

REPORT OF THE 34<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
REUNION OF THE 612TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION ASSOCIATION  
HELD AT THE AIRPORT HILTON HOTEL  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE  
ON JULY 30 & 31 - AUGUST 1 & 2, 1987

Seventy Three members and their wives, families and guests attended and we had 182 at our dinner party on Saturday evening.

The attendance was extremely gratifying to the Committee Members and their wives:

Chairman: Willie Spray & Wife Mary  
Curley Rhodes & Wife Mary Claire  
Sam Joyce & Wife Polly  
Mary Nash & Daughter Faye Manning

They all worked very hard and put in long hours to make sure that all of the many details involved in holding a successful reunion were handled promptly and properly.

The attendance was the best we have had since the 1973 reunion, also held at the Airport Hilton Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee.

Nashville is a great location for the 612<sup>th</sup>, and has a special affection from yours truly, because it was at the 1963 reunion in the old Dinkler Andrew Jackson Hotel - later blown up with dynamite before the TV cameras - - that I was selected to act as Secretary (25 years ago).

All members were most complimentary and enthusiastic over the accommodations and facilities.

Once again, on behalf of the entire 612<sup>th</sup> Battalion Association, I want to thank Willie, Curley, Sam, Mary and their mates, for their hard work assistance all through the reunion.

The reunion started out very early with some members coming in on Tuesday -- a lot more on Wednesday and by Thursday the reunion was in full swing.

It continued that way until (oh, so quickly) it was Sunday morning and goodbyes and look toward next year were being said and we all were on our way to our homes.

The following members attended:

HQ Company & Battalion Headquarters (9)

Foster Cook - ADDRESS UNKNOWN  
Tom Didlake - Starkville, MS

Bob Reighard - Springville, NY

John "Georgia Boy" Latham - Lithia Springs, GA

Hartwin Magnuson - Manor, TX

Ed Winslow - Memphis, TN

Ed Malkowski-Fort Worth, TX

James "Red" Kemp - East Point, GA

Raymond Smith - Chattanooga, TN

A Company (21½)

Clarence Reed-Salem, IL  
 Homer Patton-Arlington, TN  
 Stanley Lisowski - Carnegie, PA  
 David "Duffy" Barto - Slovan, PA  
 Dick Showalter - Muncie, IN  
 Dean Ousley - Kokomo, IN  
 Foy Peavy - Jacksonville, GA  
 Casimir "Casey" Hartwick - South Bend, IN  
 Ralph Johnson - Iowa Falls, IA  
 Clara Harding-Olmsted Falls, OH  
 Amelia Harding - Olmsted Falls, OH  
 Frank Bertrand - Eunice, LA  
 Hazel Scott - Franklin, TN  
 Arlis Mouring - Miami, FL  
 Jack Penuel - Lascassas, TN  
 Julian K. Smith-Houston, TX  
 Jack Flanagan - Severna Park MD  
 Paul Darretta - Englishtown, NJ  
 Oscar Pinegar - Manchester, TN  
 Alvin Hargrove - Murfreesboro, TN  
 Homer Powell - Manchester, TN  
 \*Jewel Raulins - Meridian, MS Also B CO.

RCN Company (8½)

Leonard Brown-Atlanta, GA  
 John Helton-Lavergne, TN  
 Albert Beane - Chancellor, AL  
 Ed Butler - Nettleton, MS  
 Sanford Johnson - Carrollton, TX  
 Dessie Johnson-Jacksonville. FL  
 Melvin Rowland - Jackson, TN  
 \*Jack Scales - Starkville, MS Also C Co.  
 John Breland - Lilburn, GA

B Company (17½)

James Boatwright - Whitesburg, GA  
 Francis Hayes-Brewton, AL  
 John O'Brien - Cleveland, OH  
 Herbert Mauritz - Minneapolis, MN  
 Charles Nix - Cleveland, GA  
 Talmadge Riley - Benton, KY  
 Paul Cocchi - Deptford, NJ  
 Toby Littlejohn - Linden, TX  
 Floyd Jaycox - Biloxi, MS

Rufus Noland - Northport, AL  
 Devers Bryant - Newnan, GA  
 Willie Spray - Nashville, TN  
 Clint Patrick - Covington, GA  
 Travis Phillips - Houston, TX  
 Floyd Snow - Goodlettsville, TN  
 E. Fayne Haynes - Murfreesboro, TN  
 Charles Armstrong - Lexington, KY  
 \*Jewel Raulins - Meridian, MS Also A Co.

C Company (15½)

Ansel Dreggors - Aster, FL  
 Richard Reynolds - Reform, AL  
 Charles Hill - Gerry, NY  
 Melvin Barr - Leonard, TX  
 James Williams - Sentinel, OK  
 Verble Wheeler - Spencer, TN  
 Curley Rhodes - Nashville, TN  
 George Johnson - Boonton, NJ  
 Mary Nash - Hendersonville, TN  
 William Leininger - Mishawaka, IN  
 Tom Hughes - Enterprise, AL  
 Avery Sanders - Murfreesboro, TN  
 Sam Joyce-Old Hickory, TN  
 Deen Uhles - Castalian Springs, TN  
 \*Jack Scales - Starkville, MS Also RON C  
 Stanley Zabetakis -North Lauderdale, FL

Medical Detention (1)

George Karaphillis -Tarpon Springs, FL (A Co.)

The Company Count was:

HQ .....	9
RCN.....	8½
A.....	21½
B .....	17½
C .....	15½
Med.....	1
TOTAL .....	73

NOTE: All members attending made contributions to the Battalion Fund to help defray the cost of the Newsletters, either prior to the reunion or at the reunion.

The entire reunion was highlighted by the wonderful spirit of camaraderie and good spirits as old comrades and soldiers of over 40 years ago get together to greet one another and swap old tales, etc.

Through the most efficient and hard work of Carolyn Reed (Clarence's wife) of Salem, Illinois (originally from Franklin, Tennessee and with close ties to the area) about 60 of our group attended THE GRAND OLE OPRY and had a most enjoyable time.

There were cruises on the river for some, and golf for others (not yours truly this time) with "Sandbagger" Raulins winning all the money again - - we have to check his handicap and I'm going to play in 1988 and I want more strokes - - right fellows -- Mal, Red, Duffy, Paul, George, Stan and Tom,

I REPEAT, EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE HAD A GREAT TIME OR IT WAS THEIR OWN FAULT.

We had two members making their first reunion - - Melvin Rowland - Jackson, Tennessee of Recon Company, he is an attorney in Jackson, Tennessee at present and Foster Cook of HQ Company, they were most warmly welcomed by all.

At our business meeting on Saturday afternoon, it was determined to have our 1988 reunion on August 4-5-6-7 at the Trace Inn - 3400 West Main Street - Tupelo, Mississippi 38801.

The Committee appointed was:

Chairman: Ed Butler - Nettleton, MS  
Bill Hawkins - Holly Springs, MS  
Tom Didlake - Starkville, MS  
Jack Scales - Starkville, MS  
Jewel Raulins - Meridian, MS

Ed Butler of Nettleton, Mississippi presented a terrific proposal from the Trace Inn, and it was chosen by the members assembled (practically unanimously). A copy of the proposal is enclosed.

I must say that in this day of rising prices, these rates for everything are outstanding, and we look for a great reunion, as the other facilities are excellent.

The Committee has come up with just about the best plan possible and one that is most suitable for our group.

In a letter from Committeeman Bill Hawkins of Holly Springs, Mississippi, he states the following: "There are 5 or 6 golf courses available with 3 of them close to the Trace Inn, The Trace Inn has given the 612th a complete building all to ourselves for our Hospitality Room from Thursday, August 4 - on."

A COPY OF THE PROPOSAL FROM THE TRACE INN IS ATTACHED FOR THE INFORMATION OF ALL MEMBERS.

One other thing, as you know I am a Civil War (war between the states) buff and in the area around Tupelo, there are two separate battlefields:

- 1/ Brices Cross Roads - fought June 10, 1864 Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest leading his Confederates inflicted a complete defeat (in fact was a rout) on the Union soldiers under Gen. Samuel D. Sturgis. The Union soldiers ran all the way to Ripley (24 miles away) and then some of them, all the way to Memphis in a panic race. The Confederates captured 14 artillery pieces, and the entire wagon train of 250 wagons containing 10 days ration for over 5,000 men, as well as, a large supply of ammunition and over 1,600 prisoners. The Yankees suffered over 700 killed and wounded and Gen. Forrest's losses were very light.
  
- 2/ Tupelo - fought July 14, 1864 Gen. A.J. Smith led the Union Army (the Red River Command) to a resounding defeat of the Confederates under Gen. Forrest, It was Gen. Forrest's worst licking of the war as the Confederates left over 350 dead on the battlefield, in addition to many, many wounded as they retreated.

So, I doubt seriously, if any other location in the entire war has the historical balance as the Tupelo area, regarding both sides. I was speaking on the phone this week with Jack Scales, Starkville and Columbus, Mississippi, as we were talking about the coming reunion in Tupelo, Mississippi and I mentioned the two Civil War Battles fought near there, and Jack informed me that in the Veterans Cemetery in Columbus, that both the Union and Confederate dead are buried together. This is quite unique because I thought that after the war, all of the Union dead were dug up and shipped to either their home towns in the North or to the Military Cemeteries in the North. This conversation brought about a lot of sober thought about how after a couple of generations, the descendants of those dead soldiers fought together in WWI - WWII - Korea and Vietnam, with the 612<sup>th</sup> coming from all over the country, Incidentally, Jack Scales had a number of his forbearers - Uncles - Great Grand-Parents, etc., that fought with the Mississippi Regts. in the Civil War - - Col. Junius Scales led the Mississippi Brigade that broke the Union line at the Battle of Murfreesboro (or Stones River in the North).

So, we all look forward to a great, relaxing and most enjoyable reunion.

I have sent a contribution to the National Tank Destroyer Association from the 612<sup>th</sup>, as well as my personal contribution and have asked them to put our reunion information in their Newsletter, which I'm sure they will do. Their Fall 1987 Edition was just received - - so it shows that they are behind in their publication schedule. I have also asked them to extend an invitation to Tank Destroyer Veterans in the area to drop in for some refreshments and just plain friendship and fellowship (there are not too many left).

As far as transportation services:

The plane connections are:

From Memphis, Tennessee - - Northwest Commuter - 6 flights daily  
From Nashville, Tennessee - - American Eagle (American Airlines Commuter) - 3 flights daily

Tupelo, Mississippi is located approximately 90 miles due SE of Memphis, Tennessee on U.S. Highway 78. A lot of members will fly to Memphis, Tennessee and then rent a car for the last lap to Tupelo.

Since the publication of the last Newsletter in June of 1987, I have received letters and contributions from the following:

Ralph Johnson - Iowa Falls, Iowa - - Is recovering from Prostate Gland surgery, but was able to make the Nashville reunion and met all of his old buddies from A Company - - Raulins, Reed, Patton, J.K. Smith, Darretta, Peavy, Showalter, Bertrand, etc.

Foy Peavy - Jacksonville, Florida - - He and his wife Mary, were getting ready to go to the Florida Keys around Marathon, Florida to enjoy the fishing from their Cabin Cruiser. We sure enjoyed seeing them both in Nashville. Say Foy - old buddy - I still owe you a set of pictures - - coming soon and I apologize for the long wait - - look forward to seeing you and Mary in Tupelo, Mississippi at the 1988 reunion.

Ed Winslow - Memphis, Tennessee - - Both he and wife Lucille made the Nashville reunion despite both having operations quite recently.

Dick King - Fort Worth, Texas - - Couldn't make Nashville due to his prior commitment to his home town reunion and golf tournament -- Pittsburg, Texas (incidentally Pittsburg is east of Dallas on the way to Texarkana) look forward to seeing Dick and his wife Etta at Tupelo, Mississippi in August.

Helen Rennard - Myrtle Beach, South Carolina - - Could not make the Nashville reunion, but is looking forward to 1988 in Tupelo, Mississippi.

Bob Sutherland - Orlando, Florida - - Could not make the Nashville reunion, but is looking forward to 1988, in Tupelo, Mississippi. Bob & Karen Sutherland's new address:

R.E. Sutherland  
3171 Crested Circle  
Orlando, FL 32821

David J. Grimm - Washington, Pennsylvania - - Couldn't make Nashville, but might be able to make Tupelo in 1988. Had a heart attack but is recovering.

George W. Yancey - Breckenridge, Texas - - Would like to have the names of the old Camp Swift bunch - - he remembers First Sgt. Bray and Sgt. Clingan was Motor Sgt. (or Master Sgt.). Some of you old timers drop him a line at:

G.W. Yancey  
1212 W. Elm Street  
Breckenridge, TX 76024

Emma Jean Willis - Homewood, Illinois - - Still enjoys receiving the Newsletters and highly values all the fine friendships she and late husband John enjoyed with all of the 612th members and their wives and families - - still is hoping to make a reunion soon - - maybe -- this year - - Emma Jean (John Willis was Secretary for a number of years and Emma Jean assisted him greatly).

Lloyd Simmons - Fertile, Minnesota - - Not feeling too well, and has to make trips to the VA Hospital in Fargo, North Dakota due to a service connected condition in his right hip - - send his best wishes to all his old comrades.

Herman McCollum - Winchester, Indiana - - Not in good health, and could not make Nashville, will try to make a reunion soon - - he sends his best to all of his old "B" Company buddies.

Marvin Dyal - Clearwater, Florida - Sends his best to his "A" Company pals and is hoping to see everyone in 1988.

Oscar Pinegar - Manchester, Tennessee - Had a great time at the Nashville reunion and is hoping to be able to make another one.

Frank Cotignola - Howard Beach, New York - - Planned on making Nashville, but a family wedding that weekend changed his plans - - will try and plan for 1988.

Ed Malkowski - Fort Worth, Texas - - "Mal" is one of my "helpers" and "gofers" at all of the reunions -- he plays a pretty good game of golf also - he was at a company retirement party last fall (General Dynamics, I think) in Fort Worth, Texas and was talking to a fellow who worked in the same department with Mal for years, and lo and behold, the guy was in Company "A" - 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion - - his name is - -

David C. Gibbons  
5028 Monett  
Fort Worth, TX 76117

He said he had never heard of the 612<sup>th</sup> having reunions or receiving any Newsletters, and the same for the National Tank Destroyer Association. Well, I checked the Battalion records - - here is what I found (on a 3 x 5 index card) - -

David C. Gibbons  
1411 Pruitt Ave.  
Fort Worth, TX

And then --

2605 Wayside Ave.  
Fort Worth, TX

Was on the Roster until 1/11/57 when mail was returned marked UNDELIVERABLE NO FORWARDING ADDRESS. Tom Didlake (I think) was Secretary at that time. This incident shows how members are gone from the Roster -- usually their own fault. Mal, thank you for the info and I have added David to the Roster and want to welcome him back into the fold.

Joe Rash - Burgettstown, Pennsylvania - - He is not in good health, but his wife Teresa sends in his dues every year. Teresa says that Joe enjoys the Newsletters and both of them wish that all members and their families enjoy themselves at the reunions. Keep fighting Joe, we are all praying and pulling for you.

Donn D. Fisher - Carrollton, Texas - - Couldn't make Nashville, but will try in 1988. Donn sent some photos taken at the Austin reunion - which I will pass on to the members - - hope to see you in Tupelo, Mississippi Donn - - and thank you for the photos.

Hazel Scott - Franklin, Tennessee - - Had a most enjoyable time at Nashville, she sure misses brother William a great deal - - Hazel, all of us miss William immensely - - he reminded me of an "old

shoe” always available and willing to help in his soft spoken way - - a true Southern Gentleman in every way. Hope to see you in Tupelo, Hazel, in August.

I also received contributions from:

Bob Behney - Norristown, Pennsylvania

Luther Hall - Price, Kentucky

Paul Tallas - Fort Worth, Texas

Joseph C. Kosak (Maj. Rtd.) - Winter Park Florida

Charles E. Mason - Ferrum, Virginia - - His wife Nadia, wrote and said that Charles was in the Roanoke, Virginia Memorial Rehabilitation Center for treatment to a service connect disability to his right ear, which caused his deafness. An ammunition dump (magazine) was blown up during the Battle of the Bulge which was the cause of Charles’ hearing impairment. He can use all the help available, so, if any of our members recall this action please write to Charles at:

Charles E. Mason  
Rt. #1, Box 123  
Ferrum, VA 24088

Charles was Maj. James Kemp’s radioman. He can use your affidavit to get V.A. help with his disability.

Floyd Jaycox - Biloxi, Mississippi - - He and wife Ruby are looking forward to the Tupelo reunion. He is back on his shrimp boat and their new address is:

14560 Lamey Bridge Rd.  
Biloxi, MS 39532

George Greek - Jacksonville, Florida - - Sorry, he could not make Nashville - - he was transferred from the 612<sup>th</sup> to the 603<sup>rd</sup> and was in combat with them. The 603<sup>rd</sup> was attached to the 6<sup>th</sup> Armored Division one of Gen. Patton’s spearheads - - and a lot of the 603<sup>rd</sup> men go to the 6<sup>th</sup> Armored reunions San Francisco in 1987 and Richmond, Virginia in 1988. He doesn’t see much of Foy Peavy since he (George) retired - - sends his best to all.

Anthony Cavataio - Brooklyn, New York - - Wasn’t able to make Nashville, but will look to 1988 - - says that Charlie Hill was supposed to write to him, but did not do so - - Charlie, get on the ball and write to your old buddy - - Anthony sends his best to all of his old “C” Company buddies.

Bob Reighard - Springfile, New York - - Bob had a conversation with Dick Showalter in Nashville and Showalter promised to send Bob a copy of the Ernie Pyle (the G.I.’s correspondent) column about the 612<sup>th</sup>, written one week before D - Day. One of our Newsletters of the past three years had reprinted the Ernie Pyle column in which Dick Showalter mentions that he had married a girl (Edna Kuhns) from Ernie’s home town - Dana, Indiana and when Ernie heard Edna’s name he immediately asked Dick to sit down away from the crowd and talk of their home tome, which they did for quite a while. Dick and Edna, his wife are very active in the Ernie Pyle Memorial

Society, and every year participate in the activities and Parade honoring the noted war correspondent who was killed on the island of Ie Shima in the Pacific, not too long before the end of the war (Ernie was up front with the infantry). Ernie Pyle wrote of the "little guys" who did the dirty work and suffered the pain, loneliness and boredom and all of the other stressful things brought on by the war - - he truly was the G.I.'s Correspondent. Say Bob, thanks a lot for the story on Bea's uncle, which I enjoyed a lot.

Now, for the saddest chore I have when I write these Newsletters:

Elsie Smith (Henry W.) - Fort Pierce, Florida - - I received a most sad and touching letter from Henry & Elsie Smith's daughter Reba, regarding the death, after a short illness of her mother Elsie, on June 23, 1987. This was absolutely a tragic happening, since Elsie had been so involved with taking care of Henry W. or Warren as she called him, for many years since he suffered a stroke. The Smiths' made every reunion up until that time and Elsie was extremely helpful in any way that she could. Rest in Peace good wife, mother and friend. The Battalion Association sent a check to daughter Reba to do with as she see fit - - a floral piece, etc.

Mark J. Dunn - Crandall, Georgia - - I received a letter from Mrs. Mark J. Dunn, that her husband had passed away on March 26, 1987.

Eldon Debro - Stone Lake, Wisconsin - - I was notified by his wife Evelyn that Eldon had lost the long hard fight against his illness that had dogged him for a number of years, including treatment in the V.A. Hospitals. Eldon passed away in September, and the VFW Post of Hessel, Michigan handled the military honors at Eldon's burial. Eldon and Evelyn were long time members of the Battalion Association and were the co - hosts of the 1975 reunion held in Chicago, Illinois and were always willing to help out in any way at the many reunions that they attended. The Battalion Association sent a floral piece to Eldon's wake and received a nice thank you note from Evelyn.

William (Willie) DiNino - Burgettstown, Pennsylvania - - Just before Christmas, I received a phone call from Duffy Barto in Slovan, Pennsylvania informing me of the passing away of Willie, who had been in ill health for some time. Willie attended a number of reunions, the last being in Baltimore, Maryland in 1971. Willie was an old timer in the 810<sup>th</sup> Tank Destroyer Battalion when "Duffy" Barto, Al Marcucci, Bill Vickers, Dante Filipponi, Bill Vennetti and the rest of the Western Pennsylvania and New York fellows came into the Army, and he was a Sgt. at the time and acted as a "big brother to the newcomers. Willie was a Gun Sgt. (Tank Commander) in the First Platoon of "A" Company, and in the last days of the war in Czechoslovakia the line of demarcation was set by President Roosevelt and Staling at half - way between Pilsen and Prague - - with the Russians on one side and the Americans on the other - - the 612<sup>th</sup> was in the town of Roczany ten miles east of Pilsen, rounding up and processing and guarding the thousands of German prisoners, who were pouring into our lines to surrender, in order to get away from the advancing Russian troops. The 612<sup>th</sup> as part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Inf. Div. had met up with the Russians, and upon a request from a Russian General, Willie's Tank Destroyer (M - 18) was chosen to be in the Russian Victory Parade in Prague (the capital of Czechoslovakia) so early one morning Willie and his crew got on that hard - paved four lane hi - way between Pilsen and Prague (40 miles apart) and following the Russian General in his American lend - lease or "lend - lose" jeep opened up the M - 18 to 60 mph. and followed the Russian General to Prague and participated in the Russian Victory Parade - - this information is taken from Sgt. Sam E. Mestrezat's history of "A" Company.



Therefore Willie DiNino and his crew of "A" Company had the singular distinction of being the American Soldiers who traveled the farthest east on the European continent.

The Battalion Association sent a check to Willie's wife to handle as she see fit. We received a nice thank you note.

James H. Scarbrough - Verdaman, Mississippi - - I was notified by his son Pete Scarbrough that his father had passed away on August 9, 1986 in the **V.A.** Hospital in Jackson, Mississippi. James had attended some reunions, the last in Memphis, Tennessee in 1974. The Battalion Association sent a check to his wife to handle as she sees fit, and we received a nice thank you note.

**REST IN PEACE GOOD COMRADES AND SOLDIERS ALL YOU HAVE ANSWERED YOUR  
LAST BUGLE CALL AND HAVE FOUGHT THE GOOD FLIGHT.**

Someday you will be finally joined by all of us and the 612<sup>th</sup> will again be 100% in assembly, someplace.

I want to thank Jack Scales of Starkville & Columbus, Mississippi for once again making a most generous contribution to the Battalion Association as he has done every year. Know that Jack is a very modest person and doesn't like public recognition, but we really appreciate his assistance and help, as we can use it to help defray additional costs of the Newsletters. Many of the wives and other family members have written to me telling that the arrival and reading of the Newsletters is something that is looked forward to with great interest and which is most enjoyable, especially by the sick members and those not in the best of health and unable to attend a reunion.

We are most pleased and able to publish the Newsletters because of the fine support given by the members.

I also want to thank Tina Phillips, Travis Phillip's wife of Houston, Texas for her faithful and diligent work every year in assisting me with the registration and the picture details and money, etc.

Col. James E. "Red" Kemp - Atlanta, Georgia -- Cal. Kemp suffered a stroke an the right side of his body in January and has been in the hospital at first, *and then in a* Rehabilitation Center, and is now at home recovering, but very slowly. I have been in contact with his wife "Izzy" Isabel, and his son Bruce and at this writing he is making progress. Please remember him in your prayers and send him a card or note notifying him that you are praying and pulling for him to recover (as .well as for all of our members who are not in good health). We certainly want to see "Red" at the Tupelo reunion as he hasn't missed one in many, many-years and among the pillars of our Battalion Association "Red" stands tallest and sturdiest of all. He was that way *during* the war, *having* picked up the spirit and style from Col. W.A. Hedden with whom he had a very proper but close relationship. "GET WELL" Red, we're all pulling for you. Drop "Red" a note or card:

Col. James B. Kemp  
2052 N. Oak Dr.  
Lawrenceville, GA 30245

Among the many important and irreplaceable items given to the Battalion Association by Capt. Charles A. Harding's (CO of "A" Company killed on the Vire River' in August 1944) sisters Amelia and Clara Harding of Olmsted Falls, Ohio is the first information bulletin for members of the 612<sup>th</sup> published by Lt. Col. (then) WA. Hedden at Camp Swift, Texas in June 1952. I think all of the members, especially the old - timers will find it most interesting (a copy of the information bulletin is attached).

"A" Company Battle Honors - The 612<sup>th</sup> Tank Destroyer Battalion received many honors and had an outstanding battle record in its eleven months in combat from Omaha Beach to Pilsen, Czechoslovakia.

In this entire time the Battalion was attached to the 2nd Infantry Division except for a very short time -- and it is quite unique that the most distinguished honor was awarded to "A" Company for its service from December 16 to 19, 1944, while it was attached to, and fought with, and along side, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the 395<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of the 99th Infantry Division in the "Battle of the Bulge" or the German Ardennes offensive.

As the attached General Order No. 5 notes: the "Distinguished Unit Badge" or commonly referred to as "Presidential Citation" was conferred on all men of Company "A" who were in that battle.

I have made a most intense and detailed study of the "Battle of the Bulge" for the past 40 years (some day I plan to write a book on the battle, but when, I cannot say at this time), and I have thoroughly studied in detail all of the units both American and German that participated -- and I can definitely state that in the 75 miles of the German penetration -- from Monschau in the North to Echternach in the South -- the only place where the U.S. Forces did not retreat or give up their original position was in the Monschau-Hofen area, which formed the solid base for the so - called "Northern - Shoulder" which then became the "ElsenBorn Ridge" position of solid American fire - power, and upon which the entire American defense in the North was anchored.

The Tragedy at Honsfeld -- At the Nashville reunion, last year, there was a most interesting discussion regarding the gigantic snafu in Honsfeld, on the Belgian - German border when the two Platoons of "B" Company and one Platoon of RCN Company were ordered and directed into a trap caused by the conflicting orders of the confused and panic - stricken officers of V Corp. and the 99<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Headquarters staff, which resulted in 17 men killed (murdered in cold blood by the 55 men as they stood in the cold with their arms overhead and without their weapons) 3 officers and 110 men of "B" Company and 1 officer and 20 men of the attached Recon Platoon and 3 medical men of the Battalion Medical Platoon were reported as missing in action, with many of them wounded. Most of the men were repatriated as POWs when the war ended, but no trace of the Medics was ever found.

Leading the discussion was Elmer Fayne Haynes, of Murfreesboro, Tennessee who amazed everyone by his recollections of the whole situation. Fayne's ability to recall practically everything, which happened 43 years ago is absolutely fantastic. Francis Hayes and Devers Bryant, together with Clint Patrick, Toby Littlejohn and Talmadge Riley also contributed to the discussion which lasted into the wee hours of the morning.

Fayne's account of how he was able to get off 3 shots from his 3" gun without it being dug in, and with it recoiling back many feet after each shot is absolutely gripping.

Haynes squad was in one of the houses in Honsfeld early on a.m. December 17, 1944 when the German spearhead "Task Force Peiper" came barreling through the town - - the German force Recon had already gone through when R.B. Taylor awakened Haynes and told him that a German column had already gone through, Haynes and Taylor and another squad member named Walker from California, went out and got the 3" gun ready to fire, even thought it was on a hard pavement and not dug in -- just then Haynes saw the first of the German Tanks, Panthers or Mark IV's coming down the road, just about 40 yards away - - the road curved and Haynes let the first two go on and when the 3rd made the turn to the right, Fayne fired and hit the 3<sup>rd</sup> German Tank right on the left side of the Turret just above the tracks with an AP shell -- it set the German Tank on fire - - Haynes 3" gun re - coiled away back into the yard - - Haynes and the others maneuvered the gun back into position and Haynes sighted the gun again at Zero Range - Direct Fire - at that moment Bill Vickers of Niagara Falls, New York came out of one of the other houses to assist in any way he could. Haynes handed Vickers a length of rope and had him tie it to the lanyard and when he had sighted in the gun again - they fired at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tank and then repeated the operation again at the third tank - hitting both and also setting them on fire.

On the last two shots, Haynes set on the trail as the gun re-coiled across the pavement. By using the rope on the lanyard, they were able to escape the muzzle blast and recoil.

The 4th German Tank had just started to come around the bend when the first Tank was hit and he put it into reverse and stayed away from the fight.

The last shot that Hayne's and his men fired was a round of HE when the rest of the German Armored Infantry started to surround the house.

That was the beginning of the real tragedy. Then the 612<sup>th</sup> men were ordered by Lt. Baysek to break - up their arms and walk outside to surrender with their arms over their heads, and the SS Troopers started shooting them down as they stood there. However, that is a story for later on.

A Mr. John F. Colarusso of Carver, Massachusetts of the 626<sup>th</sup> Tank Destroyer Battalion Association, has written to me to see if any other Battalion Association is interested in going in with the 626<sup>th</sup> to make a purchase of 200 medallions of either metal or strong plastic to attach to our vehicles. They are similar to the ones used by the DAV - Elks - American Legion and VFW (sketch of a probably look of medallion as shown)



Colarusso writes that if each Battalion Association would commit for 60 or 70 of the medallions - he can arrange a buy of 200 for \$1,400.<sup>00</sup> or' \$7.<sup>00</sup> a piece.

From past experience, I think our Battalion Association would purchase probably 40 or 50, but I hesitate to commit for any more than 50. I also think Colarusso should be able to get two more Battalion Associations to go along with the 626<sup>th</sup> and 612<sup>th</sup> to make up the 200.

I called him today (8/24/88) but he is in Florida until the end of March when I will call him again.

I will pass on any other information on this project, so please consider it and let me know later on how you feel.

Once again we raised a substantial amount of money for the Flower Fund through the hard work of all of the ladies under Tina Phillips and ably assisted by Lucille Winslow and all of the other ladies. Thank you all very much for all of your most valuable help.

That is about all for now, so come on to Tupelo, Mississippi on August 4 - 5 - 6 & 7, 1988 or come earlier if you like - - and have a most enjoyable time with all of your old buddies and Comrades-in-Arms.

Another Newsletter will follow in June.

Please send in your dues of \$3.<sup>00</sup> to help pay *for* the Newsletter (if you *haven't* already).

Best Regards,

Jack Flanagan  
Secretary  
139 St. Andrews Rd.  
Severna Park, Maryland 21146  
(301) 987-1701

**SPECIAL NOTE:**

**ENCLOSED WITH THIS NEWSLETTER YOU WILL FIND A REGISTRATION CARD FOR THE TRACE INN. PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU ARE WITH THE 612<sup>TH</sup> TANK DESTROYER BATTALION ASSOCIATION AND DONT FORGET THE 1st CLASS STAMP.**

**A Special Note of Thanks:**

I want to thank "Duffy" Barto and his .wife Alice of Slovan, Pennsylvania and Paul Darretta and his wife Mary of Englishtown, New Jersey for all the help and assistance given at the Memphis Reunion - - thanks a lot folks!

Also the same of Verble Wheeler of Spencer, Tennessee an old buddy of Sam Joyce's for the midnight runs to replenish the refreshments.

**HOPE TO SEE EVERYONE IN  
TUPELO, MISSISSIPPI  
FOR A GRAND REUNION**

LAST MINUTE CONTRIBUTIONS:

Talmadge Riley - Benton, Kentucky - - Had a most enjoyable time in Nashville and is looking forward to Tupelo, Mississippi and another great time.

Levander O. Walter - Louisville, Kentucky - - Still having a great deal of trouble getting a fair shake from the Veterans Administration regarding compensation. He was wounded when a tank ran over him in "The Battle of the Bulge", and despite Capt. Brennan's statement to that effect - the VA continues to shaft Levander - he is very sick and disabled and also his wife is very ill at the present time. Anyone that has any information regarding his injury would help him greatly if they would contact him.

Levander O. Walter  
3026 Crums Lane  
Louisville, KY 40216

IF ANYONE KNOWS THE ADDRESS OF FOSTER COOK, PLEASE CONTACT ME SO THAT I CAN ADD HIM TO THE ROSTER AND MAILING LIST.

# Certificate of Commendation Headquarters



## Second Infantry Division



*For outstanding and especially  
meritorious service, this Certificate of  
Commendation is awarded to:*

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

**Citation:** The 6888 Central Postal Directory Battalion is commended for meritorious performance of duty in Korea. Personnel assigned a highly trained and dedicated crew to conduct the various supplies runs in support of the 24 Infantry Division. The highly efficient performance by this organization was in a large measure instrumental in the success of this Division. The superior skill and exceptional courage displayed by this battalion reflect great credit upon each officer and enlisted man and the staff of the United States.

W. J. HARRISON  
W. J. HARRISON  
Brigadier General, USA  
Commanding