of many of our American soldiers who were killed in January were covered by the snow, and were not found until later in March. The bodies were perfectly preserved due to the extreme cold.

Dee Williamson describes the manner in which the men of Company B operated during those days when the temperature continually hovered near zero. “Hubert Gressler and I argued over who got to stand guard at our foxhole, while the other ‘slept’

undercover. The man who stood guard could jump up and down to try to keep warm, while the man lying under the covered part of the foxhole just froze. Also, there was a good deal of sniping going on, so it paid to keep one's head down."

The 6th AD continued its attack and movement to the east. CT 9 played a role in the capture of Trois Vierges, Binsfield, and Holler. By January 27th, the 6th was holding the high ground ("Sky Line Drive") overlooking the Our River.

In the period between 27th January and February 4th, Company B, along with the remainder of the 9th AIB, patrolled the area between the Sky Line Drive and the west bank of the Our River in its assigned zone. As a result of the heavy rains and melting snow, the river was about ten feet deep and swollen to several times its normal width. During this time a constant reconnaissance was being conducted to find possible crossing sites.

Much difficulty was encountered in building a bridge in order to cross the raging waters of the Our. Company B was scheduled to cross at a site south of the Dahlen-Kalborn road. Repeated attempts to launch boats failed and by midnight no troops were across the river. In the early morning hours of 7th of February, the 44h AIB was successful in getting two companies across the Our. Soon thereafter, the 9th AIB reinforced the 44th on the East side of the Our. At long last, men of Company B were in Germany.

For the next several days Company B, along with the remainder of the 9th AIB organized its position, patrolling further to the east, and prepared for the attack toward the Siegfried Line.

The long awaited major attack took place on 20 February. At 0645 the Artillery laid an intensive preparation over the entire front

for 20 minutes, then lifted for 10 minutes to allow the enemy to come out of their pillboxes and man their outside defenses to meet a probable attack. Then for one minute every available gun of the artillery concentrated on the small area of the first objective with a terrific TOT (Time on Target) which was the signal for the assault parties to attack.

Assaulting troops found their greatest obstacles to be mines, wire and booby traps and the physical difficulty of breaking into pillboxes. Task Force Britton (including Company B), soon after the Artillery TOT, fanned out toward Dahnen to the northern edge of the Zone. The first pillbox was seized at 0830 by Task Force Britton (or CT 9). By 1800 the 6th AD had successfully forced through the heaviest portion of the Siegfried Line. At 0745 the following day, Dahnen became the first town in Germany to be captured by the 6th AD. Following the capture of Dahnen, CT 9 resumed its attack southward to smash into Dasburg, which was taken by 1700.

The sign, ***“YOU ARE NOW ENTERING GERMANY THROUGH THE COURTESY OF THE U. S. 6TH ARMORED DIVISION”***, was erected on the outskirts of Dahnen, near the Our River, during the night of 21 February 1945. Parenthetically, almost every 6th Armored Division soldier has a picture of himself posing in front of that sign.

The 6th Armored Division continued its attack eastward throughout the remainder of February. A total of 40 pillboxes were taken with a minimum of loss suffered by the division troops. Only one pillbox held out for an extended time. When it was finally blown up, with 450 pounds of TNT placed against its door, one officer and 11 EM were dragged out in a stunned condition.

In its continuing attack eastward into the month of March, the 6th AD captured many German villages and towns. The German forces did not offer stiff and constant opposition. The Prum and Nims rivers were crossed and bridgeheads established. CT 9 played prominent roles in the capture of Olmscheid and Wetteldorf.

Corporal Joe Bogdon, himself a "retread" replacement, having joined the company less than a month prior, and now a squad leader of the 4th platoon, describes the action of his platoon on or about the 3rd of March.

"We were moving east out of Schonecken, Germany, when the column of tanks encountered some Germans in trenches up on the hill to our right. My platoon dismounted from our halftracks and with the help of the machine gun fire from the tanks, drove the Germans out. As the tanks came to this stream, one pulled into the water and immediately became stuck and could not advance. My platoon went across the stream, the water up to our waist. We advanced up the hill along the hedgerows and were fired on by eighty-eights. There was a farm house and barn on the hill. We ran into the house and barn to get out of the shelling. Members of the third platoon had become intermingled with my platoon. The Lt of the Third Platoon assigned my platoon to the barn and the Third platoon to the house. It was about 200 yards from the house to the barn. I moved my men outside of the house and held them close by, because of the eighty eights. The men from the other platoon in the barn started to walk across to the house. Fire from the eighty-eights started to come in pretty heavy. The men were caught out in the open. Some were killed, others were wounded. The Lt. told me and my men to take the wounded down the hill to the house near the stream, and come back. We made litters from saplings and our raincoats to carry the wounded. We used our

belts to strap arms and legs that were just hanging on by the skin. As we started down the hill with the wounded, eighty eights were coming in and hitting the ground around us. When the shells stopped I checked the men. One of the men on a litter was hit across his skull. Bleeding pretty bad, I said we will leave him and get the rest of the wounded down the hill. He begged 'don't leave me'. So, with his bandaged head, and leg and arm just hanging on, we crawled with the litters till we got away from that part of the hedgerow. We succeeded in reaching the house and delivered the wounded to the medics. As we were leaving, one of the wounded men asked for some water. As I put my hand behind his head, assisting him to take a swallow, I felt the hole in his skull." (Note: Bogdon's complete story of his experiences can be found in the Appendix section of this book)

Bogdon reports that the Lieutenant awakened him about midnight that night and, since he was the "only one who knows the way in the dark", gave him the mission: to go back down the hill and wait for the advance party of the 90th Infantry Division, which was to relieve the 6th AD in that area.

On the 4th of March, the Sixth Armored Division passed into SHAEF Reserve, and was assembled in the Arzfeld area north of Luxembourg. For the first time since it entered combat on 27 July 1944, the entire Division was out of the front lines. On the 8th of March the division received orders that it was now attached to the Seventh Army.

During the period of the Battle of the Bulge and the initial entry into Germany, Company B, as well as the entire Division, sustained a very heavy casualty list. In addition to suffering the many casualties from enemy weapons, there were many casualties resulting from exhaustion and frozen feet. The casualty list for

Company B for the period from 1 January 1945 to 1 March 1945 follows:

| Name | Date of Evacuation | Date of Return to Duty |
|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Pfc William C. Rowe | 2 Jan 1945 | 6 Feb 1945 |
| T/5 Edward A. Suda | 2 Jan 1945 | |
| Pvt. Alexander R. King | 2 Jan 1945 | |
| S/Sgt Henry H. Christian | 2 Jan 1945 | 4 Mar 1945 |
| Pfc. Phillip C. Evans | 2 Jan 1945 | |
| Pfc Gaspar C. DeVita | 2 Jan 1945 | |
| Cpl. Robert A. Binda | 2 Jan 1945 | |
| Sgt. Louis J. Rekar | 2 Jan 1945 | |
| Pfc Frank D. Andrews | 2 Jan 1945 | |
| Pvt. William V. Lane | 2 Jan 1945 | |
| Pvt Howard T. Ackerman | 2 Jan 1945 | |
| Pvt. James C. Westfall | 2 Jan 1945 | |
| Pvt. Raymond W. Burgess | 2 Jan 1945 | 1 Feb 1945 |
| Pvt. Gordon H. Elridge | 3 Jan 1945 | 4 Jan 1945 |
| Pfc Benjamin J Krawchuk | 3 Jan 1945 | 4 May 1945 |
| Pfc Vernon W. Head | 3 Jan 1945 | |
| Cpl Lawrence C. Stout | 3 Jan 1945 | |
| Pfc George J. Storrie | 3 Jan 1945 | |
| T/5 Hallie R., Phillips | 3 Jan 1945 | 7 May 1945 |
| Sgt Daniel Hoffpanir | 3 Jan 1945 | 6 May 1945 |
| S/Sgt Edward F. Joyce | 3 Jan 1945 | 4 Mar 1945 |
| Pfc Roycemerald S Six | 3 Jan 1945 | |
| Pvt. Murl H. Bosston | 3 Jan 1945 | 1 Feb 1945 |
| Pfc John R. Delk | 3 Jan 1945 | 16 May 1945 |
| Sgt Iva Cochran | 3 Jan 1945 | |
| Pvt. Edward L. Showler | 3 Jan 1945 | |
| Pvt. Frank Disalvo | 3 Jan 1945 | 7 Feb 1945 |

| | | |
|----------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| Pvt. Leo W. Kluetsch | 3 Jan 1945 | 29 Jan 1945 ^{2nd} |
| Lt. Walter C. Jacobson | 3 Jan 1945 | |
| Sgt James C. Bell | 4 Jan 1945 | 16 May 1945 |
| S/Sgt Carl J. Hronek | 4 Jan 1945 | |
| S/Sgt Clarence R Blackwood | 4 Jan 1945 | 4 Mar 1945 |
| Pfc John E. Burns | 4 Jan 1945 | 9 Jan 1945 |
| T/Sgt Chauncey M Stewart | 4 Jan 1945 | |
| Pfc Robert C Hughes | 4 Jan 1945 | |
| T/5 Hiram Caudill | 4 Jan 1945 | |
| Cpl Guisto S LaScala | 4 Jan 1945 | |
| Pfc Henry W. Blevins | 4 Jan 1945 | 5 Jan 1945 |
| Pvt Walter E. Wellock | 2 Jan 1945 | 30 Mar 1945 |
| Pfc Elvin N Cantrell | 2 Jan 1945 | |
| Pfc Chester J. Moleski | 2 Jan 1945 | |
| T/5 John C. Hawlett | 2 Jan 1945 | |
| Pfc Clyde F. Brewer | 2 Jan 1945 | |
| Pfc William R Perjory | 2 Jan 1945 | |
| T/5 James R. McClure | 4 Jan 1945 | 30 Mar 1945 |
| Pvt Leo A Czsplicke | 4 Jan 1945 | |
| Pfc Charles H. Kell | 4 Jan 1945 | 7 Jan 1945 |
| Pvt Roy E. Renfro | 5 Jan 1945 | 1 Mar 1945 |
| Pvt Vachel E. F. Gilliland | 5 Jan 1945 | 24 Jan 1945 |
| Pvt Frank A Green | 5 Jan 1945 | |
| T/5 Dennis E Hahn | 9 Jan 1945 | |
| Sgt Elmer A. Miller | 9 Jan 1945 | 13 Jan 1945 |
| Cpl. Jimmie M. Drury | 3 Jan 1945 | 29 Jan 1945 |
| Pvt John R. Lair | 11 Jan 1945 | |
| Pvt. Willard S. Wedin | 11 Jan 1945 | |
| Pfc Dee R. Williamson | 11 Jan 1945 | 24 May 1945 |
| Pvt Elmer H. Gussler | 11 Jan 1945 | |
| Pvt. Lenvil Holbrook | 11 Jan 1945 | |
| Pfc Grady A. Lunsford | 13 Jan 1945 | |
| T/5 Blair E. Mullan | 9 Jan 1945 | |

| | | |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Pfc Robert M. Davis | 16 Jan 1945 | 16 May 1945 |
| 1st Lt. Walter J. Neskeim | 16 Jan 1945 | |
| Pvt. Nicholas J Martinkovich | 17 Jan 1945 | 9 Apr 1945 |
| Pvt. Joseph Szoveczyuk | 17 Jan 1945 | 27 Feb 1945 |
| Pvt William D Cunningham | 19 Jan 1945 | 28 Apr 1945 |
| T/5 Joseph D. Duncan | 16 Jan 1945 | 21 Jan 1945 |
| Pfc Gilbert R. Lane | 16 Jan 1945 | |
| Pvt Howard M. Williams | 16 Jan 1945 | 16 Feb 1945 |
| Pvt. James Davis, Jr. | 21 Jan 1945 | 6 May 1945 |
| S/Sgt Fred Klotz | 22 Jan 1945 | 26 Jan 1945 |
| Pvt. William Demi | 22 Jan 1945 | |
| Pfc Anthony A. Miller | 22 Jan 1945 | |
| 2nd Lt Raymond H. Mathisen | 24 Jan 1945 | 27 Feb 1945 |
| Pvt. Brendon T. Durkin | 24 Jan 1945 | 29 Jan 1945 |
| Pvt. Nicholas Zappone | 24 Jan 1945 | 26 Jan 1945 |
| Pvt. Lloyd C Entsminger | 24 Jan 1945 | 30 Jan 1945 |
| Pvt. Printes H. Creasy | 24 Jan 1945 | |
| Cpl Edward R. Cowan | 24 Jan 1945 | 27 Jan 1945 |
| Pvt Carroll J Hobson | 24 Jan 1945 | |
| Pvt. Donald O. Cool | 24 Jan 1945 | |
| Pvt Paul F. Buttner | 24 Jan 1945 | 16 May 1945 |
| T/Sgt Maurice L. Dineen | 24 Jan 1945 | |
| Pfc Edward E. Sabo | 24 Jan 1945 | 29 Mar 1945 |
| Sgt Americo Venturini | 24 Jan 1945 | 19 Feb 1945 |
| Pvt Arthur K. Cole | 24 Jan 1945 | |
| Pfc David Kaplan | 26 Jan 1945 | |
| Pvt. Szetly H McGuire | 27 Jan 1945 | |
| Pvt. James I Oldham | 6 Feb 1945 | |
| 1st Lt. Robert H. Cunningham | 7 Feb 1945 | |
| Pvt. Leo W. Kluetsch | 8 Feb 1945 | 29 Mar 1945 |
| Pvt Leon F. Benson | 8 Feb 1945 | 8 Mar 1945 |
| T/5 Angelo A Secchitano | 8 Feb 1945 | 4 Mar 1945 |
| Pvt. Harvey Deford | 20 Feb 1945 | |

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1st Lt William M. Klett | 20 Feb 1945 | |
| 1st Lt Royce V Wells | 20 Feb 1945 | |
| Pvt. Wallace S Dunsworth | 21 Feb 1945 | |
| Sgt Jimmie M Drury | 21 Feb 1945 | 24 Apr 1945 |
| Pfc Jesus A. De Santos | 21 Feb 1945 | |
| Pvt Russell E Cutrell | 21 Feb 1945 | |
| Pvt Nicholas Zappone | 21 Feb 1945 | |
| Sgt. Harold Wagner | 22 Feb 11945 | |
| Pvt. Johannos Jackumsen | 22 Feb 1945 | 10 May 1945 |
| S/Sgt Joseph D. Duncan | 22 Feb 1945 | 8 Mar 1945 |
| T/Sgt Paul Kuzma | 22 Feb 1945 | 18 Apr 1945 |
| Pvt Henry J Bielecki | 22 Feb 1945 | |
| Pvt Victor H. Lapine | 22 Feb 1945 | 18 Apr 1945 |
| 2nd Lt Lyell C LaPlantz | 22 Feb 1945 | |
| 2nd Lt John B Belinski | 22 Feb 1945 | 28 Apr 1945 |
| 1st Lt John P. O'Hare | 22 Feb 1945 | 18 Apr 1945 |
| T/4 Robert W. Blythe | 25 Feb 1945 | 18 Apr 1945 |
| 2nd Lt Peter P. Robinak | 27 Feb 1945 | |
| Pfc Charles F. Campbell | 27 Feb 1945 | 2 Mar 1945 |
| Pvt. Jessie W. Murray | 27 Feb 1945 | |
| S/Sgt Elmer A. Miller | 27 Feb 1945 | |
| Pvt Henry Feuer | 27 Feb 1945 | |
| T/5 Clarence McCurry | 27 Feb 1945 | 29 Mar 1945 |
| Pfc William J. Klokis | 27 Feb 1945 | |
| Pvt Herman F Slack | 27 Feb 1945 | |
| Pvt Walter G Thompson | 28 Feb 1945 | 24 Apr 1945 |
| Pvt George H. Elliott | 28 Feb 1945 | 19 May 1945 |
| Sgt Leo DeChamplain | 28 Feb 1945 | |
| Pvt. Parks J. Moore | 28 Feb 1945 | |
| Pvt. Drexler L. Benton | 28 Feb 1945 | 24 Apr 1945 |
| Pfc J. D. Porter | 28 Feb 1945 | |
| Pvt. Peter P. Chubka | 28 Feb 1945 | 15 Mar 1945 |
| Pvt. Frank DiSalvo | 28 Feb 1945 | 15 Mar 1945 |

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------|------------|
| Pvt Carl L Darrell | 28 Feb 1945 | 1 Mar 1945 |
| Pvt Marvin F. Hoke | 28 Feb 1945 | 1 Mar 1945 |

The following members of Company B were reported as Missing in Action (MIA) during this period (1 Jan - 1 Mar 1945):

| | | |
|-----------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Pfc. Frank J. Powers | 3 Jan 1945 | 8 Jan 1945 |
| Pvt. Johannos Jackumsen | 3 Jan 1945 | 8 Jan 1945 |
| Pvt James E. McMurtery | 3 Jan 1945 | |
| *Pfc. Byron M Parish | 4 Jan 1945 | |
| Pvt Maurice E. LeSiur | 4 Jan 1945 | 8 Jan 1945 |
| Pfc Jack Phillips | 4 Jan 1945 | |
| S/Sgt Fred Klotz | 4 Jan 1945 | 8 Jan 1945 |
| Pvt Howard J. Glass | 4 Jan 1945 | 8 Jan 1945 |
| *Pfc Milton M Moncrief | 4 Jan 1945 | |
| Pvt Sylvester L. Guido | 4 Jan 1945 | 8 Jan 1945 |
| T/5 John F Vanlandingham | 4 Jan 1945 | 8 Jan 1945 |
| Pvt William H Frise | 4 Jan 1945 | 10 Jan 1945 |
| Pfc Grady F. Lunsford | 4 Jan 1945 | 8 Jan 1945 |
| Pvt James I Oldham | 4 Jan 1945 | 9 Jan 1945 |
| Pfc Dee R. Williamson | 4 Jan 1945 | 9 Jan 1945 |
| Pvt. Charles Villanueva | 4 Jan 1945 | 8 Jan 1945 |
| Pfc Carlos Ingram | 4 Jan 1945 | 8 Jan 1945 |
| Pfc Nicholas J Martinkovich | 4 Jan 1945 | 8 Jan 1945 |
| 1st Lt. Frank P Kornagay | 4 Jan 1945 | |

*See personal stories in Appendix

Replacements assigned to Comopany B during the period 1 January --- 1 March 1945:

8 January 1945

1st Lt. Maurice W. Fowler

Twenty seven (27) Enlisted men assigned
this date. Unable to obtain names

16 January

2nd Lt. James M. Brown

17 January

Pvt. Arnold M. Debrick

Pvt. John M. Devero

Pvt. Charles E. Dickey

Pvt. Carl L. Dorrell

Pvt. Walter E. Eaton

Pvt. Henry Feuer

Pvt. Donald Gehret

19 January

Pvt. Raymond F. Gannon

Pvt. Leonard C. Rivers

24 January

1st Lt. Robert K. Cunningham

27 January

Twenty eight (28) unnamed Enlisted Men

30 January

Ten (10) unnamed Enlisted Men

7 February 1945

2nd Lt. John R. Adikes

24 February

2nd Lt. Lyell C. LaPlantz

27 February

2nd Lt. Emmanuel Ostrov

2nd Lt. Richard G. Perscaw

2nd Lt. Peter P. Rabinak

28 February

1st Lt. Michael R. Alexander

2nd Lt. Harold B. Parker

1st Lt. Augustus B. Maxwell

CAMPAIGN INTO GERMANY

Assigned to the XV Corps, the 6th AD moved south from the Arzfeld-Dasburg area through Luxembourg to the area of Chateau Salins. For the first time since entering combat in July 1944, the entire Division had ten days in which to rest, reorganize, and refit. The Corps was planning a major assault from the Zweibrucken area with an objective of getting to the Rhine in the area of Worms.

The attack was launched on 20 March, with Company B, a part of Combat Team 9 (CT9) being assigned to Combat Command A. "Legs" Legerat, a "re-tread" replacement, now a rifleman in Company B, described the weak opposition encountered, saying, "we by-passed all kinds of German warriors dug in, and not offering much resistance to our column".

CT 9 proceeded along the northernmost route in the attack from the Zweibrucken area. The opposition was not nearly so strong as that which confronted the southern columns of the Super Sixth. By the evening of the 21st March CT 9 had reached the west bank of the Rhine.

In the maneuvering which took place in the coordinated attack toward the Rhine, the Sixth Armored Division on the northern flank of the Seventh Army, found itself protruding into the area of the Third Army. Some critics have reported that Gen Grow purposely maneuvered his division in such a manner as to be placed in the area of the Third Army. In any case, the 6th found itself, once again, under the command of Gen. Patton, and assigned to the XII Corps.

The Rhine was the last natural barrier facing the U. S. forces before getting into the heart of Germany itself. After crossing the Rhine at Oppenheim on a heavy pontoon bridge put in place by a Bridge Company of the Corps of Engineers, the German resistance became much stronger. Combat Command A, of which CT 9 was a member came under heavy artillery fire at Morfelden, which was captured by CT 9, with Company B playing a significant role.

In its attack from Morfelden and near Waldorf, Col Jack Hines, the Commander of Combat Command A, was seriously wounded by German artillery fire, and was replaced by Col. Albert Harris. In the attack toward Frankfort and in the crossing of the Main at the city of Frankfort, the division experienced the heaviest artillery fire experienced since it had been in combat in August 1944.

Again, Legs Legerat tells about the action of Company B: "Once across the Rhine, we headed northeast toward Frankfort, which is on the Main River. The only bridge across the Main was located at Frankfort. Although the bridge was intact, the Germans had concentrated firepower zeroed in on it. German mortar and artillery fire kept our engineers from fixing up the bridge so our tanks could drive across. We lost some guys before we crossed. Although coming under enemy rifle fire, my platoon ran across to the other side. As soon as got to the other side of the bridge we sought cover behind and in a building which was burning. We shot it out with those Germans who were also in buildings across the street from those which we had entered."

Joe Bogdon, of the Fourth Platoon, recounts his experience in the fighting around Frankfort. "The next block up at the corner looking left was the bridge to Frankfort. It gave you a funny feeling. The bridge was taking heavy shelling on the side we were on (west). Sparking electric wires were all over the road. We had

orders to clear out two blocks around the bridge. After checking out the buildings, we had to break in doors where a lot of German people were. After cleaning out the buildings, we had orders to cross the bridge. Shells were hitting the bridge. I timed the shelling, it was about 60 seconds between barrages. When the shelling let up I went for the bridge. It had absorbed a lot of shelling. There was a lot of steel all twisted. We had to crawl on some of the beams. I got my men across. I heard a man calling out: "help me". I looked back and saw him, He was stuck with a piece of steel suspended from his belt. I went back and got him loose. The shelling started back in about 15 seconds. There was machine gun fire. We got to a barricade of blocks about 20 feet high. We checked the building and found a bomb shelter with about 30 people in it. In checking out the building, we also found a tunnel going to the next building. On the second floor we took out a window. I put a man with a BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle) there. He could cover the center of the street."

CT 9 (minus Company C which had been reassigned to TF 69), although under very heavy artillery fire, played the leading role in establishing the initial bridgehead (two blocks deep) in Frankfurt. Holding the bridgehead gave the armored engineers the required time to repair the bridge at Frankfurt so that the tanks could cross into Frankfurt. The construction of the bridge was severely hampered because of the intense artillery fire. It was estimated that 4,000 rounds of artillery fire fell on the construction site during the morning of the 27th of March. In the afternoon B Company, along with other companies of the 9th AIB were relieved by troops of the 5th Infantry Division.

Legaret describes the scene at Frankfurt: "Although the bridge across the Main was intact, the Germans had concentrated firepower zeroed in on it. While coming under heavy enemy rifle

machine gunned our troops, plus the German Infantry on the tanks shot at us as they proceeded along.

Our radio signals were confused in thinking these German tanks were waiting for us at the intersection ahead. Our halftrack vehicles were chewed up in the backs, plus an artillery spotter riding with our column got his leg pinched off by one of the Tiger tanks swinging their big guns against the turret of the American tank he was riding on. I hollered at our halftrack driver (Carl Blevens) to pull over and stop, which he did. The entire crew jumped out on the right hand side (same side Carl had pulled the Halftrack). I saw this huge black hulk of the first Tiger Royal tank approaching, and pulled the pin on the grenade I was carrying, let the handle fly --- for a short fuse --- then gave it a big heave high and above the big black hulk (Tiger Royal tank). That tank went about fifteen or twenty feet more and stopped. The grenade air burst cut something in the engine through the grating and killed off a bunch of Germans riding on top of the tank.

The second Tiger Royal tank tried to push it, but the first tank wouldn't budge, so the second tank drove around it, and that delay was about the time our radio phone control got it straight at the front of our column letting our tanks know that the German Tigers were chewing up our column. Our tanks quickly got into position behind some building as cover and at a intersection of this narrow road, waited for the second Tiger tank in which they fired High Explosive shells into the engine compartment and knocked it out. The third Tiger Royal came by the intersection with its guns blazing and firing with everything they had, and it got away."

For the above action Legerat was later decorated by Gen. Grow with the Silver Star at a ceremony at Camp McCalley, just outside of Jena, Germany.

Enroute north toward Kassel, and going through a small town, a castle with a tower on it became a significant landmark to two members of Company B.

First, let us get "Legs" Legarat's version of the castle episode: "Early in the evening we left to take a one tower castle. Platoon Sgt. Swan was our 2nd Platoon leader. Sgt Swan told us "Get across that river dam". Only we soldiers could see against the night sky that German soldiers were patrolling the tower overlooking the river. We said: "You go first, Swan!" Needless to say we by-passed the castle and went farther down river and crossed on a blown out bridge."

A second time the same castle came into the scene when Joe Bogdan was told by Capt Jones, the Company Commander of Company B to "take these men into that castle up there and get some sleep" Although Bogdon had been told that the 1st Platoon was already in the castle, Bogdon took some precautions. But here is Joe's own account:

"I took two men with me to scout it out, having the others to cover us from a railroad track running below and by the castle. We went across a field, came up to the moat that circled the castle. It was dark and when we got to the water's edge two heavy German machine guns opened up on us. It was a wall of bullets coming at us. I yelled "get down!!" I don't know how the bullets missed us. We crawled back to the railroad trestle. Only two of us made it. We later learned that the 1st Platoon by-passed the castle and were in a town a mile down the road."

Company B, a part of Combat Command A, was on the west flank of the Division as it proceeded toward Kassel. Before any

major effort was made to take the city, orders were changed and the 80th Infantry Division, also under the command of XX Corps, was ordered to capture Kassel, while the 6th Armored was directed eastward to cross the Fulda River and move eastward toward Muhhausen which became the next objective.

It was on 1 April that Company B crossed the Fulda river at Malsfeld, as the 6th Armored Division continued its advance east with CCA (of which Company B was a part) on the left and CCB on the right. On the 2nd of April, the division was subjected to the greatest enemy air attack in the history of the Division. All units of the Division were targets of the bombing and strafing attacks. The 777th Anti-Aircraft Artillery attached to the Division fought off the low flying German planes, but there were many which were flying very high, out of range of the 777th weapons.

In its retreat, the Germans had blown bridges across the Fulda, Werra, and Wehre Rivers. Company B was deployed as a scouting party to search for possible crossing sites on each of these rivers. The inability to locate an adequate number of crossings was a major factor in slowing down the eastward movement of the Division. The German opposition had deteriorated so that only sporadic and disorganized fire was encountered.

The entire division finally was able to cross the Werra River at Gros Burschla over a partially blown bridge which was hastily and adequately repaired to permit the crossing. As the division organized itself to make a coordinated attack on Mulhausen, it was obvious that the Germans had organized themselves to offer more opposition than had been recently observed. CT 9 advanced on Muhlhausen from the west, while other elements of the Division had surrounded the city, cutting off all road exits.

Joe Bogden's eyewitness account of his platoon's activity at Mulhausen: "The Combat Command moved up to Mulhausen. As our column was coming down the road, it encountered a lot of firing. Capt. Jones called me up to his position, where you could see our tanks firing at some burning houses up at the end of the field. He said: "take the 2nd squad up to those houses, we have seen some movement up there." We started down the embankment of the road and up the field. Tanks opened fire over our heads, knocking off our helmets. The men were holding their heads. We did not know what happened. The grass was up to our chins. It didn't look right. I yelled: "keep firing in front of you." We moved up to the center of the field. To my right was a small clump of trees. As I passed them I saw a head coming up to see what was going on,. I fired at him, hitting him. He came up screaming. To his left about twenty Germans came out of a trench with their hands over their heads. After sending the prisoners back to the column, we moved up the field to the burning houses. I saw someone run into one of the houses. We ran to the house and found a closed door. I opened it with a grenade in my hand and I yelled in German: Come out or I'll throw this grenade." A woman carrying a baby followed by another woman and twelve little children came out. We sent them to another house across the street as this house was collapsing."

Holding a front of about 40 miles, the 6th Armored Division was in a defensive position for several days following the fall of Mulhausen. The division was ordered to cease advancing until the 76th Infantry division could move up and form a solid front. As a result of the operation in and around Mulhausen, CCA and CCB had been reversed, so that now CCA, with Company B as a part, was on the south flank of the march eastward.

This switch permitted CT 9 to be on the road nearest the Buchenwald Concentration Camp, where Hitler had held thousands

of political prisoners, many of whom died under the cruelest of conditions while imprisoned. A patrol commanded by Capt. Keffer of the 9th Armored Infantry Battalion is officially recognized as the element of the 6th Armd Div which discovered, or liberated, Buchenwald on 11 April 1945. (Editor's note: In 1992 there was quite a controversy when a documentary entitled *Liberators: Fighting on Two Fronts in WW II*, was aired by PBS. This alleged documentary credited the discovery to the 761st Tank Battalion. PBS received some very severe criticism from Veterans of the Sixth Armored Division, -- but that is another story.)

Some members of Company B, including "Legs" Legerat (see Legerat's story in Appendices) report that the column in which they found themselves that day passed on the north side of Buchenwald.

At this stage the division continued its movement eastward, encountering only moderate resistance. Small arms fire was met in towns and villages. Several Prisoner of War camps were overrun and the prisoners evacuated through channels to hospitals for further evacuation either to England or to the United States. One camp at Bad Sulza contained approximately 300 British Officers. The staff of the 6th Armd Div made arrangements for them to be flown directly to England.

The disintegrating German Army either destroyed the bridges following their retreat or set trap fuses to be exploded upon arrival of the American forces. Very little organized defense was evidenced. Upon establishing a bridgehead on the east side of a river, the immediate objective was to proceed to the next stream and reconnoiter for a crossing in order to establish a bridgehead to the east of that river. The progress of the division was being controlled by higher headquarters to insure that the remainder of

the American forces could establish a solid front. Corps orders prohibited the division crossing the Mulde river.

With the exception of a few shots being exchanged by patrols operating in front of the "line", there was little "fighting" taking place. The principal mission of the Division became Military Government. The establishment of local governments, and the assurance that the civilian public services and utilities were in operation became the prime mission of the troops.

Almost daily, our troops expected to meet the Russian Army coming from the East. As a matter of fact, at one time it had been announced at SHEAF Headquarters that the Sixth Armored Division would meet the Russians. With that announcement, hundreds of members of the press suddenly appeared at Division Headquarters. Within hours after their arrival, the information was broadcast that the meeting between the Americans and Russians would take place further north on the Elbe River and that the 69th Infantry Division would make the contact. With that announcement, the Press members disappeared as rapidly as they had arrived.

Company B reached Mittweida, north of Chemnitz and was at that location when the war ended on May 9, 1945.

The Casualty List of Company B from 1 March 1945 through May 9 1945 is listed below:

| Name | Date of Evacuation | Date Return to Duty |
|------|-----------------------|------------------------|
|------|-----------------------|------------------------|

fire, my platoon ran across to the other side. As soon as we got to the other side of the bridge we sought cover behind and in a building which was burning. We shot it out with those Germans who were also in the buildings across the street. When the fire reached the first floor of our building, we had to leave out the back and climb over a seven foot wall and spread out to the first block corner. Only one platoon, now down to two or three squads, were left to hold the bridgehead until the 5th Infantry Division troops came.

In the same building in which we spent the night on the 8th floor, Germans occupied the basement and first floor. The Germans were firing bazookas at the Eastern Rathskellar where Sgt. McGarity and his squad were holed up. The Rathskellar offered very little protection because of the many glass windows. McGarity and his men piled tables and chairs trying to keep the bazooka shells from coming in. But they suffered badly as three Company B Soldiers were killed that night

Meanwhile, at the 8th story building, the German and American artillery and mortars were hitting the roof as well as the 8th and 7th floors. So we six Company B men went down to the sixth floor where we were afforded more protection. We guarded the back and front stairways, while the Germans occupied the entire first floor and basement for the night.

The troops of the 5th Infantry were supposed to relieve us around dark, but they didn't show up till the next morning about 0930. To six soldiers of Company B who had spent a sleepless night in that commercial building, the troops wearing the "Red Arrow" were a welcomed sight.

With the arrival of the 5th Infantry Division, the Germans started running. Most of them were caught by the fire of the troops of the 5th Division, or were captured."

Following the fall of Frankfurt, the Super Sixth moved northward toward Giessen and Kassel. With the 86th Reconnaissance Squadron leading the way, and two Combat Commands abreast, the division slashed through unorganized resistance, capturing many towns and villages, taking many prisoners.

On the 29th of March, the division captured over 8,000 prisoners, the largest number in any one day. Armored columns used both lanes of the Autobahn while moving north. The prisoners were marching south under their own officers using the Autobahn median. Gen. Grow commented: "I sense today the complete collapse of organized resistance. On our front, the war is over from the German point of view."

But there was more fighting to follow, even though it might have not been "organized resistance". Company B was moving up the road toward Kassel when Al ("Legs") Legerat's platoon encountered three 60 ton "Royal Tiger" tanks (Note: George Hofmann's *Super Sixth* called them "three Tiger II tanks", and classified them as 70 tonners) which broke into his column near Holzhausen. But, let's have "Legs" tell us what happened.

"Our column started in the evening late, and we were in the pitch blackness as we went through several small towns. Suddenly three German 60 ton Tiger Royal tanks, with infantry soldiers on them, came down out of the wooded area and entered our column on this narrow road. They didn't fire their 88 mounted guns on the tanks, but they smashed their way and pushed our vehicles and

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Pvt. James J. Dandy | 1 Mar 1945 | 24 Apr 1945 |
| T/5 Willard B. Knight | 1 Mar 1945 | |
| Pvt. Robert W. Struble | 3 Mar 1945 | |
| T/4 John Poletunow | 3 Mar 1945 | |
| T/4 Lauren G. Vande Zande | 3 Mar 1945 | |
| Pvt. Raymond F. Gannon | 3 Mar 1945 | |
| S/Sgt Clarence R. Blackwood | 20 Mar 1945 | 6 May 1945 |
| T/5 Homer T. Bevel | 20 Mar 1945 | |
| Pfc Leon F. Benson | 20 Mar 1945 | 6 May 1945 |
| Pfc Anthony J. Muscato | 20 Mar 1945 | 6 May 1945 |
| Pfc Joseph A. Poltel | 20 Mar 1945 | |
| Pfc Edwaard J. Powers | 20 Mar 1945 | 8 Apr 1945 |
| Pfc Clarence M Redmond | 20 Mar 1945 | 6 May 1945 |
| Pvt. William D. Kramer | 20 Mar 1945 | |
| Pvt. Alex J. Sultan | 20 Mar 1945 | 6 May 1945 |
| Pvt Homer S. West | 20 Mar 1945 | 6 May 1945 |
| Pvt Russell N. Hetrick | 20 Mar 1945 | 6 May 1945 |
| 2nd Lt Thomas R. Bearden | 27 Mar 1945 | 29 May 1945 |
| Pvt Raymond W. Burgess | 27 Mar 1945 | 23 May 1945 |
| Pvt. Stephen S. Slawski | 27 Mar 1945 | |
| Pfc Brendon T. Durkin | 27 Mar 1945 | 28 Mar 1945 |
| Pfc Lyle V. Clark | 28 Mar 1945 | 31 May 1945 |
| Cpl Frank L. Fusco | 27 Mar 1945 | 31 May 1945 |
| Pvt Lesley Miller | 27 Mar 1945 | |
| S/Sgt Frederick F. McGarry | 27 Mar 1945 | |
| Pvt Burton A. Darragh, Jr | 27 Mar 1945 | |
| S/Sgt Joseph Aiosa | 1 Apr 1945 | 31 May 1945 |
| S/Sgt Henry H. Christian | 1 Apr 1945 | 10 June 1945 |
| Sgt. Amaerico Venturini | 1 Apr 1945 | 18 Apr 1945 |
| Pfc Charles P. Duval | 1 Apr 1945 | 15 May 1945 |
| Pfc Charles E. Dickey | 1 Apr 1945 | 10 May 1945 |
| Pvt Edward J. Darnell | 1 Apr 1945 | 19 May 1945 |
| Pvt Edward Garszczyski | 1 Apr 1945 | 24 Apr 1945 |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Pvt James A. Holibaugh | 1 Apr 1945 | |
| Pfc Henry W. H. Lutes | 1 Apr 1945 | 5 June 1945 |
| Pfc Frank L. Panichella | 1 Apr 1945 | 5 June 1945 |
| Pvt Elmer L Hill | 1 Apr 1945 | 5 Apr 1945 |
| T/5 George R. Carter | 27 Mar 1945 | 15 May 1945 |
| Sgt/ Donald W. Gallagher | 6 Apr 1945 | 18 Apr 1945 |
| Pvt. William H. Freise | 16 Apr 1945 | |
| T/5 Clarence McCurry, Jr | 16 Apr 1945 | |
| 1st Lt Francis W. Mead | 24 Apr 1945 | |
| Sgt Robert W. Harper | 24 Apr 1945 | 2 July 1945 |
| Pvt Nicholas J. Mortinkwich | 6 May 1945 | |

Replacements assigned to Company B during the period
between 1 March --- 9 May 1945

| | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| | 1 March 1945 | |
| Pfc. John E. Mayberry | | Pfc. Isaac E. Story |
| | 9 April 1945 | |
| T/5 Robert E. Kennedy | | Pfc. Edward J. Powers |
| 1st Lt. Francis W. Meade | | 1st Lt. Joseph P. Hanchin |
| 2nd Lt. Orlando J. Rochi | | 1st Lt. Manuel M. Morton |
| | 10 April | |
| 1st Lt. Percy R. Blundell | | Pvt. Nicholas J. Martinkovich |
| | 11 April | |
| Sgt. William H. Mark | | |
| | 13 April | |
| Pvt. Joe P. Bryant | | Pvt. Albert E. Gibson, Jr. |
| Pvt. Charles E. Hicks | | Pvt. David F. James |
| Pvt. Duiffie Johnson, Jr | | Pvt Harry H. Johnson |
| Pvt. Charles W. Jolley | | Pvt. George L. McCroy |
| Pvt. William L. Moore | | Pvt. Lewis C. Murdock |

Pvt. William N. Myers
Pvt. Robert D. Perras
Pvt Clyde W. Ponce
Pvt. Chester T. Rives
Pvt. Robert E. Robeson
Pvt. Damon J. Ross

Pvt. Clarence A Parton
Pvt. Rhea A. Phillips
Pvt. Jack W. Rigsby
Pvt. Charles R. Roberts
Pvt. Carl E. Rogers
Pvt. Howard B. Sanders

19 April

2nd Lt. George J. Gavallas

2nd Lt. Robert J. Kenniston

21 April

Sgt. Willie J. Irick
Sgt. Donald W. Gallagher
Pvt. Roy E. Owens

Pvt. Milton B. Swearingen
Sgt. Amaerico Venturini

APPENDIX

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GENERAL INFORMATION

No Infantry unit can endure combat for any length of time without sustaining many casualties. Company "B" had its share. From July 1944 until May 1945, ten months of combat, the company suffered four hundred thirty two (432) casualties of whom eighty six (86) were killed in action, while the remainder were Wounded in Action (WIA). That number of casualties represents 185% of the Table of Organization (TO&E) strength of the company, or 185% turnover of personnel within the Company.

| Number KIA or died of wounds by rank | Number KIA or died of wounds by month |
|--|---|
| Captain ----- 1 | August 1944 --- 3 |
| 1st Lieut --- 3 | Sept. 1944 ---- 2 |
| 2nd Lieut --- 2 | October 1944 --- 12 |
| Tech Sgt ---- 3 | Nov. 1944 ----- 26 |
| Staff Sgt ---- 4 | Dec. 1944 ----- 1 |
| Sergeant ---- 4 | January 1945 --- 22 |
| Corporal --- 5 | February 1945 --- 13 |
| PFC ----- 34 | March 1945 ---- 4 |
| Private ---- 30 | April 1945 ----- 3 |

In order to maintain a unit at its fighting peak, with the occurrence of casualties, it becomes necessary that another man be assigned to take the place of each victim. The Replacement does not always arrive on the scene immediately after a casualty occurs. Sometimes it became necessary for the unit (squad, platoon, or

Company) to function when its manpower was far below the normal Table of Organization (TO&E) strength. There were many times when Company B was forced to continue its fighting the Germans when the Company was understrength. It was not unusual for a platoon leader to find that his platoon was only at half strength, or even below. Replacements were assigned to the Division by higher Headquarters as they arrived in the Theater of Operations. Soldiers referred to the Replacement System as the Repple Depple. The system has come under severe criticism since the war, but as inefficient as it might have been, it did get the Replacement to the fighting unit -- although many times not as quickly as the unit commander would have liked.

The Replacement Soldier assigned to an Infantry unit in combat is a "Very Special Person" (VSP), and in my opinion, should receive some special recognition. (See Section "**CLOSE COMBAT**" in Appendix). Described below is the experience of Clarence ("Duke") McCurry. Duke was twenty years old, married and the father of a son less than a year old. He had trained in the states as a radioman, and had little training for duty with an Infantry platoon. This places McCurry in the category known throughout the army as a **RE-TREAD**, a soldier who is trained in one job (usually a special classification, i. e. ordnance mechanic, radio operator, etc) but is sent as a replacement to a combat infantry outfit.

McCurry's story: "I joined Company "B" on January 7th or 8th on the outskirts of Bastogne. Seven days earlier I had spent New Years eve in New York City. As a casualty replacement, following the "Battle of the Bulge", I was one of approximately 16,000 troops that boarded the Queen Elizabeth for a fast five days to Glasgow, Scotland. When daylight arrived, and we saw the beautiful green hills of Glasgow, it all seemed like a fairy tale. We

boarded trains and rode all day, with a short break in London, for box lunches on the train and on to South Hampton. A night ride on a French cattle boat across the channel, a march through the cobblestone streets of LaHarve, France at daylight, (many piles of rubble were roped off with signs saying "live bombs:) then loaded on to 40 x 8 rail cars for an all day ride to the front. We had one short stop for "relief" (ground was covered with snow) before we "arrived", but we didn't know where. We were lined up in small groups and assigned to our outfits. We (my group) were given 6th Armored Division patches, loaded into half-tracks and joined our squad of Company B, 9th A. I. B. There was a sergeant and six men, period! It was dark, two feet of snow, many houses in the area were on fire and artillery shells were flying over. I only mention the above to show the impersonal part of my first day with Company "B". As a casualty replacement, you never really get to know any one. My mind has been almost totally blank as far as names of men and places are concerned." (See McCurry's story of his military experience in Appendix)

Being a Replacement to an Infantry Unit engaged in combat surely has to produce the most awkward, confused, insecure, lonely, humbling, and scariest feeling; while at the same time, promoting the least gratifying, least appreciated and the least understood feeling that a human being can experience. An Infantry Replacement knows that the odds of an Infantryman being killed in action are very strong; and that in all probability, he will just become another statistic (KIA). Without having gone through it, I have always considered that merely being a Replacement Soldier reporting for duty with a infantry unit committed in combat was one of the toughest assignments in the military; and therefore, one of the toughest jobs in the world.

Sometimes the replacement soldier was soon replaced by another. Such was the case of Private George R. Connor who joined Company B on 19 November 1944. On the 4th January 1945, he was initially picked up on the Morning Report as MIA (Missing in Action), then later when he was properly identified by the Graves Registration people, his status was changed to KIA (Killed in Action).

For many years, Connor's family did not know his true status. In May 1999, Connor's son, Roger, joined the *Super 6th e-mail list*, and by means of this computer procedure, was able to establish contact with some former Super Sixers. Roger knew his father was in the Sixth Armored Division, and thought he was in the 9th Armored Infantry Battalion, but was not sure of the Company to which his father was assigned. This information was picked up from the *e-mail list* by a former 9th AIB member who, in an effort to determine which Company of the 9th his father belonged, inquired from Ed Clark, the former Company Clerk of Company B, if one George Connor was ever assigned to Company B. Clark, after checking through the old Morning Reports of Company B, answered in the affirmative, so information was relayed to Roger who now had proof of his father's war assignment and record.

Based on the above information, Roger joins many other second generation Super Sixers at the reunions of Company B, as well as that of the Sixth Armored Division Association. In 1999 he was welcomed at these respective reunions in July at Newport News, Va., and in August at Columbus Ohio.

Two enlisted members of Company B are known to have been commissioned as Officers during the combat in Europe. There might have been others, but no known evidence exists

through which that fact can be proven. Wilmer Jones, who was the Supply Sergeant of the original cadre of Company E of the 50th Infantry Regiment, and later was made a Platoon Sergeant, was commissioned on September 20, 1944, and promoted to First Lieutenant on 22 January 1945. Thomas R. Bearden was the other Non Commissioned Officer who was given a battlefield Commission as a Second Lieutenant.

The Company was commanded in combat by Capt. John W. Melbourne until he was killed in action at Lorient. He was followed by Lt. Donald Shallcross who served until he was wounded in November 1944. Following Shallcross' evacuation, there were several company commanders, some of whom served for a relative short time, First Lt. Charles W. Alexander served for five or six days, and he was replaced by Capt John L. Rice, who contracted Yellow Jaundice in early January 1945.. First Lt. Robert K. Cunningham replaced Rice on January 21, and was commander until February 7th. Then First Lt. William M. Klapp commanded until he was wounded on February 20th. First Lt. Wilmer T. Jones, took command on 20 February and was the Company Commander until the Company was deactivated in September 1945. Although not reflected in the Morning Reports, it is known that Capt Jeff Coats (C.O. of Service Company of the 9th AIB) was ordered by the Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Frank Britton, to take temporary command of the Company for several hours during the chaotic fighting around Wardin 2-5 January 1945.

THE ANNUAL REUNIONS OF COMPANY "B"

The History of Company B of the 9th Armored Infantry Battalion did not end with the cessation of hostilities in Europe in May 1945. Neither did the History of Company B end when the 6th Armored Division was deactivated in September 1945 at Camp. Shanks, N. Y.

Since 1946, only one year following the deactivation of the division, members of Company B have conducted a reunion at some designated location, in order to remember those friends who did not survive the war; and to continue those strong bonds of friendship made during combat. Enroute overseas, while at Camp Shanks, N. Y., Capt Melborne, in conversation with Jokie Bilcze and Ed Clark volunteered to host the first reunion of the Company when "we return to the USA". Since Melborne was killed in Action, Clark and Bilcze organized and held the first reunion in Alliance, Ohio in 1946, the year following the Company's return to the USA. (Editor's Note: Company B survivors held its first Reunion before the 6th Armored Division Association was started. It is believed that no other unit in the Super Sixth held a reunion prior to that of Company B. George Hofmann's book *The Super Sixth* ((page 456-459)) describes how the existence and experience of Company B's Annual Reunion influenced the beginning of the Sixth Armored Division Association.)

There is no formal organization similar to an association, or other legally formed body, with a designated name, or officially chartered group. The reunions have been planned, organized, and announced each year by some one individual former member of the Company. Each member who attends pays his own expense. The collective or community expenses, such as costs of operating a

"C. P." (Command Post) or Hospitality Room, or postal expenses, are divided equally between all who attend.

The fact that this loosely organized group of dedicated former members of the Company have reunited each year since 1946 is evidence of the strong bond of friendship which exists between the old soldiers. Lynn Johnson, retired from the Fire Department in Seattle Washington, and who now lives in Seattle, attended the reunions of Company "B" in Williamsburg Va., Spartanburg S. C., Akron Ohio, and Newport News Va.; although he has seldom attended the annual meetings of the Seattle Fire Department retirees held in his home town.. "Legs" Legerat who lives in California has also attended several of the reunions on the east coast. Another example of the strong ties that binds these former members of Company "B" is the 600 mile trip through snow and ice-covered roads made by Glenn Blenman in the middle of the winter from Ohio to Nashville to visit his friend, Max Bohanan, who was seriously ill.

In the late fifties, the Annual Reunion of Company "B" was a contributing factor to the death of one of its veterans. Tom Kelly, a High School teacher, was enroute to Louisville to attend the reunion, when he was in an automobile accident and was killed.

There are many Second (and some Third) Generation, "members" of Company "B" who have, because of their interest, and attendance at these reunions, become "members" of Company B. Already mentioned in preceding paragraphs are Wendell Williamson and Roger Connor. Others are: Ken and Randy Moncrief, Paul Kuzma, Jr, Amy Grogan Chandler, Vickie Wheeler Bramblett, Dennis and Richard Parrish, Waltine Brooks Simmers, Becky Brooks Boyd, E. R and Debbie Brooks, Kathy Blenman Benjamin; and Third "Generationers": Doug and Eric

Blenman, sons of Douglas Blenman. Undoubtedly, there are others whose names were not available.

There is no medium which cements the relationships between men so much as being shoulder to shoulder in combat. For as long as two or more of those brave young men of the Forties who fought in World War II as members of Company B can get together annually, the History of Company B will continue.

Company "B" annual reunions have been held in the following cities:

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1946 Alliance, Ohio | 1947 Louisville, Ky. |
| 1948 Erie, Pa | 1949 Louisville, Ky |
| 1950 Louisville, Ky | 1951 Alliance, Ohio |
| 1952 Greenville, S.C. | 1953 Alexandria, Va |
| 1954 Alliance, Ohio | 1955 Louisville, Ky. |
| 1956 Parkersburg, W. Va. | 1957 New York, N. Y. |
| 1958 Roanoke, Va | 1959 Louisville, Ky. |
| 1960 Greenville, S. C. | 1961 Washington, D. C. |
| 1962 Roanoke, Va | 1963 Louisville, Ky. |
| 1964 New York, N. Y. | 1965 Roanoke, Va. |
| 1966 Alliance, Ohio | 1967 Alexandria, Va. |
| 1968 Louisville, Ky. | 1969 Roanoke, Va |
| 1970 Louisville, Ky. (25th) | 1971 Greenville, S. C. |
| 1972 Youngstown, Ohio | 1973 Roanoke, Va |
| 1974 Greenville, S. C. | 1975 Louisville, Ky. |
| 1976 Youngstown, Ohio | 1977 Columbus, Ohio |
| 1978 Asheville, N. C. | 1979 Nashville, Tenn |
| 1980 Asheville, N. C. | 1981 Youngstown, Ohio |
| 1982 Louisville, Ky. | 1983 Williamsburg, Va. |

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1984 Parkersburg, W. Va. | 1985 Louisville, Ky. |
| 1986 Nashville, Tenn. | 1987 Youngstown, Ohio |
| 1988 Asheville, N. C. | 1989 Williamsburg, Va. |
| 1990 Parkersburg, W. Va. | 1991 Jeffersonville, Ind |
| 1992 Spartanburg, S. C. | 1993 Canton, Ohio |
| 1994 Williamsburg Va | 1995 Parkersburg, W. Va. (50th) |
| 1996 Spartanburg, S. C. | 1997 Nashville, Tenn. |
| 1998 Beaver Falls, Pa. | 1999 Newport News, Va. |
| 2.000 Canton, Ohio (Planned) | 2001 Charlotte, N. C. (Planned) |

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SURVIVORS

Surviving Members, as of September 1999, of Company B, 9th Armored Infantry Battalion. (Those who were members of Company E, 50th Armored Infantry Regiment are indicated with an **E**):

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Abramowitz, David E | Grogan, Ralph |
| Bitto, John | Hartman, L |
| Lubobanski, Harry | Horton, Orba V. |
| Blenman, Glenn | Houser, Foster E (Cadre) |
| Blundell, P. Roland | Hronek, Carl J. E |
| Bogdan, Joseph | Irick, Willie |
| Bohannan, Max | Johnson, Duffy, Jr |
| Bolton, John | Johnson, Francis |
| Brooks, Eugene | Johnson, Lynn A. |
| Carrell, Wilburn L. | Jones, Wilmer T. E (Cadre) |
| Cash, Robert | Kahle, Neil R. E |
| Clabaugh, Donald | Kornegay, Frank P. |
| Clark, Charles | Kuzma, Paul |
| Clark, Edwin, F. E (Cadre) | Legerat, Al G. |
| Clark, Lyle | Lux, Virgil E. |
| Copass, Hascal | Mayberry, John E. |
| Cypak, Paul P. | McCurry, Clarence (Duke) |
| Debrick, Arnold | Moncrief, James S. E (Cadre) |
| DeSantis, John | Moncrief, Milton |
| Dyer, Edward E | Morton, Manuel |
| Eckenrod, Walter G. E | Murphy, William J |
| Erdman, Edward A. E | Oren, Russell F. |
| Fischer, Alfred H. | Peer, Robert S. |
| Ford, Henry E. | Piper, Russell E |
| Gajan, Frank P. | |

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Goble, Henry | Raimor, Eugene |
| Gravelly, Lance B. E | Robinson, Robert E |
| Sabo, Edward E. | West, James |
| Sabo, Joseph | Wheeler, Robert V. |
| Sipkovich, Louis E | Williamson, Dee R. |
| Taylor, Joseph D. E (Cadre) | Zappone, Nick |
| Tripp, Thurman E | Zizzi, Emanuel S. |
| Vodhanel, Michael E. | |

Other members of Company B who survived the war, but known to be deceased, with date of death, where known:

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Biggersstaff, Frank | Hughes, Robert 8/26/90 |
| Aiosa, Joseph | Katich, Michael |
| Arff, Henry, E. 5/2-73 | Lambert, Paul |
| Bearden, Thomas - 1998 | Larimore, Robert 5/14/90 |
| Bilcze, Jokie - 1972 | Craig, Robert - 1989 |
| Black, William E. 6/7/85 | Martin, Nicholas 3/1/93 |
| Cichocki, Theodore | Morgan, Woodrow 9/2/86 |
| Conrad, John D. 2/25/95 | Munas, Nick 6/3/81 |
| Davis, Charles 8/19/90 | O'Brien, Joseph 1/3/85 |
| Decatur, John E. 6/11/88 | Parrish, Byron M. - 1970 |
| Dickerman, Richard 1994 | Poteat, James |
| Entsminger, Lloyd 11/15/72 | Raizor, Lee R. 12/ /91 |
| Filek, Michael | Reed, Roger |
| Ferguson, Charles 8/ /91 | Sarsfield, James 2/15/91 |
| Garszczyński, Edward | Shallcross, Donald 8/6/90. |
| Giltner, Marvin - 1998 | Simmons, Harry 7/ /90 |
| Hanchen, Joe 11/13/75 | Smith, Ralph 12/11/91 |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Hobbs, James | Sudick, Michael 3/16/ |
| Cudnik, Walter 3/20/77 | Dasher, Dennis |
| Baker, Robert | Bankston, Arthur 1/29/84 |
| Bates, Charles | Blasche, Joseph 9/11/87 |
| Bordo, Jimmy | Brozovich, Frank |
| Campbell, Alton C. 7/24/89 | Catuldo, Tony 8/8/90 |
| Christinsen, Walter 11/1/76 | Drury, James |
| Dransfield, John 12/19/87 | Fitzpatrick, Albert |
| Gilbert, Frank D | Guill, Edgar I. |
| Hancock, William 1994 | Hendrihofsky, Matthew P. |
| Hissong, Forest | Hoelscher, Merlin |
| Hoholik, Francis | Horan, James |
| Huddleston, William | Kelley, Merritt |
| Kelley, Thomas | Kimmell, Harry 12/21/87 |
| Kluetsch, Leo | La Scalla, Guisto |
| Lolley Elbert L. | Madigan, Donald |
| Miller, William B 12/30/83 | Movsessian, Moses 3/11/48 |
| Neshein, Walter 12/24/90 | O'Hara, John P. |
| Poole, Ralph 12/19/75 | Stansha, Frank 4/5/86 |
| Sperock, John C. 1992 | Suda, Edward A 6/5/86 |
| Toth, Steve | Testa, Lewis |
| Wenz, Jacob | Workman, Alvin |
| Yankowski, Albert | Young, James |
| Murphy, William J. 5/30/98 | Rahmberg, Arthur 5/3/89 |

EXPERIENCE OF AN INFANTRYMAN IN WW II

STORY OF MILT MONCRIEF'S WARTIME DUTY WITH COMPANY "B"

As an eighteen year old, I was very vulnerable for the draft in 1943. As expected, I received my "Dear John" letter in April 1943. I was drafted on 14th of April and was sent to the Induction Center at Ft. Hayes, near Columbus, Ohio. After the normal processing procedure, along with many other future soldiers, I was sent to Camp Polk, Louisiana.

My Basic Training at Camp Polk was not unlike that of hundreds of thousands of other recruits, except my duty was performed in Louisiana where it was very hot and humid. I sustained a serious knee injury when I fell during a Field Problem while carrying a machine gun. Following my release from the hospital, I was placed on "Light Duty". The hospital stay, incidentally, caused me to miss going to Gunnery School. Soon thereafter, my Basic Training Course was completed, and I was given a furlough.

Returning to Camp Polk following my furlough, I was assigned to the 535th Armored Infantry Battalion. Being assigned to an Armored Infantry unit meant that I received more advanced training than those men who were assigned to "straight" Infantry Battalions. On the 23rd of December 1943 the 535th was sent to Camp Cooke, California, where its members were assigned to the 6th Armored Division. At the same time, the 536th was shipped from Camp Polk to the Pacific Theater of Operations.

It was reported that the 18-19 year old members of the 535th were assigned to the infantry units of the Sixth Armored Division in order to lower the average age of those units, since many of those already were in the 20-30 year old bracket. Actually, the division had been alerted for overseas shipment, and standard operating procedure (SOP) required those in that category to be brought up to Table of Organization (T/O) strength.

Along with other members of my unit from Camp Polk, we traveled by troop train over the Christmas holidays of 1943 to Camp Cook. Upon arrival I was assigned to the 9th Armored Infantry Battalion commanded by Lt. Col. Elmer Droste. I was further assigned to Company "B", commanded by Capt. John Melbourne. I was assigned to the 3rd. Platoon, where Sgt. Wilmer T. Jones was the NO in charge of the Platoon. Among those who were in the 535th assigned to Company B were: my friend from near my home in Ohio - Glenn Blenman, Robert Wheeler, Paul Kuzma, Virgule Lug, Mike Vodhanel, Mike Klatch, Frank Stash, Fred Brown, Joe Saab, and Louis Testa. We continued our training in California, taking 25 mile hikes with full pack, and other strenuous exercises designed to get us in the very best of physical shape. We were at Camp Cooke just long enough to get to know the "old" members of the Company.

Shipping out of Camp Cooke in early February, we "rode the rails" by Troop Train for about four days until we arrived at Camp Shanks, N. Y. After a few days at Shanks, my battalion was moved by rail to a port facility in New Jersey, hence by ferry to Staten Island, where I saw the Statue of Liberty, a sight I did not have the privilege of seeing on my return to the good old U. S. of A. On 10 February 1944 we boarded a Navy Transport, the U.S.S. Samuel Chase. Most of our battalion was on board this ship.

During the night of 11 February, the ship moved out to sea and joined a large convoy. Following the Destroyers, we were the first ship in the convoy. With the battleship U.S.S. Nevada on our right, other transports following, and with the various cargo vessels, aircraft carriers, etc., there were ships as far as the eye could see.

We were in the North Atlantic when we encountered a severe storm. The waves came in over the decks of the ship. The peak of the storm was on 2-16-44. Another highlight of the voyage was the sight of a huge whale, but I was never able to write home about either, because our mail was censored, and such information could possibly give away our location.

We docked at Glasgow, Scotland on 22nd of February, George Washington's birthday. Later, I was able write home and identify the date by using my Sister-in-law, Pauline Moncrief's birthday, relating that to my present surroundings; and thus passed the censors. It was considered a

major achievement if you could pass along some information to your folks and "beat" the censors; while at the same time, not give away any military secrets.

On 26 of February 1944 we left the ship to board a train for Sandywell Park, England in the vicinity of Cheltenham about 100 miles from London. All units of the Sixth Armored Division were billeted in the Cotswalds, a beautiful section of England. With other units of the Battalion, we were involved in gunnery training on ranges, maneuvers, and strenuous physical training until July 1944. We moved to Southampton, where we boarded an LST to cross the English Channel to Utah Beach in France.

Our first taste of combat took place around Granville on the Cotentin Peninsula, when our Battalion advanced along the coast during the last days of July. On 1 August Company B played a major role in capturing the town of Pontorson. We surprised the Germans as they were not set up to face a new force, being fully occupied fighting off troops of the 4th Armd Div. It was like a wild west show. A P-47 flew over and strafed ahead of our column. All of our halftracks were firing to both sides of the road keeping the Germans pinned down. I had a close-up view of an "88", as our small arms fire kept the Germans off the gun. We advanced to a hill and took up a defensive position. We heard later that the next company had to dismount and fight their way through the town.

During the period between 2 and 12 August our battalion marched toward and deployed around Brest. While some units of the Division suffered some losses during this period, our Company had it relatively easy. Our most serious combat was against the enemy which attacked the division at its rear. The Germans which we had by-passed in the "rat-race" to get to Brest were now attempting to get through our lines to get to France's eminent port city.

Around the middle of August, the 9th AIB was a part of the combat Command which moved to the Lorient area. We were there until about the middle of September. Company B was on continuous and heavy patrol duty, insuring that the Germans were contained in the area of the city. Although our casualties were relatively light, our Company Commander,

Capt. Melbourne, was killed during a patrol skirmish. Lt. Donald C. Shallcross became our Company Commander replacing Melbourne.

In the latter part of September, the 9th AIB, along with the remainder of the division, moved farther east where my Company B would be fighting and slogging in the mud for the next two months along the Seille and Han Rivers. During a war it is tough enough to survive the enemy who is firing his guns at you; but it is a miracle that our troops survived the elements of weather. Rain and more rain. The rivers were out of their banks. Sleeping - what little sleep one could get - in wet blankets and bedding rolls was impossible. Heavy patrol duty was the order of the day for our stay in the "Grimace Woods" as we called the Gremecey Forest.

Up until this time (early November 1944) we had not been involved in any heavy combat (eye-ball to eye-ball, building-to-building, fox hole-to fox hole, with heavy artillery bombardment dominating the scene), but with the arrival of November, we began a dead serious attack to drive the Germans eastward, or annihilate them. It was about this time that our gasoline supply was increased to permit unrestricted movement of our vehicles.

In spite of heavy artillery fire, my company as part of the Combat Command A advanced to the Neid River, where the Engineers (25th Armd. Eng Bn) were successful, in spite of heavy enemy fire of all types, in cutting the wires which the Germans had placed to detonate the bridge. where the 2nd platoon of Company B led by Sgt. Madison, under withering rifle fire, raced across the bridge at Hans-sur-Neid and with a platoon of tanks from the 68th Tk Bn secured a bridge head. Soon the remainder of the Combat Team and some troops of the 80th Inf Div were able to enlarge and strengthen the bridgehead.

It was in this action that Sgt Madison with several men of his platoon, including Henry Goble, sought a little warmth from the cold and near-freezing rain in a house which the retreating Germans had just abandoned. Soon after occupying the house, Sgt Madison and several members of his platoon were killed when the house was shelled by German artillery. Goble survived and now lives in Alexandria, Virginia.

Nearing the Saar River in mid December, we learned of the German breakthrough in the Ardennes area to the north. Little did we know that in a few short days Company B would be part of a huge force of the Third Army going there to drive the Germans back into Germany. When we were pulled back just before Christmas, we thought we were going in Reserve. The good hot meal, with all the fixings, we had for Christmas was but a slight reminder of home - and Christmas.

The Sixth Armored Division was moved up into the "Bulge" and on or about the 27th, we were again facing the Germans. During the period of the first three days of January my company faced the bitterest fighting we had yet encountered since entering the war in July. Aside from the combat, the weather was the worst we had seen - freezing cold and heavy snow. On Jan 3rd, we were making an attack on the Germans in the late afternoon in the vicinity of Wardin. In spite of heavy machine gun and anti-tank fire, we pressed the attack and captured Wardin. My platoon was stationed in some woods just outside the town and during the night we were subjected to heavy artillery and mortar fire. In the early morning after I had been awakened from a short nap, a mortar shell hit about three or four feet from me and shrapnel hit my left leg, shattering the shin bone.

Company medics were summoned and they patched me up. Sgt. Ball, who was next to me caught shrapnel in his buttocks. The medics called for a stretcher and more help. They picked me up and carried me to the back of the woods. The Germans were just across the road and were firing at us when we emerged from the edge of the woods. The Medics carried me back into the woods. Placing me in the front seat of the Company jeep, they were going to make a run for it; but another mortar barrage stopped us short. A Captain from "A" Company and Sgt. Ball got hit in this second barrage. When the barrage subsided somewhat, with Ball and the Captain in the back seat of the jeep, Parrish, the driver, made a dash for the main road. Because of the slippery, snow covered road, the jeep hit a ditch and got stuck preventing our escape.

There was a farmhouse across the road where some American troops were taking shelter. Parrish carried me to the house. While there, the medics gave me some more medical attention. In a few minutes afterward I asked them where the Captain and Sgt Ball were. They told me that they

had taken off in the jeep, leaving me and that they would get back for me later.

The Germans were advancing and soon would be entering the house. Some of the troops in the house were able to leave. The artillery and mortar fire was moving in so those of us remaining in the house sought shelter in the potato cellar. A couple of guys helped me down the stairs. These troops were not members of my company and I was not sure what outfit they were from. An Officer was among us and when the Germans came into the house, they threw a grenade. After one of our troops started to cough, and fearing the Germans would throw a grenade in the cellar, the Officer yelled out "We Surrender".

We were brought outside the house and lined up. Apparently because I was not moving fast enough to suit the Germans, one of them hit me in the jaw and knocked me down. They took us across the road. I had to be carried due to my left leg being immobilized. We went for some distance to what appeared to be a Command Post where we stopped. I don't know how long we were there, as I was falling into unconsciousness. When I came to, I recognized Jack Phillips from the 2nd Platoon of Company "B", and Lieutenant Frank P. Kornegay from the same Platoon of my Company. Fellow prisoners took turns carrying me until they found a farm wagon. Placing me in the wagon they pulled until we reached an Aid Station which had been established in a house by the side of the road. The wounded were left at this Aid Station, while the remainder of the prisoners were moved farther east.

Due to the severe swelling of my foot and leg, the German Medics cut off my boot. I do not remember how much time went by, but I was moved to yet another Aid Station. My mode of transportation was an ox cart, which managed to stay just out of range of our artillery fire. I remained at the second Station for a day or two until there was another means of transportation. It was a bus with a stove in it; far better and more comfortable than in the ox cart where I was exposed to the bitter cold. I was the only American on the bus with many wounded German soldiers. When we reached our destination, apparently a temporary Field Hospital, the German soldiers were taken off while I was left on the bus for a long while.

The fire in the stove had gone out and it became very cold. Finally, I was taken off the bus and placed in a bunk in the hospital.

At this temporary installation, they put me to sleep and did some sort of surgery on my injured leg. After the surgery, I was placed in another makeshift hospital for a day. Along with some other wounded, I was put in a boxcar (a typical 40 x 8) and moved by train to an unknown Hospital which was located in the mountains. I had no idea where I was. Being an American, I was the last man to be taken off the train.

The first day in this hospital I was in a Ward with Germans. My first food was a plate of potatoes which would have been sufficient for three meals. The next day they took me to a room where there were three beds, all of which were occupied by Americans. In addition to me, there was Ted Schrieber from the 7th Armored Division, and another soldier, whose name I can't remember. Since infection was setting in on my right thigh, they decided to perform surgery to remove the shrapnel in that area. We were there 2 or 3 days. The German lady who took care of us was very compassionate and brought us books and soap from her home.

Just before leaving that hospital, we were joined by another American, a flyer of the US Air Corps. We were put aboard an Italian Hospital train which made stops at places along the route to drop off wounded German soldiers. We arrived at an unknown destination one evening and remained over night, with the Americans still aboard the train. They let the fire go out on the train and we four Americans almost froze. In the morning the Americans were unloaded off the train and placed on the back of a truck which hauled us to a two-story building which was close to a railroad yard. This was a Prisoner of War hospital, the Lazaret 4-G, which was, as determined later, on the southeast outskirts of Leipzig, Germany. The most recent member of our little group, the Airman, commented that this railroad yard would be a target at one time or another.

Soon after arrival, they gave me a bath, issued me a pair of pajamas and then took me to the ward on the second floor. Since it was past meal time and the boiled potatoes, we got nothing to eat. The Doctor at this Leipzig hospital was a Polish Prisoner of War. He performed more surgery on my left leg, and put it into a leg cast from above the knee down to and

encompassing the whole foot. I was concerned as to how they were going to change the dressings, one on each side of the shin bone, and another on the left underside. The next time I went for a dressing change they cut holes into the cast where the injuries were. The dressings consisted of a single layer of gauze and then it was wrapped with tissue paper.

The prediction of the Airman was accurate. The English Air Force bombed the railroad yard next to the hospital, using delayed action fuses. The raid was over by midnight but bombs were going off until daylight. The walls of the hospital were cracked and the windows blown out. The dressing room sink was broken in half but, Thank God, there was no direct hit on the hospital. The next day the pilot of the lead plane, which was shot down, was brought into the hospital and he couldn't believe that the hospital had escaped without being hit.

Eventually Leipzig was declared a free city towards the end of the war. The American 69th Infantry Division evacuated us. By this time my cast was off and I was using crutches which were much too short for me. I was the first to be helped on the back of a "Deuce and a Half" truck to start our trip west to a American Field Hospital. During the processing, a soldier told me he had seen some 6th Armored Division (my outfit) soldiers that day. We made several stops before reaching our destination, an airfield. During one of these stops, as I was trying to get in the truck, an officer reprimanded the soldier in charge, saying that I should be in an ambulance; but by then we were ready to move out so he put me in the cab with the driver. After spending one night at the airport, we were loaded on a plane headed for England. I was taken to a hospital where I stayed for a couple of weeks to regain some strength. At that point I was down to #110, about 60 pounds less than my normal weight.

My next move was to Scotland, and from there to Mitchell Field, Long Island, New York. I was on a stretcher for the whole trip. They loaded the stretchers in ambulances to take us to the hospital. Being so happy to be in the U. S., I told the lady driving the ambulance: "Let me out, I'll walk". Soon after arrival at the hospital, all the wounded Prisoners of War were given their choice of which Veterans Hospital they would go for treatment. I chose Cleveland, Ohio as it was only 60 miles from my

hometown of Canton. I was there for nine months during which time I had two additional surgeries on my leg.

It was now November 1945. Due to a surgery schedule on Monday, I could not go home for the weekend. Instead, with a buddy I went to a football game where I met my future wife, Sally. I was discharged in February 1946. Sally and I were married on 11 May 1946. We have two sons, Kenneth and Randall and three grandchildren: Jennifer, Jacqueline, and Carolyn.

Milton Moncrief,
2315 Brook Haven Lane,
Hinkley, Ohio 44233
Co. B, 9th AIB

COMPANY B 9th ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION

6th ARMORED DIVISION

DUKE McCURRY'S STORY

January 1945 - June 1945

I joined Company B of the 9th Armored Infantry Battalion, 6th Armored Division on January 7th or 8th on the outskirts of Bastogne. Seven days earlier I had spent New Years eve in New York City. As a Casualty replacement, following the "Battle of the Bulge", I was one of approximately 16,000 troops that boarded the Queen Elizabeth for a fast five days to Glasgow. It all seemed like a fairy tale. We boarded trains and rode all day, with a short stop in London, for box lunches on the train and on to Southampton. A night ride on a French cattle boat across the channel, a march through the cobblestone streets of LaHarve, France at daylight, (many piles of rubble were roped off with signs saying "live bombs") and then loaded on to 40 & 8 rail cars for an all day ride to the front. We had one short stop for "relief" (ground was snow covered) before we "arrived" but we didn't know where. We were lined up in small groups and assigned to our outfits. We were given 6th Armored Division patches, loaded into half-tracks and joined our squad of Company B 9th A. I. B. There was a sergeant and six men, period! It was dark, two feet of snow, many houses in the area were on fire and artillery shells were flying over. I only mention the above to show the impersonal part of my first day with Company B. As a casualty replacement you never really get to know any one. My mind has been almost totally blank as far as names of men and places are concerned.

I was twenty years old, married and the father of a son (October 10,1944) and found myself cold, confused, and scared. I had trained in the States as a radioman (Coyne Radio School in Chicago) and was assigned to an anti-aircraft unit. Very few casualties replacements were prepared for the front lines. My early duties included manning a machine gun in a snow banks, picking up bodies (both German and ours) for a graves detail group and learning to fire a bazooka. Life became a blur as our unit was always on the move. It was a constant battle to stay dry, warm and safe. I was

wounded on February 27th and returned to Company B on March 29th. It felt good to be free and have new underclothes!

Although the division was moving fast there was still plenty of shooting and being shot at. Some memories stand out, like, having a plane fly down over our column of half-tracks and tanks and all of us jumping out and running for cover, afraid of strafing. The plane then dropped what looked like two bombs but they turned out to be empty gas tanks, being jettisoned by one of our own planes.

Another less serious memory recalls my catching a 7 or 8 pound rooster and melting snow to boil water to get the feathers off. I cut the chicken and boiled that rooster for a long time. I fell asleep while waiting for a real hot meal, only to wake up and the rest of the guys had eaten all of it!

I remember April 12th, 1945 very well as we heard over the half-track radio that President Roosevelt had died. I believe most GIs felt a great personal loss. Three days later I was taken prisoner of a German S. S. Officer, whose sole purpose that day was to bring in a Prisoner for interrogation. In my quest to find some fresh eggs, I obliged him by walking into a 45 Luger pistol shoved in my face as I went around a corner of a barn.

Except for the first couple of days with the S. S. Officer, I was not treated too bad. I walked a lot, going from one small village to the next with a lone volkes-man soldier on a bicycle as my guard. On two occasions I saw a whole hillside of people in striped clothing sitting like a herd of sheep. I didn't realize at the time they were concentration camp people that the Germans were moving away from the Russians.

On May 7th, another prisoner of war (Fish or Fisher from Pennsylvania) and I escaped our prison camp (an old paper mill factory) by squeezing through a small window in the outhouse that was built over a small stream. We foraged for food from the farms and were able to hear a B.B.C. broadcast at a farm house that said "a surrender" would be signed the next day in Reims, France. The German farmer helped us to find our way back to the prison camp and the P.O.W.'s overthrew the guards that night. We walked 20 kilometers to Chemnitz and freedom on May 8th, my 21st birthday. Most of the guards went with us, to escape the Russians. I

had lost about 30 pounds in 23 days and was covered by open sores on my face and arms, due to the food we had or lack of food. We ate a lot of sugar beet hulls boiled in water. A lot of starch, but not much else. My 21st birthday was and is my best one. I had a choice of returning to Company B or go home. I chose to go home.

My real story of Company B of the 9th Armored Infantry Battalion of the 6th Armored Division is the one I like to remember. After many years of no contact with the past, my wife Lee and I went to our first 6th Armored Division reunion in Charlotte, N. C. in 1993. There I met Henry Goble of Company B, 9th A. I. B. in The 9th's hospitality room. He told us that Company B had held their own reunion every year since World War II had ended. I later noticed the Company B reunion notice in a P.O.W. Calendar of events in 1994, along with the telephone number for Ed Clark who has been the Company Clerk of Company B since it was organized in the States. I called him in Detroit and told him who I was and asked for the 1994 reunion information to be mailed to me. He called me back later that evening and electrified me by telling me more about myself than I ever expected to know. As Company Clerk for Company B throughout the war, he had made duplicate copies of every days action from the day they landed in France until the day the Company and Division returned to the State. We attended our first Company B reunion in Williamsburg, Virginia in 1994. I now have copies of each day that my name appears on the daily log that shows where Company B was each day, the weather conditions, the morale of the men, and all those wounded or killed, or sick, or change in rank, etc. He said the reason I had not heard about Company B reunions was that his records still show me as Missing in Action when they disbanded in 1945.

Since attending the annual reunions of both Company B and the 6th Armored Division, I have learned to appreciate the full effect of their efforts in World War II. In 1995 at the Parkersburg, West Virginia Company B meeting, I met Donald Claybaugh (Columbus Nebraska) and Al Legeret (Cherry Valley California) who were there when I was taken prisoner on April 15th 1945. When I was introduced to them in 1995 and said I was Duke McCurry, they said the only "Duke" they knew was that guy who was taken prisoner late in the war. Needless to say, we have become good friends and never get tired of piecing those days back together.

Many of the stories told at the reunions about the Siegfried Line, of German tanks found in our long column during the night, of half-tracks having a direct hit with many casualties, are very vivid and thanks to Ed Clark, our Company Clerk, who has the daily records of each day to help pinpoint the men that were involved, we can relive those days of World War II.

I feel very lucky to have been a part of Company B - 9th Armored Infantry Battalion and the 6th Armored Division and have lived to tell about it. I am only sorry that I was not a part of the 6th from the beginning.

Corporal Clarence (NMI) McCurry 37663948
Nickname: "Duke"
Promoted as P.O.W. one grade to Sergeant,
upon discharge.

MY TOUR OF DUTY
with
COMPANY 'B' of the 9TH ARMORED INFANTRY
BATTALION
"SUPER SIXTH" DIVISION, THIRD ARMY
WORLD WAR II

T/5 Al "Legs" Legerat
Rifleman

A native of Chicago, at 19 years of age, I entered the Army at Camp Grant, Illinois on January 11, 1943. I was sent to an Ordnance Company (521st Heavy Maintenance, Field Army), where I had Basic Training at Red River Depot, Texarkana, Texas. I went overseas with my unit and we landed at Belfast in northern Ireland on 22 February 1944. Later the 521st Ordnance Company was moved to Newberry, England. During the first part of July 1944 my company went to France as part of the Third Army.

While performing my normal duties with the Ordnance Company in Nancy France, the Company Commander received an urgent message from Third Army Headquarters, which was sent to all rear echelon commands, that replacements for fighting soldiers were needed immediately. "Legs" Legerat was one of the soldiers selected for Infantry duty.

I was trucked to Metz, France, to a place used as a marshaling area for the Third Army. Assembled with hundreds of other such replacements, my name and serial number was called three different times. I answered each call. After one of the roll calls, I was actually assigned to the 26th Infantry Division (the "Yankee Division"). But I was never ordered to load up on a truck. On the third time my name was called, the caller ordered me to "get

your belongings, and get on that truck, you're in the 6th Armored Division now". That was on or about the 1st of November 1944. Several of my pals who were assigned to the 26th Division got killed soon afterwards.

After a day's drive on the truck filled with other GI's, I arrived in the rear area of the 6th Armored Division. I was assigned the following morning to Company "B" of the 9th Armored Infantry Battalion, as an ammunition carrier. I was to load and tote 13 shells of 40 mm "ammo" in a vest type carrying harness. Sgt. Russell Oren was the leader of the Mortar Squad.

My first combat experience was doing outpost guard duty in and out of four or five towns with the mortar squad. I soon met our Platoon leader, Sgt. Head (called "Mother"). A tall guy, about 6' 6" fellow named Tellerson, a guy named Glass, and a guy who got a Section 8 because a bazooka he was manning went off at his feet although it did not injure him.

We went on the attack before Christmas and a Sherman tank was hit by two 88 armor piercing shells. Our combat Medic was pulling the crew members from the tank and through the snow, when our Captain and a Colonel got shot about 20 feet away by machine gun fire. The Medic had his hands full getting these wounded men off the hill.

We left Metz for Bastogne Belgium on Christmas day with our Christmas dinners in our mess kits. Our first full-force attack came on January 1st 1945 outside of Bastogne. The hard fighting lasted two or three days. We lost men and some were captured. First we would advance, taking land or forests from the Germans, and then they would drive us back. We lost our mortar so I became a rifleman along with the rest of our squad. Creating a line of defense, we dug new foxholes where we held the Germans back and prevented them from overrunning our position. It was bitter cold and many soldiers, including me, developed frozen feet.

The men of Company B were in a wooded area. Some of the men of Company A brought up their vehicles which, along with 3 medium tanks of one of the tank battalions, were knocked out the following morning. Jokie Bilcze, the Mess Sergeant of Company B, came up during the night and

brought us some hot food and blankets. He returned that night with his half-track to safety where his mess was behind the shelling area.

Most all of the vehicles of Company B and Company C were not damaged as they were outside of the range of the shelling. Although my feet were frozen, I kept soldiering as best I could until almost the end of January. Those were the orders of Gen. Eisenhower: that no soldier who could still pull a trigger would be evacuated.

While I was hospitalized Company "B" crossed the Our River into Germany in February 1945. While hospitalized, I had a chance to visit with the Sherman Tank driver, whose tank came under German fire as his outfit was supporting Company B, and who was also hospitalized. I asked him why he didn't put the tank in reverse after the first 88 shell hit? He said the first shot took off his knee cap, and he couldn't push in the clutch. I signed his body cast that day in the Hospital.

After scrambling through the Repple Depple system, I finally returned to duty with Company "B" in early March 1945, just in time to get ready for an attack from Metz France to the town of Worms, Germany on the Rhine River. We spearheaded an attack through the Palatinate Territory, a district west of the Rhine River. This is the same route the Romans used in their European campaign centuries before.

Enroute to Worms, we by-passed all kinds of German warriors dug in, and not offering much resistance to our column. The bridge at Worms was blown out so we had to wait until the heavy pontoon bridge was put in place by the Engineers. Taking about three days, the Engineers of the 555th Heavy Pontoon Bridge Company placed a bridge across the Rhine River. When it was finished, we went across with all our vehicles under a smoke screen. There were smoke screen machines setting all about.

We had a 350 mm rocket mounted on a Sherman tank in the column. Moving on secondary roads with this tank presented problems. On those occasions when the road led through an underpass, we were slowed down because the multi-rack ammo carrier for this rocket was too high to go under the underpass. Once the rockets were loaded and made ready to fire, it was too touchy to unload them, so they had to be uselessly fired, when an

alternate route could not be found. A "built-in" problem was when the tank's turret was traversed all the way, the multirocket rack (holding the ammunition for the rocket) would be pitched off the tank's turret, falling off. Given the fact that we had no occasion to use the rocket, this tank with a rocket mounted thereon was a "sore thumb".

At times on this move to the Rhine, it appeared as if the entire German Air Force, mostly Messerschmidt fighters, were in the air over our column. But we had plenty of anti-aircraft gun power to discourage the German air force.

Once across the Rhine, we headed northeast toward Frankfort, which is on the Main river. The only bridge across the Main was located at Frankfort. Although the bridge was intact, the Germans had concentrated firepower zeroed in on it. German mortar and artillery fire kept our engineers from fixing up the bridge so our tanks could drive across. We lost some guys before we crossed. Although coming under enemy rifle fire, my platoon ran across to the other side. As soon as we got to the other side of the bridge we sought cover behind and in a building which was burning. We shot it out with those Germans who were also in buildings across the street on the left side. When the fire reached the first floor of our building, we had to leave out the back and climb over a seven foot wall and spread out to the first block corner. Only one platoon, now down to two or three squads, were left to hold the bridgehead until the 5th Infantry Division troops came.

The troops of the 5th were supposed to be all set to relieve us in a few hours, but they didn't show up till the next morning about 0930. To six soldiers of Company "B" who had spent a sleepless night on the 8th floor of a commercial building, the troops of the 5th Infantry Division were a welcomed sight.

In the same building in which we had spent the night on the 8th floor, Germans occupied the basement and first floor. The Germans were firing bazookas at the Eastern Rathskellar where Sgt. McGarity and his squad were holed up. The Rathskeillar offered very little protection because of the many glass windows. McGarity and his men piled up tables and chairs trying to keep the bazooka shells from coming in. But they suffered badly as three

Company B soldiers were killed that night, on out-post guard duty across the yard from the Rathskellar in a house. I heard their awkward end.

The hated SS Troopers of the German Army were in charge of the Germans we were fighting that night, and we were outnumbered all night.

Meanwhile, at the 8th story building, the German and American artillery and mortars were hitting the roof as well as the 8th and 7th floors. So we six Company "B" men went down to the sixth floor where we were afforded more protection. We guarded the back and front stairways, while the Germans occupied the entire first floor and basement for the night.

When the 5th Infantry Division came through in the morning, the Germans started running. Most of them were caught by the fire of the troops of the 5th Inf Div., or were captured.

Meanwhile the artillery fire was still falling on the bridge throughout the night and next day. A German doctor, located on the fourth floor of a building on the near side of the river was the artillery "spotter" (forward observer) calling the shots for the German artillery. The infantrymen of the 5th Inf Div killed the German Doctor, and the bridge became somewhat safer for the American forces.

My platoon rejoined the Company, mounted up on our half-tracks and headed east and into more fighting. Our column of vehicles was the spearhead of our advancing troops, as we went through many German towns. We were just about forty miles below the big city of Kassel Germany, and heading east. Our column started in the evening late, finally in the pitch blackness and after going through several towns, we saw three German 60 ton Tiger Royal tanks with infantry soldiers mounted on them. The tanks came down out of the wooded area and entered our columns on the narrow road. The Germans didn't fire their 88 guns which were mounted on their tanks, but they smashed their way and pushed our vehicles aside. The mounted German infantry machine gunned as they proceeded along.

Due to confusing radio reports, we had expected to find these German tanks at the intersection ahead. Instead, they intercepted our

column before we reached the intersection. Our halftrack vehicles were chewed up in the rear. An Artillery spotter, riding with our column, got his leg pinched off by one of the Tiger tanks swinging its big guns against the turret of the American tank on which the spotter was riding. The German infantry firing their machine guns from atop the Tigers were successful in keeping all of us down under the protection of our armored vehicles. I hollered at our halftrack driver (Carl Blevens) to pull over and stop, which he did. The entire crew jumped out on the right hand side, the same side of the road which Carl had pulled off. I saw this huge black hulk of the first Tiger Royal tank approaching; and pulled the pin on the grenade I was carrying, let the handle fly --- for a short fuse --- and then heaved it high and above the big black hulk. That tank went about fifteen or twenty feet more and stopped. The grenade air-burst cut something in the engine through the grating and killed off a bunch of German Infantrymen riding on the Tiger. The second Royal Tiger tried to push it, but it did not budge, forcing the second tank to drive around the stalled tank.

Our predicament had been relayed by radio to the head of our column. So our tankers at the front of our column quickly positioned themselves behind some building cover, and at an intersection of this narrow road, fired H. E. shells into the engine compartment of the second tank and knocked it out. The third Tiger Royal tank came by the intersection, with their machine guns blazing and got away; only to return the next morning to give us more damage and killing. For the action as described above, later, after the war, I received the Silver Star from Gen. Grow at Camp McCalley, just outside of Jena.

Sometime later, my platoon left in the evening to take a one tower castle. It was near Kassel, as I remember. Platoon Sergeant Swan was our 2nd Platoon leader, and he said, "get across that river dam." All of us soldiers could see against the night sky that German soldiers were patrolling the tower. We said: "You go first, Swan!" Needless to say, we bypassed the Castle and went farther down river and crossed on a blown out bridge and came to a town.

We set up our machine gun to see if we could draw fire, and just were just about to shoot it, when we heard a commotion on the road which paralleled this small town. The word was passed along to get down in the

ditch which was there. Seven or eight German Officers, appearing to be half drunk, riding bicycles, were apparently returning to that single tower castle, after a "night on the town" in this small neighboring village. As they came by, somebody in our platoon shouted "Now." We rushed in, knocked them off their bicycles, and grabbed them. All they said was: "Duetsch Officers" and some of our men said ... I'll give you Deutsch Officer, and we gave them the old fists, blam-blam, and we got 'em all... and no shots fired.

We made these "Deutsch Officers" prisoners along with more German soldiers we captured before morning. We even let one German soldier go back to his outfit. He said he would bring back some other German soldiers who wanted to surrender to the Americans. After he had departed, we wondered if he'd bring some SS'ers back with him to do battle against us. He came back and led quite a few men who also surrendered to us.

We took control of this small town and outposted guards... still only one platoon strong. On the eastern edge of town the 2nd Squad of the 2nd Platoon, at half strength, took this house. Don Clabough (of Columbus Nebraska) and I were both on guard at the back of the house. I was preparing to throw a grenade, had pulled the pin, and tossed it away in the darkness; but the target moved away.. Not wanting to cause a big explosion or a loud noise, I said to Don, "find the pin". I still had the handle. After feeling around in the blackness of the night, Don found the pin,. I put the pin back in place after some difficulty. We had captured more German soldiers than we could handle that night.

After eating a bit of breakfast, thanks to the German people, we left town; while in the far away hills, snipers were shooting at us.

Our Spearhead Column went on a back road adjacent to the infamous death camp - Buchenwald - when we had stopped because the Spearhead Column had stopped. Anyhow, our halftrack was only a few feet away from the double-gated, chained and padlocked gates of the concentration camp. While we were there, about five or ten minutes, most of the crew dismounted and broke the locked gates and let those ill-fated starved prisoners out. They wanted food and also to help us fight. We couldn't give them any food; but we had a few cases of bottled cognac which we gave them. I said it might kill them if they drank that strong liquor since they

were in such run-down condition. Our column began to move so we went on leaving those inmates liberated.

After more travel we were closer to the war's end and there was talk about whether or not the 6th or 9th Armored Divisions would go to Czechoslovakia to fight the Hitler hold-outs. It was May 5th, and we were happy that we didn't have to go. We went as far as Mittweida, Germany, where the Russian artillery was over shooting, so we moved back about 15 miles and pulled in more Germans.

On one occasion, I almost shot two G.I. prisoners who were hiding inside a house and I was in the backyard about 50 feet away as they opened the door to come out. Fortunately, I held my fire as they opened the door to come out. I saw the O. D. uniform clothing they were wearing.

In that same town we captured an Artillery Battery. I found one of their wheeled artillery guns. The German Artillery crew had tried to destroy it with one of our captured grenades. The fuse had gone off, but the charge didn't which was set on the breech block. The German Artillery crew had also smashed the eye pieces on the Battery Commander's telescope which I took, although the tripod had been broken to bits.

As we went through one village, we captured the crew of the biggest mortar Germany had, along with the weapon. A 350 MM mortar shell is lifted into the mortar tube by four men using a bar with a hook; two men on each end of the bar, then a bit of a twist and down the tube. The shell strikes the firing pin. It is hauled about on an axle and two wheels. When it lands on the ground, it leaves a hole large enough to bury a jeep.

The 250 pound aircraft bombs dropped by our aircraft, and which didn't explode, were put to good use by the Germans. They would pick up the dud 250lb bomb and change the fuse. As they moved eastward in their retreat, they would use these duds to blow up bridges, and thus prevent the attacking American ground troops from using the bridges. Company B experienced a bridge being blown up right under our noses at a small town. We had to wait until the combat engineers put up another type of hastily built bridge.

Toward the end of the war, while we were on outpost guard duty in our foxholes, Russian fighter aircraft frequently flew over our area. The airplanes were mostly American Lend-Lease P-39 Bell Airacobras. The Pilots were looking to determine if we were German or American soldiers.

We kept the German soldiers moving further east until the end of the war when Company "B" was at Mittweda, Germany.

Soldiers known to have been in 2nd Squad, Second Platoon, Company B:

Sgt Dave Broughton
T/5 Carl Blevens, half track driver
T/5 Al ("Legs") Legerat, Rifleman
Bob Craig, Rifleman and Sniper
Rifleman
Doc Roberts
Red Partain
Big Red (from Minnesota)

Sgt Wooster
William Powers
Don Clabough - Rifleman
Duke McCurry -
Mike Kattach
Buck (Nick Name)
Little One (Nick Name)

FOURTH PLATOON, COMPANY "B"
9th ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION
SIXTH ARMORED DIVISION

Joseph Bogdan,
--- Staff Sergeant

After serving fourteen months in the European Theater of Operations with the 424th Anti Aircraft Artillery in Greenland, I returned to the United States. Following a two week Leave of Absence, I was sent to Camp Hann, California. In a short while I started my career as a "Re-Tread" when I was ordered to Camp Housey Texas where about a thousand other non-coms were being assembled for overseas duty as Infantry Replacements.

In February 1945, from Camp Miles Standish in Boston Mass, I boarded a troop transport, the USS West Point, which carried 10,000 troops. In order to avoid German submarines, the ship followed a zig-zag course across the Atlantic. After nine days we were scheduled to reach Glasgow Scotland, when the ship received a message that a German wolfpack of subs was waiting off shore at the port of Glasgow. The ship turned south to an alternate port. Some of us were topside trying to see land. It was around 0600 and we were looking out over the ocean. On deck with me was Cpl. Glen Burns, and many others. We all saw a periscope from a submarine. It came to the surface and dived. Everybody was yelling. "Submarine". The ship was unable to get its guns aimed at the target because the sub was so close. All ships were dropping depth charges, and planes were dropping bombs. The sub was hit, stood on its bow and sank.

Later in the day we came into port, disembarked and were directed to an English train. Women from the Red Cross gave us coffee and donuts. I asked one woman where we were. She replied, "I'm a Scottie. You're in Scotland."

We boarded an English train and traveled about twenty hours, reaching a port on the English Channel. The area was fenced in. We were loaded on a L.C.I. (Landing Craft Infantry) and bedded down for the night. In the morning we crossed the Channel to LeHarve France, where we were loaded into box cars for movement to a Replacement Depot at Metz France, near the German border. I was assigned to the 6th Armored Division. With other replacements destined for the 6th Armored Division, we were loaded on trucks and taken to Luxembourg, where we slept in a barn that night. Leaving the next morning, we soon passed a sign on the side of the road, saying: "You are now entering Germany through the courtesy of the 6th Armored Division".

Ultimately, I arrived at the Command Post (C.P.) of Company "B" 9th Armored Infantry Battalion, my new assignment. I reported to Lt. Jones, the Commander, who assigned me as squad leader of the 1st squad of the 4th platoon. I told Lt. Jones that I was never in combat, and he should have an experienced man as the squad leader. He replied: "You have the corporal stripes, and that's why you were sent up here". He turned me over to the Sergeant of the 4th Platoon, and told me I would have a couple of days to get to know the men before we go on the line. It was about 2130 as I was going with the platoon sergeant to an old farm house where the platoon was billeted for the night. The Sergeant said for me to get some sleep, and in the morning you can become acquainted with the men of your squad.

Unfortunately, that was not the scenario. At about 0100, the platoon Sgt woke me, saying, "we have got to go to the C. P. for a briefing." Arriving there, Lt. Jones told us that we were moving out and that our objective was to capture a bridge, which was identified to the platoon sergeant and me. On the way back to the house where we had bunked, the sergeant said: "you take the second and third squads, I'll be in the first track with the platoon Lieutenant (who also was newly assigned) and the first squad." Up to that time, I had never seen a half track except in the movies. The driver told me where my position was in the vehicle. At about 0500 we arrived at our destination, the road to the bridge, our objective.

Immediately upon arrival, all hell broke loose. German machine guns were playing havoc with our platoon. Dismounting, we hit the ground behind the nearest protection we could find. We found ourselves behind a

hedge row. Snipers in the woods on the other side of the road were shooting at us. I saw a hole in the hedge row, but did not see anything or anyone. One of the men said he knew where the snipers were and put his head in the same place that I had been. Next thing I heard was a shot. The sniper shot him in the head. He fell at my feet, blood splattering all over. I never knew the soldier's name.

Unaware of the snipers, the platoon Lieutenant and the sergeant came running up from the rear. I had thought they were up front of the platoon. They were running right by us yelling, "are you guys afraid, Come on!" I yelled at them to "get down, there are snipers in the woods." No sooner had I made that statement both the sergeant and Lieutenant were hit. Both were badly hurt and were taken away in a jeep. I looked around and I realized I was the ranking non-com, so I took over the platoon. Still under German fire, we sought protection of the hedge row until we got some support from the heavy machine guns which cut through the woods and got rid of the snipers. Our artillery fired some smoke over our position, so we were able to pull back.

About 1700 we moved down the stream. The first, second and third platoons moved across. My platoon, the fourth, crossed over and up the bank into a field. Everything had been shot up by the artillery. I came out in the field and looked to the left, and saw a path cut out in the woods. It was about 100 yards long by about 10 yards wide. I didn't like the looks of this, so I held up the men of my platoon. The other platoons had gone by. I yelled "Come out!". At first nothing happened, but in a few minutes, something moved in the woods and two Germans came out from behind a machine gun. I sent them back under escort to the C. P.

We moved up and joined the other platoons and dug in for the night. After receiving orders to move out at midnight, I went back to the Company C.P. where I was briefed on the situation. My platoon was to bypass the town and go around it, to cut off the road keeping the Germans from coming in. We started for the town and the fourth platoon went through the middle of town, turned off to the right and across the field to some pine woods. I set up the 30 Caliber machine gun in a bomb crater to cover our right flank. We dug foxholes in the pines just so we could have a clear line of vision. We

joined up on the left with another platoon. We dug two-man foxholes, so that while one man slept the other could man the lookout post.

My partner appeared to be a little slow, so I let him sleep and I took the first watch. At 0500 I woke him up and I lay down to sleep. Just as I fell asleep, he shook me awake, saying, "I think someone is coming." The Germans were, indeed, coming up the road through the fog. The fog was heavy and about four feet from the ground. We couldn't see a thing. The fellow in the foxhole with me said, "what are going to do". I answered, I don't know about you, but I'm going to fire." So I aimed into the fog and opened fire. I hit someone, because I heard the scream. Then the whole line opened up. It became quiet for a moment. Then all hell broke loose. Shells were hitting around us. Screaming shells were coming in. We lay in our foxholes while limbs from trees came down on us. When all the noise stopped, I raised my head out of the foxhole, looked around and checked on the men. Back of our foxhole was a big green-shell sticking out of the ground. It had a crack in it. It was smoking and was about three feet from our foxhole. I said: "let's get out of here." We moved out of range of the unexploded shell and dug new fox holes. We held our position for three days. When I saw the men from the other platoons pulling back, I moved the fourth platoon back also.

Being a green horn, and having not received specific orders to pull back with the others, I found that it was the right thing to do. Back on the hill where the half-tracks were, the men were watching us come back. Glen Burns (the same man on board the deck of the transport ship when we spied the German submarine as we came into port in Scotland) came running toward me, saying, "Joe, they had you Missing in Action". We were starved, since we had nothing to eat for three days, and had only one canteen of water left.

Such were my first three days in combat.

Now, it was around the 2nd or 3rd of March, 1945. The 9th Armored Infantry Battalion was moving out from Schonecken on the way to the Moselle River. My platoon started out by riding in the half-tracks, then dismounted, followed the tanks down the road. To the right on a big hill were Germans in trenches. Our machine guns drove them out. One of the

tanks when trying to cross a stream got stuck and could not advance. The Infantrymen of the 9th AIB waded across the stream, through the waist high water. We advanced up the hill along the hedgerows and were fired on by eighty-eights.

We advanced to the edge of the woods. There was a house and barn on the hill. We ran to the house and barn to get out of the shelling. The personnel of the platoons became mixed, with some members of each being in both the house and the barn. The Lieutenant told me to take my men and go to the barn, and to send his platoon to the house. I told the Lt that it was not safe to move across in the light, to wait till dark. It was about 200 yards from the house to the barn. He said "get moving". I moved my men to the outside of the house and stopped there. The men from the other platoon in the barn started to walk across to the house. Eighty-eights started to come in pretty heavy. The men were caught out in the open. Some were killed, others were wounded.

The Lt. told me and my men to take the wounded down the hill to the farm house by the stream and come back. We made litters from saplings and our raincoats to carry the wounded. We had to use our belts to strap arms and legs that were just hanging on by their skin. As we started down the hill with the wounded, eighty-eights were coming in, hitting the ground around us. When the shelling stopped, I checked the wounded. One of the men on a litter was hit across his skull, and was bleeding very bad. I suggested that we leave him and get the rest of the wounded down the hill. He said, "don't leave me", so with his bandaged head, and leg and arm just barely hanging to his body, we crawled on our hands and knees, while pulling and pushing the litters as best we could until we got away from that part of the hedgerow. We finally arrived at the farm house where we found the medics, who took the wounded. Just as my platoon was leaving, one of the wounded men asked me for some water. I put my hand behind his head to assist him to drink from a canteen, and I felt the hole in his skull.

We gathered up our gear, belts and raincoats, etc, and started back up the hill. It was now dark, and we had about a mile and a half to the barn where we had been earlier. When we arrived, I immediately lay down to get some sleep. About midnight the Lt came into the barn asking, "where is the squad leader?" When I finally gathered myself together and reported to

him, he said: "take one of your men and go back down the hill; you're the only one that knows the way in the dark." My orders were to go into the house on the other side of the stream and wait for a representative of the 90th Infantry Division. About 0500 I heard a vehicle approaching. We watched out the window, with our rifles at the ready. Finally, a jeep with the driver and a one star general of the 90th came into view. I went out to tell him that I was designated to escort him to our position on the hill. He said he would wait until his troops arrived in about an hour. As we sat in the house we were shelled by 88's. We went into the cellar until the shelling stopped in about an hour. Soon elements of the 90th arrived and I escorted them up the hill to our positions.

Soon thereafter, the 9th Armored Infantry Battalion moved back into a staging area, where we removed the 6th Armored patches from our clothes and covered all markings on the vehicles. This was in preparation for being shifted from Patton's Third Army into the Seventh Army commanded by Gen. Patch. It was reported that the German radio had announced that the American 6th Armored Division had been annihilated. When the division arrived in the Nancy area the same radio broadcasted that the ghost division had reappeared.

On or about 20th March the 9th AIB, along with the remainder of the 6th Arm'd Div went on a 60 mile dash to the Rhine River. Pending the time when we were to cross the river, our Company dug in on the water's edge on the outskirts of a town. Once across the river, we moved up the road, armored Infantry on each side, toward Frankfurt. My platoon was on the left, and 88's were coming in. One shell hit the sidewalk about 5 feet in front of me. It was spinning around, red hot, but did not explode. I told my platoon to keep moving, that it was a dud.

Soon we arrived at a corner where we could see the bridge across the river to Frankfurt. The bridge was taking heavy shelling on the nearside. Live electric wires giving off sparks were all over the road. My platoon was ordered to clear out the two blocks around the entrance to the bridge. In the process of checking out the buildings, we had to break into several by crashing in the doors. Some were occupied by German civilians, who were ordered out of the buildings.

Soon we were ordered to cross the bridge, which was still under fire. I timed the shelling, it was about 60 seconds between barrages. During one of those "lulls", I made a dash for the bridge. Looking back, I found that no one was following me. I went back, and chewed out my men. I told the corporals that "when I go I wanted to see the men behind me". When the shelling eased, I ran for the bridge. It had taken a terrific beating from the shelling, steel was twisted. We had to crawl on some of the beams. I got my men across before the shelling started again. I heard a man calling, "help me". I saw the man stuck with a piece of steel suspended from his belt. I went back and cut him loose. In spite of the shelling which started again, and the machine gun fire, we reached safety.

Reaching the other side, we ran for a barricade of blocks about 20 feet high. A wagon had been jammed in the open slot. There were some men dead. There were three men wounded at the wall. I got my men into a building by smashing in the door. Once in the building, I said there are some wounded men out there, "who is going with me to bring them in?" I ran for the wall, but no one was with me. In spite of the machine gun fire, I was able to drag two of the guys to the building. I went out for the third soldier who continually was saying "save yourself, leave me". He was a Lieutenant and was hit in the back. He died there, before I could do anything for him.

Company B had been ordered to clear out 5 blocks around the bridge. About the time that I got all my men into the building, a lieutenant came up and said for me to take my platoon and go left, since all the other troops had gone right. I had 8 men and myself. We went to the left, entering buildings as we went. In many cases, we had to break down the door to enter. John Mayberry broke his rifle in half trying to smash down a door. He had to return to the edge of the bridge and recover a rifle from one of the GI's who had fallen at the bridge.

We were in a building on the second floor when a shell came in and hit the chest of drawers. I hit the floor when something started hitting me. It was coins. I picked them up, and have them to this day.

We cleaned out 3 blocks, putting all the civilians in a large cellar with a guard over them. It was getting dark. We made it to a 3 story building.

The next building had a 10 foot wall around it, so I decided to stay there for the night. We checked the building and found a bomb shelter with about 30 people in it. We also found a tunnel going to the next building. On the second floor, we took out the round window. Since from there we could cover the center of town, I put a man with a Browning Automatic Rifle in that window. We protected the tunnel, since we might need it in case we had to get out and could not hold the building.

When we were on the second floor, we saw a light. It was a German smoking while on lookout. I was aiming my rifle, but John said. "let me shoot him." John fired - no more light. About midnight we heard men talking outside in the street. We did not know whether they were our people or Germans. I yelled "Are you a G-I"? They threw down their guns, gas masks, and what else they had. You could hear the hobnails as they ran up the road.

The next morning I was suddenly awakened when a shell hit outside the window. The window frame fell into the room. One of the men called me, saying there was movement in the center of town. I looked out and saw a German with a Red Cross on his arm run across the street. I told my men, "let the next first-aid man cross. Shoot any that follow." Sure enough, there was one more Red Cross man, and then came the infantry. We fired, hit some. No more tried to cross.

The next day men from the 5th Infantry Division came to our building, from which they launched an attack. It was not long until they came back with several wounded. On the next day they made another attack. This time they did not come back.

On March 29th, we were pulled back over the bridge and loaded on our half tacks and moved toward Kassel. Enroute as my platoon approached a curve in the road where another road intersected, I dismounted and with another man proceeded to scout the intersecting road. We went about an eighth of a mile and saw hay stacks which were on fire in the fields. Hearing tanks starting up, we ran back to the column, and reported to a Captain of the Tank Destroyers what we heard. He said "Get back to your tracks, they are ours". As we were running back to our half-tracks I yelled that tanks were coming from the side road. As I got in the half-track, I saw a

tank with a white cross come out onto the road. I don't know if I got out the door or over the side to get in the field and hit the ground. I saw someone laying next to me. I stood up and looked at him in the dark. It was a German with 2 grenades. I called one of my men over, telling him to step on one wrist and I stepped on the other. We took the two grenades, checked to make sure the pin was in and then threw them out in the field. We gave him a couple of kicks and he did not move. One of my men said: "I'll get him up." He pulled out his knife and grabbed his ear, as if to cut it off. The German jumped up. We sent him back to the Company CP for interrogation.

By-passing Kassel, the 9th AIB overran a small town with a few houses and a large castle. Capt Jones said: "Corporal Bogdan, take these men (about 90) into the castle and get some sleep.' He said the first platoon was also there. Moving toward the castle, I had some doubts about the safety. I had men cover me from a railroad running by the castle. I took two men with me to scout it out. We went across a field, and came up to a fifty yard wide moat that circled the castle. As we reached the water's edge, two heavy German machine guns opened up on us. There was a wall of bullets coming at us. I don't know how the bullets missed us. We crawled back to the railroad trestle. Not all of us made it. I went back to Capt. Jones, telling him, "you told me the first platoon was in the castle. It's full of Germans. If I had taken the men straight up there, we would all have been killed." We later learned the first platoon had by-passed the castle, and were in a town a mile down the road.

The next morning the Germans were walking around the top of the castle. We brought up ten tanks and fired at the castle. Shells hit it, smoke came off the stones. Soon thereafter, we moved out of there as we were replaced by some infantry troops from another division.

One day I was told to take two squads in two half tracks and go out and find some prisoners. We drove out toward the front for about two miles and did not see a thing. We came to a very big field. You could barely see the woods at the other end. There was a path from one end of the field to the other. A road led from the woods where there was a large clump of trees. I had the half track drive past close to the trees. We stopped and waited. There were no tracks through the field. We thought it might be mined. Suddenly, we saw something move in the woods. Two people were coming

out of the woods. They were Germans in black uniforms. We thought they were SS. As they came near the clump of trees we took them prisoner. They were officers who had deserted from a submarine. We loaded one each on the hood of the half tracks. One of the prisoners had a pair of fur lined gloves. I took them and still wear them every winter.

In April our Combat Command moved up to Mulhausen. As our column was coming down the road, we encountered a lot of firing. Capt Jones called me up to his position. The tanks were firing at some houses up at the end of the field. The Captain said: "take the second squad up to the houses, we see some movement there". We started down an embankment from the road and up to the field. Our tanks opened up, firing over our heads, and the percussion knocked our helmets off, My men did not know what was happening, we were holding our heads. I got the men calmed down, and we started moving up through the tall grass which was chin high. I yelled to the men to "keep firing in front of you." Suddenly, from the right in a small clump of trees, I saw a head coming up to see what was happening. I fired at him, hitting him. He came up screaming. To his left about twenty Germans came out of a trench with their hands over their heads. I sent them back to the column, and we moved up to the burning houses.

We continued to search other houses. I saw someone run into one of the houses, so I went to that one. The second floor was in flames. I looked around and found a closed door. With a grenade in my hand, I yelled in German, "come out or I will throw this grenade". Coming out of the dark was a woman carrying a baby and in back of her came another woman and ten or twelve little children. As the second floor was falling in, we sent them to a house across the street.

The next morning, on April 10th, we liberated an allied POW camp. We were at the main gate, where the POWs crawled all over the half tracks. As we were moving, we had to chase them off for fear that someone of them might get injured. We told them "to sit tight", that the units in rear of us would take care of them.

On April 11th, we were on the road to Buchenwald, but did not go through the town. We by-passed it and ended up in Mittweida. While we

were entering the town on one road, the Germans were going out of town on another road. When the town was secured the German townspeople brought all their weapons, shells, and gunpowder out. We had a large pile of ammunition. I went over to check it out. I saw a German BHZ with its pin coming out. I squatted down to examine it, and at that moment everything blew up. I threw up my hands to cover my face. The men took me to a barroom and lay me on the bar and covered me with blankets. I was burned on the back of my hands and the right side of my face. I was taken to a first-Aid station in a building in the town,. Both American and German wounded men were on the floor. The first aid men appeared to be drunk. If someone groaned they kicked him. I said, "give me my gun, I'm getting out of here", and left.

Returning to my platoon, we soon were ordered to move out. As I went through the woods, the limbs would hit my freshly burned face which caused much pain. Moving up the hill to a new position, we checked out a house where a German woman, seeing the blisters on my face, said, "I have something which will help that". She gave me a salve that smelled like birch. Later in a foxhole, I applied the salve. It was cool and got rid of the water blisters and cleared it up in no time.

Soon thereafter, the platoon Lieutenant and Sergeant were gone, and I was in command of the platoon. One day, while on a normal movement down a road, there was a column of tanks and jeeps which came up to our position. The officer in charge said, "Sergeant., I want you and another halftrack to join the column." I didn't know what was going to happen. I soon discovered that it was a task force going to meet the Russians. We drove into a small town, stopped and the Russian Army was pulling in. We were told to stay in our halftracks. The Russians had a lot of women soldiers with them. Up front we could see the Russians meeting the 6th Armored column. The Germans were on a balcony waving to us. The German woman who gave me the salve when we fought our last battle was there and saw how my face and hands had cleared up.

Following the "shooting war, my platoon was placed on security guard duty in Weimar Germany. I had three squads, a total of about 30 men. Posts were established: Corporal Herst with three men at the Wine Warehouse, where all three men were to sleep; Cpl. Friedman, the Court

House post where 3 men were to sleep in the court house; Sgt. Martin, at the Police Station where 3 men would sleep in station; Cpl Fields, a Night Post where Passes would be checked; and the motor pool post where 3 men would sleep.

An interesting incident occurred one day at the wine warehouse. The guard had been instructed to fire their weapons when there was a problem. One day I heard the weapons being fired, I got my weapon and drove to the warehouse. The men were holding a Russian colonel and his driver. The Russian looked at me and said: "He must be someone pretty high up in the American Army.: They did not know that I was Polish and understood everything they said. I asked my men what was going on. They said the Russians wanted to load up with wine and not pay for it. I told the Russian Colonel, "No wine without money". They finally paid for the wine and left happy. John Mayberry was one of the men at that post.

Our next move was to a field outside of Jena where we lived for a short while in pup tents. From there we moved into Camp McCauley, named for a Lieutenant who was killed there. We were there until we moved back to Camp Phillip Morris in France, where I was put in charge of about 180 men from the 6th Armored Division. We were all from Pennsylvania, and were assigned to the 28th Division "Provisional Battalion. We boarded a French ship, the Marshal Joffre which carried 2,000 troops, for the shipment to the USA. We arrived in August 1945. Passing the Statue of Liberty, we heard the war was over in Japan.

After short sojourns at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey and Indiantown Gap, Pa, I was given a furlough. Upon return to duty, and a short detail (including 45 days leave) to Camp Shelby Mississippi, I was sent to Indiantown Gap Pennsylvania and discharged on 8 December 1945

Soldiers known to have served in Second Squad, Fourth :Platoon of Company B, 9th Armored Infantry Battalion:

S/Sgt Joseph Bogdan
S/Sgt Wilmer Martin
Cpl J. Fields

S/Sgt J. M. Drury
T/Sgt Joseph Duncan
Cpl Arthur Wagner

Cpl Wesley Hersch
PFC Harold V. Watson
Pvt J. B. Richards
Pvt. Howard B. Sanders
Pvt. Dourglas W. Thompson
Pvt. James M. Lahr
Pvt. Vahl W. Tatham
Ray Pantages
Smith

PFC John Mayberry
T/5 Joseph Chepolis
Pvt. Damon J. Ross
Pvt. Homer B. Yeargan
Pfc. Darle E. Lukehart
Pvt. Joseph P. McHenery
Pvt. Morris H. Silva
Owen G. Keim
Friedman

"HE AIN'T HEAVY, HE'S MY TWIN"

---- Sue Parrish Henderson

First of all, I'd like to say that this is not a History lesson; dates are not recorded. It is written in "story" form, which was told to me by my twin brothers Ben and Byron; and I have related to Dennis, Byron's son, and Benjie, who is Ben's son. For obvious reasons, for the title of this story, I have taken: "*He Ain't Heavy, He's My Twin*".

December 7th 1941. Every American should know that date. For those of you old enough to remember, I'd like for you to go back in your minds to that date; and think about where you were, what were you doing, how you felt after you heard the news of the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

I was in Prep School at Campbell College, a young teen ager with no real worries except to get to class on time, and try to think of some way to get to the drug store more than twice a week, and stay there more than twenty minutes (strictly against the rules).

But --- this bomb on Pearl Harbor, I knew would affect my life considerably because I had seven strong healthy brothers.

Before the Draft began, my brother Ben joined the National Guard, so that he would have his choice of service, and would be with friends when his unit was called to active duty. Ben tried desperately to get his twin Byron to join up with the Guard: "Come on," he said, "it will be great - being together." "Are you crazy, Ben, even with the draft they'll have to drag me" was Byron's reply. But after much persuasion by Ben, Byron decided to join his brother's National Guard unit. But it was too late. The authorities had placed a "cut-off" on more signees for the National Guard.

In time, Byron's number in the draft came up and he was drafted and assigned to the Infantry in the Army. Elbert, another brother, was also assigned to the Army, and served in Sicily and eventually under Gen Patton in Europe, driving supplies to the front lines. My youngest brother, Harold, after one year in college, decided he really didn't care too much for walking,

so he joined the Navy and served as a Medic while in China. He contracted Spinal Meningitis and stayed in the hospital for weeks, but recovered and stayed on until the end of the war. But this story is about The Miracle of The Twins.

Each time Ben had a furlough, Byron couldn't get one; and so all through their time in the States and over seas they never got to see each other and were moving around so much that we, the family, did not seem to be able to get in touch by mail enough for them to even know where the other one was located.

Now keep in mind that the two twins were not in the same branch of the service, nor inducted at the same time. In 1944, Ben was in Luxembourg as a Master Sergeant. During this time, he was taken Prisoner, but escaped into the Black Forest, where he nearly starved to death. Not knowing exactly where he was, he did know that he was not too far from a farm house because he could smell something cooking. As he grew nearer, he saw a woman in the yard and food cooking in a big pot. He drew nearer and realized the woman was singing in a language he thought sounded like French. Thinking that she was not the enemy, and being so hungry - having been in the woods for two days and nights, he ventured into the yard. He asked the woman for some food, which she gave him, and then went into the house to get a bag in which to put more food for him. While he was eating, suddenly two German M.Ps. appeared and took him back to prison. The woman had turned him in.

Not to be out-done, but to make this story shorter, Ben did escape two more times, but was found and brought back each time to the prison. Food and water were very scarce, You could not call his fare food - potato peeling soup with not many peelings.

One dark, dark night (strictly enforced black-outs made it even darker), in the prison camp, Ben was lying on his cot weak and lonely when an American Lieutenant, a fellow prisoner, who Ben knew, approached his cot and whispered to Ben: "Your brother is in this camp." In total disbelief, Ben said to the Lieutenant: "Please don't talk about my family. I have no idea where any of them are, so just leave me alone." The Lieutenant insisted and asked: "Don't you have a twin brother named Byron, and don't you call

him Bydie?" With that Ben knew the Lieutenant was being truthful. Of course, the prisoners were not supposed to be out of their cots nor having conversation, so the Lieutenant whispered: "stay here and I'll bring your brother to you." Ben said he actually thought he was dreaming; but suddenly in the stillness and blackness he heard Bydie coming, recognizing his footsteps. He jumped up off his cot and they ran into each others arms and kissed and hugged and cried.

Pretty soon, Bydie pulled away and whispered: "Ben, you got anything to eat? I'm starving." Ben led Byron to his cot, and under his pillow he had a small piece of hard German bread which he had been nibbling on for days. Ben whispered to Byron: "lie down on the cot and put your head under the pillow and just suck on the bread. If any of the guys found out you had the least bit of food, they'd literally kill you for it." All the prisoners were so starved. Soon the Lieutenant came and said that Bydie would have to go back to his own cot.

Miracle Number One: A Private in the Army meeting his twin brother a Master Sergeant in the National Guard, whom he had not seen in three long years, in a German Prisoner of War Camp where they were both prisoners.

Days passed and they did not see each other. Then the big day came for the 30 day march in the snow to another unknown (to them) prison camp. Then Miracle Number Two occurred. Out of the blue, they found themselves side by side for the march.

Three days before they reached their destination, Ben passed out. Normally under similar conditions, prisoners were simply abandoned or in some cases shot on the scene, and the march proceeded with one less prisoner. But when Ben passed out, Bydie picked him up and put him on his shoulders. Each day thereafter while on the march, Byron carried Ben on his shoulders until they reached their destination. It was most unusual for the German guards to allow anyone to live that could not keep up on the march. Byron and Ben actually saw R. J. Todd, from Wilson's Mills, a small village near Byron's and Ben's home, shot because he had a lame leg and could not walk.

After reaching the second prison camp, they were separated again. they did not see each other again until the war was over and they returned home separately.

Bydie never related the story of how he had saved Ben's life -- that was Ben's joy to tell to anyone who seemed a little bit interested.

The title again: *"HE AIN'T HEAVY, HE'S MY TWIN"*

(Editor's Note. Byron Parrish was in Company B, 9th Armored Infantry Battalion. An entry in the Morning Report of 4 Jan 1945 shows: "Pfc Parrish, Byron M., -- "MIA." Here are the facts surrounding Parrish's "Missing in Action" status as determined later: PFC Byron M. Parrish was a jeep driver in Company B. On January 4, 1945 Byron's jeep was found turned over in the deep snow somewhere around Wardin to the east of Bastogne. There was no sign of Parrish. He was carried on the Morning Report as Missing in Action (MIA). Nobody ever knew what happened to Byron Parrish. After the war he contacted Ed Clark, and found out about the Company's annual reunion, and attended one of the earlier reunions. At that reunion, he told Clark what had happened to him back there in January 1945. He was captured and became a Prisoner of War. The reader should refer to Milt Moncrief's story in the Appendix. Undoubtedly, Parrish was captured about the same time that Milt Moncrief was taken prisoner by the Germans.

Byron was from Smithfield, N. C. and knew Ava Gardner in that city when they were in school together.

After returning to North Carolina following the War, he married and was the father of three boys. He died in 1970. Two of his sons, Dennis and Richard, attended the Reunion of Company B in Newport News Virginia in 1999. Sue Parrish Henderson, the author of the story above, is the youngest daughter of the Parrish family, and Byron's sister.

**NOTES FROM THE ANNUAL COMPANY "B"
REUNION - NEWPORT NEWS, VA.
JULY 23-25, 1999**

-- Roger M. Connor
Son of George Roger Connor - KIA
Jan. 4, 1945 at Wardin, Belgium

Following are some of my recollections from a reunion I attended recently. I wrote it from memory and I'm sure every detail is not correct, but I believe it is mostly accurate. For any errors, I sincerely apologize.

I have just returned from an amazing, unforgettable weekend in Newport News, Va., with 17 men of Company B, 9th Armored Infantry Battalion, 6th Armored Division, United States Army. My father, Private George R. Connor, was a member of Company B at the time he was killed on January 4, 1945.

Most of the wives were also at the reunion, along with a few children, grandchildren and other relatives. **Company B has had a reunion EVERY YEAR since 1946.** That in itself must be a longevity record, and not many units as small as a company (about 240 men) from WWII have reunions. Then -- to think that I had the good fortune to find the very company that my dad was in. Altogether, this borders on the incredible.

The bond among these men and women is strong, abiding, wonderful to behold. I was a bit apprehensive, barging in on a party that had been going on for over a half-century, but they ALL welcomed me as if I had been there all along. What wonderful people. I spoke individually with many of the men about their experiences, and in small groups with all of them.

I talked at length with the Company Clerk, who still has Morning Reports for the entire time the company was in Europe. I found and copied the reports from the day my father joined the Company (Nov. 29, 1945), the day he went on sick leave and the day he returned (Dec 31 and Jan 1), the

day he was reported MIA (Jan 4 1945), and the day he was confirmed as KIA (Feb 4).

I also talked with the first Company Commander, who is writing a book about Company B. He had a draft with him and I copied (thank the Lord for Copy Max) portions about the time my father was part of the company, as well as the part where he talks about my father as a typical replacement and my search for information about him. Another man, a Squad Leader, I believe (although there was little talk of rank or position except as it was relevant to past events), had a paperback History of the 6th Armored Division, and of course I copied parts of that too, to go along with another history that yet another Company B man had loaned me. I have a lot to read and study.

Two Company B men were reported missing the same day that my father was killed. One was severely wounded and captured by the Germans, to be returned at War's end. The other became separated from the company in the chaos, but soon found his way back. I had the good fortune to speak with both of them about the tremendous battle that raged that day. The German artillery fire was especially murderous, causing many casualties. My father died from a "severe head wound," probably suffered from a shell fragment during this barrage.

I learned that during the time the company was in Europe, they were in combat 221 consecutive days, that the men often suffered from fatigue; being wet, cold and miserable; slow mail delivery; and snafus that are always a part of war. When winter came, it was bitterly cold, weapons and feet froze, everybody was dirty, tired and scared. But they fought through it all, suffering terrible casualties, seeing friends blown apart, losing track of others altogether. Eighty-Six men of Company B were killed and 346 more were wounded. Total casualties: 432. And the normal strength of the company was only 240. I do not know how they did it. I just do not know.

When I took Army Basic Training in the winter of 1963 in Colorado (Ft. Carson), the temperature sometimes went below zero. I was so cold, I could hardly function. All I could think of was that if I ever get warm, I would never complain about anything ever again. And I did not have to contend with people trying to kill me -- no one was lobbing mortars at me,

raining endless artillery barrages on me, or booby trapping everything as they retreated.

I learned that the day my father was killed was one of the worst days the company ever had. Thirteen men, including my father, were killed. The German artillery fire was horrendous. Although Company B had managed to hold its position, at least one of its flanks was left unprotected as other units withdrew under fierce German attacks. This left Company B vulnerable on the flank. It was a very bad day. But the lines eventually stiffened and the Germans did not break through. War is hell, and Freedom is not free, but some things are worth fighting for. Thank God for the men of Company B and all like them who fought and too often died to defeat the German and Japanese menaces. May God bless them all.

I did not meet anyone who remembered my father, but I still have many Company B men who were not at the reunion to contact. Perhaps I will meet someone who knew him and perhaps not --- replacements were not always known to those outside their squad (about 12 men). But I now know what conditions were like on Jan 4 1945, and exactly where Company B was. I hope that before long I can visit that place where my father spent his last day. It is at Wardin, Belgium, not far from Bastogne. He is buried in the military cemetery at Hamm Luxembourg. I was there in 1963 and will go again.

(Editor's Note --- On 19 November 1999, Roger reported that he had airline reservations and that he will be in Luxembourg/Belgium from December 27 1999 -- January 9, 2000. He will be at his father's grave as the millenium turns, and at the spot near Wardin (map coordionates 6065) where his father fell on January 4, 2000 -- the 55th anniversary of his father's death.)

CLOSE COMBAT

or

“EYE - BALL TO EYE - BALL” CONTACT

WITH THE ENEMY

It is known that certain soldiers have tougher jobs than others. The guy who is a typist or clerk in Theater Headquarters certainly has a far easier life than the ammunition carrier in a mortar squad of an Infantry outfit. The fellow standing guard at the entrance into the Corps Headquarters bivouac is not subjected to the rigors of combat as is the rifleman of an Infantry squad. The experience of the truck driver moving supplies from the rear echelon to the Field Army “dumps” can’t be compared to that of the tank driver, who suddenly finds his tank face to face with an enemy tank as he makes a turn at a road intersection. The radio operator at the G-3 Tent of a Division Headquarters enjoys comforts and conveniences never experienced by the machine gunner on a half track. The cook in an Infantry Battalion Headquarters does not face the enemy's rifle and machine gun fire as does the rifleman of an Infantry squad.

Yes, the job of being a soldier who faces the enemy eye ball to eye ball should be singled out as being the toughest, the most dangerous, with greater risks of life, the least comfortable, and requiring the most physical endurance than any assignment in the Army. He may be an Infantry rifleman, who, while facing enemy fire, advances with his fellow platoon members to knock out a machine gun at the top of the hill. He could be a member of a tank crew as his tank gets in a more advantageous position to fire at an enemy tank emerging from the woods. He could be an Engineer racing onto a bridge to cut the wires leading to an explosive which the enemy, in his retreat, had installed to detonate the bridge. He may be an Artillery Forward Observer, positioned in the Church Steeple, who is, by radio, bringing fire from the heavy gun0s to bear on an enemy advancing within fifty yards of the church, and the area occupied by friendly troops.

In addition to the extremely hazardous conditions of enemy fire faced by the CLOSE COMBAT SOLDIER, he is constantly subjected to personal hardships far more serious than those experienced by other soldiers. He is forced to live with: hazardous weather conditions, cold food, little sleep, no bath for days, maybe weeks, little chance for a change of clothing. Because of the elements of Mother Nature he endures: the snow, the ice, the rain, and ankle-deep mud, while in clothing wet to the skin. Much of the time he operates from the cramped and limited space of a narrow, hastily constructed foxhole, which he has dug, sometimes into the frozen ground. but always with a small inadequate hand shovel. Frequently, the foxhole is dug while he is under fire from the enemy.

The casualty level of these types of soldiers is much higher than among others. In most units where CLOSE COMBAT was a daily routine, the casualty rate during WW II was over 100%. Being a Replacement assigned to such a unit engaged in CLOSE COMBAT has to be one of the worst experiences to which a human being can be exposed. Nothing can produce a feeling more awkward, insecure, humbling, and sensitive; and at the same time generate so little gratification, appreciation or understanding. Therefore the Replacements who join a unit where "eye-ball to eye-ball" soldiering is routine deserves double credit or recognition.

For a nation to be victorious at war, those soldiers in CLOSE COMBAT with the enemy must be successful. The ultimate objective of a nation at war is to impose its will upon the enemy. To do that requires that nation's forces to conquer the military forces of the opposing nation. Such cannot be accomplished without routing the enemy forces from his position on the ground. That same ground must be physically occupied by the ground (CLOSE COMBAT) troops of the enforcing nation. The entire effort of a nation involved in a war is centered around producing and delivering the where-with-all -- equipment, materiel, including trained manpower for CLOSE COMBAT duty -- required for those same soldiers to achieve their objectives.

The various activities of the Command and Staff functions of each of the seven or eight echelon levels (from Company, Battalion, Regiment, Division, Corps, Army, Army Group, to Theater) of command in a Theater of Operations are centered and focused on insuring

that the soldiers in **CLOSE COMBAT** with the enemy accomplish their mission. Organizing the soldiers into battle-ready units, assigning appropriate missions, establishing areas of operation, coordinating support fire from the air and sea as well as that from ground artillery, arranging for logistical support to include medical, food, communication, transportation, ammunition, and maintenance are but a few of the duties of these various echelons of Command. It is important to note that all of these Headquarters are in existence solely for the purpose of supporting the soldier who is in **CLOSE COMBAT** with the enemy.

An oversimplified analogy of the above may be described as the relationship between a golfer and his caddie. The golfer is responsible for withstanding the pressure, the weather, the hazards, and other problems, while at the same time, making the all-important shot, the end result, on which his success or failure depends. Just as the **COMBAT SOLDIER** is responsible for the end result, so is the golfer responsible for the final score. The caddie is responsible for toting the golfer's bag, advising the golfer concerning club selection, determining distances, holding his umbrella in case of rain, drying the club grip, raking the sand traps, -- for the total support of the golfer. In the Army scenario, there are thousands of caddies, or people in support roles, for each **CLOSE COMBAT** soldier. Note the one significant, yet ironic, difference in the comparison. In the world of sport, the golfer is the one who, not only makes the score, but also he receives the prize money, honors, and the press reviews accompanying his victory. In the Army, the **CLOSE COMBAT SOLDIER** while he achieves the victory, gets very little financial return, seldom is recognized or honored by the Congress or the press nearly so much as some of the "Caddies" who have furnished him his support.

In today's Army, the Combat Infantryman's Badge is awarded the Infantry soldier. This award is given across the board to all members of an Infantry Regiment or Battalion. Not every soldier in an Infantry Regiment or Battalion is subjected to the "eye-ball to eye-ball" combat described in the paragraphs above.

It is my opinion that the Army should create a new Decoration called the **CLOSE COMBAT MEDAL** to award soldiers, not restricted to Infantryman, who perform their duties under conditions of "eye-ball" contact with the enemy. Further, I believe the Replacement Soldier who earns the **CLOSE COMBAT MEDAL** should receive additional special recognition.

THE ANNUAL REUNION OF COMPANY "B" BRINGS TWO MONCRIEFS TOGETHER

It was long after Company "E" was activated, even long after Company "B" fought the war: as a matter of fact, it was in 1992 that the two Moncriefs of Company "B" met.

Jim Moncrief was a member of Company "E" upon activation of the Company in February 1942. He was transferred to Division Headquarters in late 1942. Milt Moncrief joined Company "B" as a replacement in early December 1943 while the Sixth Armored Division was at Camp Cooke Calif. Jim remained a member of the General Staff of the Division throughout the war. Milt fought the war as a member of Company "B" until he was critically wounded on the 4th of January 1945 near Wardin (east of Bastogne) at which time he was taken prisoner by the Germans. (Note: The complete story of Milt's interesting military experience is included herewith as an appendice.)

Following the reunion of Company "B" in Spartanburg S. C. in 1992, Milt Moncrief and his charming wife, Sally, went to Florida to visit their son, Kenneth. On their return trip from Florida to Ohio, they headed north on Interstate 95 which enters North Carolina near Lumberton. In order to get to Ohio, it was necessary for Milt and Sally to take Interstate 77 which is west from I-95. They selected as their route N.C. Highway #74 to Charlotte where I-77 would take them to Hinkley Ohio, their destination.

Traveling Highway #74, and approaching Monroe, N. C., Milt suddenly realized and told Sally: "Monroe is where that other Moncrief guy who was in the Sixth Armored Division lives." After a bit of conversation, and not having any dead line to meet, they decided to stop and find Jim Moncrief.

Driving in my driveway, I spotted this strange car, so I went out to meet the strangers to see if I could help them, asking, "May I help you?" Extending his hand, Milt said: "Moncrief is my name, I am looking for a

fellow named Jim Moncrief.” Needless to say, I was somewhat shocked. Not many people are named Moncrief. Never before had a stranger driven in my driveway and stated his name was Moncrief.

Regaining my composure, I told him I was the guy he was looking for. I invited Milt and Sally to come and meet my wife, Jerry. The four of us spent the next two hours exchanging stories of our respective lives and vainly trying to establish some sort of kinship.

Since my name was not on the roster of Company “B”, I did not receive notices of the company’s annual reunions, and knew nothing about the annual meeting. Reflecting our delight in learning of the reunions since 1993, Jerry and I have attended all but one (because of a family death, we were forced to cancel Parkersburg W. Va in 1995). We have enjoyed seeing the Milt Moncriefs at the annual reunions of the Sixth Armored Division Association each year since our meeting in 1992.

Although we have not been able to establish a genealogical relationship, the two Moncriefs of Company “B” have become very friendly. At the reunions of Company “B” in Williamsburg, Va., Jerry and I met Milt and Sally’s son, Randy, and Randy’s wife, Anna Marie, and their three grandchildren: Jennifer, Jacqueline, and Carolyn; and their other son, Ken at the Orlando meeting of the Sixth Armored Division Association. At meetings of the latter group, Milt and Sally have met our daughter, Anne and her late husband, Walter Baucom, in Charlotte; as well as one of our grand-daughters, Kate, in Minneapolis. More recently, our other daughter, Gene and her husband, Walter Levy, met Milt and Sally at Arlington, Va in 1997 at the reunion of the Sixth Armored Division Association.

It’s a small world; and there are so few Moncriefs!!!! Two Moncriefs in the Sixth Armored Division --- and in the same Company “B” (“E”)!!! Unbelievable!!!

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

James S. Moncrief, Jr., Colonel (Retired) USA

Born: June 7, 1912, Manchester, Georgia
Graduated High School, 1928, Albany Georgia
Graduated University of Georgia, 1933
Commissioned 2nd Lieutenant Infantry Reserve, June 1933
Active Duty, *Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)*:
 Six Months, 1933-34, as 2nd Lt.
 One Year, 1937-38, as 1st. Lt.
Educational Advisor (as civilian) in *Civilian Conservation Corps*, 1934-1936
One Year Active Duty in Regular Army under Thomason Act, 1936-37 with 22nd Infantry
 Regiment , at Ft. McClellan, Ala.
Employed as Field Investigator and Interviewer in Legal Department, The Coca-Cola
 Company, Atlanta Georgia, 1938-41
Active Duty, 2nd Armored Division, Ft. Benning Georgia, February 1941-1942
Cadred to 6th Armored Division upon activation, February 1942
 Company Commander and Regt. Adjutant, 50th Armd. Inf. Regt.
 Assigned (as Capt) as G-1 (Personnel) of Division in 1943 - Promoted to major
 and Lt. Col. served in that capacity as Lt. Colonel throughout the War in Europe
 Chief of Staff of 6th Armd. Div. upon deactivation in Sept. 1945
War Department Manpower Board, Atlanta, Ga., and the Pentagon, 1946-1947
Integrated into Regular Army in 1946
Student, Graduate School, University of North Carolina, 1947-1948
Army Secretary, Committee on Human Resources, Research and Development
 Board, Department of Defense, Pentagon 1949-1952
G-4, Third Army Corps, Ft. McArthur, Calif. 1952-53
Staff Negotiator, United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission (UNMAC)
 Panmumjom, Korea 1953-1954
Asst. J-1, Far East Command, Tokyo Japan 1954-1956
Professor, Military Science and Tactics (PMST) West Virginia University,
 Morgantown, W. Va. 1956-1959
Military Attache to Nicaragua, 1960-1963, during Somoza's regime
Professor, Military Science and Tactics (PMST) University of Wisconsin
 Madison, Wisc. 1963-1965
Retired as Colonel, July 1965
Executive Vice President, Chamber of Commerce, Monroe, N. C. 1966-1968
Vice President, American Bank and Trust Co. (later United Carolina Bank)
 Monroe, N. C. 1968-1977

Activities Since Retirement

Member, Monroe Rotary Club. (President 1975-76)
Genealogical Research of own and wife's Families
Obtaining License and operating as Ham Radio Operator
Organizer and first President, Union County Amateur Radio Society (UCARS)
Chairman, Board of Trustees, First Baptist Church, Monroe, N. C.
Vice Chairman, Board of Directors of Union Memorial Hospital, Monroe, N. C.
Board of Directors, Rolling Hills Country Club, Monroe, N. C.
Board of Directors, local chapter of American Red Cross, Monroe, N. C.
Organizer of *OMEGA* (Old Men Enjoy Golf Association), a local golf league for
Senior Members of Country Clubs in the Charlotte area
Member, Advanced Planning Committee, Sixth Armored Division Association
President, 1997 Sixth Armored Division Association
President, Resident Council, *The Carriage Club*, a Retirement Community in which
my wife and I reside..
Author of book "AS YOU WERE SOLDIER", a series of "squibs" about people,
events, occurrences, and incidents which are included among my experiences
of thirty years in the Army. Book was privately published (1995) by my
grandson, David Baucom, with my assistance.

Military Schools Attended

Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth Kansas 1941-42
Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Va., 1949-50
Army Language School, Monterey, California 1959
Army Strategic Intelligence College, 1960, Washington, D. C.

Military Decorations Received

Legion of Merit with two Oak Leaf Clusters
Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster
Army Commendation Ribbon
French Legion of Honour
French Croix de Guerre avec Palm
United Nations Meritorious Service Award

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