

**OUR WISCONSIN BOYS  
IN ÉPINAL MILITARY CEMETERY, FRANCE**



**BY THE STUDENTS OF HISTORY 357: THE SECOND WORLD WAR**



**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**  
University of Wisconsin-Madison

# **THE STUDENTS OF HISTORY 357: THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN, MADISON**

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SHUANG WU, JENNIFER ZELENKO



**THE STUDENTS OF HISTORY 357 WITH PROFESSOR ROBERTS**

## FOREWORD

This project began with an email from Monsieur Joel Houot, a French citizen from the village of Val d'Ajol to Mary Louise Roberts, professor of History at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Mr. Houot wrote to Professor Roberts, an historian of the American G.I.s in Normandy, to request information about Robert Kellett, an American G.I. buried in Épinal military cemetery, located near his home. The email, reproduced here in French and English, was as follows:

Bonjour madame...Je demeure dans le village du Val d'Ajol dans les Vosges, et non loin de la se trouve le cimetière américain du Quéquement à Dinozé-Épinal ou repose 5255 soldats américains tombés pour notre liberté. J'appartiens à une association qui consiste à parrainer une ou plusieurs tombes de soldat...à nous de les honorer et à fleurir leur dernière demeure...Nous avons les noms et le matricule de ces héros et également leur état d'origine...moi même je parraine le lieutenant KELLETT, Robert matricule 01061440 qui a servi au 315<sup>th</sup> infantry régiment de la 79<sup>th</sup> infantry division, il a été tué le 20 novembre 1944 sur le sol de France.... il a encore de la famille pouvez vous m'aider à la retrouver . Malheureusement je ne parle pas anglais et ne sait ou m'adresser pour orienter mes recherches...merci

Good day, Madame. I live in the village of Val d'Ajol in the Vosges, not far from the American cemetery of Quéquement in Dinozé-Épinal, where 5255 American soldiers repose, having died for our freedom. I belong to an association which allows you to "godfather" one or several gravesites of soldiers. It is our obligation to honor and put flowers on their final resting place. We have the names and the regiment number of these heroes, as well as their state of origin. As for me, I am 'godfather' to the gravestone of Robert Kellett, number 01061440, who served in the 315<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment of the 79<sup>th</sup> infantry division. He was killed on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November on French soil. If he still has some family, would you please help me to find them? Unfortunately I do not speak English and I do not know how to go about this kind of research. Thank you!

Professor Roberts decided the research requested by Mr. Houot might make a good *extra credit project* for one of the students in her lecture class History 357, The Second World War. She presented Mr. Houot's appeal to the class, showing them Val d'Ajol on Google maps, and reading aloud an English translation of his email. The students were touched by the request. When it came time to volunteer, every hand in the room went up. So Professor Roberts wrote back to Mr. Houot requesting more names of soldiers resting in the U.S. military cemetery in Épinal. Two weeks later, an email arrived from Jocelyne Papelard-Brescia, the director of the 'parrainage' or gravesite adoption program at Épinal. A retired elementary school principal, Madame Papelard-Brescia started the adoption program in

2012. She sent Professor Roberts the names of several soldiers, describing them as “boys buried in Épinal World War Two U.S. cemetery.” Most exciting to the students was the fact that all the soldiers were from their home state of Wisconsin.

In this way, the Épinal project was born. Over the course of the semester, 43 students worked on “their” boys from Wisconsin. We were lucky enough to have a first-rate genealogist, Joyce Nigbor, auditing the class. Joyce’s research knowledge proved invaluable. The teaching assistant for the course, Jennifer Gramer, gave generously of her time at every stage of the project. Finally, the United States Army could not have been more helpful. Erica Elaine Wilson, Corinne E. Hagan, and Susan M. Kilianski worked hard to cut through red tape and make the IDTP file (Individual Deceased Personnel File) for each soldier available in record time. We are so grateful to these three amazing women and to the entire staff at the Freedom of Information Act\Privacy Act Office Human Resources Command for their help with this project!



MONSIEUR HOUOT STANDING NEAR THE GRAVESITE OF LIEUTENANT ROBERT KELLETT

LIEUTENANT ROBERT D. KELLETT  
315<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY REGIMENT, 79<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION



Lieutenant Robert D. Kellett was born on December 1, 1922, in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. He lived at 20 North Seymour Street with his parents, Gilbert and Dorothy Kellett, and he had two younger siblings, Audrey, born in 1927, and Gary Lee, born in 1937. He went to Lincoln School and graduated from Senior High school in 1940. He worked as a clerk in the engineering department of the Giddings and Lewis plant. His future wife, Betty Jane Bodoh also worked for Giddings and Lewis. She attended Fond du Lac High school and graduated in 1941. Kellett and Bodoh were married in Houston, Texas, on February 10, 1944.

Kellett enlisted in the service in Milwaukee on January 23, 1943. He was attached to an antiaircraft unit. In March 1944, Kellett was transferred to the infantry. He was assigned

to overseas duty on September 17, 1944 and served in the 79<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in the 315<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in General Alexander Patch's Seventh Army.

On November 15, 1944, Kellett was reported missing in action. Five days later, on November 20, 1944, he was reported as killed in action. In his US Army IDPF (Individual Deceased personnel file), his cause of death is listed as a "fractured skull" and "upper extremities disarticulated" or severed. He died at the age of 21 and was awarded a purple heart. Memorial services were held for him on Sunday, December 17, 1944 in his hometown. Attached are several newspaper articles about Kellett's life, as well as a picture of some of his living family who visited his grave in Épinal.

# MUSIC, ART, Drama; W O N

## BRIEF

### GROUP TO MEET

The Women of the Moose will meet at 7:30 p. m. Thursday in the auditorium with Miss Marie McCoy in charge of the program which will follow a business meeting.

### GARDEN CLUB MEETS

The Community Garden club will meet at 2:30 p. m. Friday at the home of Mrs. E. E. Borsack, 156 1/2 Hickory street.

### MEET AT SCHOOL

Members whose birthdays occur the first three months of the year were hostesses Tuesday afternoon at a birthday party given by the Frauen Verein in St. Peter's school hall. Mrs. Edward Ballwanz, Mrs. E. C. Schrank, Mrs. August Dekerman and Mrs. Louis Scher were awarded prizes in games. Refreshments were served by the steers and plans were made to meet March 2.

### SOCIAL PLANNED

Members of the White Shrine auxiliary will hold a social at 2 p. m. Saturday at the home of Mrs. Leahay Brenden, 181 Brush street.

### EVENTS PLANNED

Plans for a sleighride party to be held Monday night, Feb. 28, and a dancing party March 4 were made at a meeting of Hattie Winna Theta rho Girls' club Monday night at O. O. F. temple. Refreshments are served by Marion Welch and Joseph Odekirk. The next meeting of the group will be held March 6.

## Betty Jane Bodoh, Lieut. R.D. Kellett Married In Texas

### OFFICER STATIONED AT CAMP HULEN CLAIMS BRIDE AT EVENING RITE

Miss Betty Jane Bodoh, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Bodoh, 379 North Main street, became the bride of Lieut. Robert D. Kellett, son of Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Kellett, 20 North Seymour street, in a ceremony performed at 7 p. m. Saturday in the Trinity Lutheran church at Houston, Texas, by the Rev. Horms.

The bride wore a suit of orchid wool with dark brown accessories and a corsage of natural colored orchids. Miss Janice Culberson, bridesmaid, wore a slate blue wool dress with black accessories and a gardenia corsage. Lieut. W. R. Hamper attended the groom and the bride was given in marriage by Lieut. Stuart C. Morton.

Dinner was served for 16 guests at the Rice hotel in Houston following the ceremony. The couple will reside at the Luther hotel in Palacios, Tex. Lieut. Kellett is stationed nearby at Camp Hulen.

The bride was graduated from the Fond du Lac High school in 1941 and has been employed in the offices at Gliddings and Lewis, where the groom was also employed before entering the service. He was commissioned Oct. 14, 1943, at Camp Davis, N. C.

## TEACH CHILDREN HOW TO MAKE

By GAYNOR MADDOX

(NEA Staff Writer)

Education for living begins in the home. Even very young children should learn the basic rules of modern nutrition and how to prepare simple dishes. Many grammar and high schools now teach food use and preparation on the theory that it is every citizen's duty to know how to eat for physical fitness and national defense.

When possible let the children cook something they themselves will enjoy. This cookie recipe, for example, is chocolate (they love

### TOMORROW'S MENU

Breakfast: Orange juice, hot whole grain cereal, toast, butter or fortified margarine, coffee, milk for children.

Lunch: Cream of lima bean soup, soya crackers, cabbage and apple salad, whole wheat bread, cream cheese spread, chocolate chip honey cookies, tea, milk for children.

Dinner: Swiss steak, fried potatoes, green beans, enriched bread, butter or fortified margarine, green salad, prune soufflé, coffee, milk for children.

(chocolate); cookies are fine for the workers and school lunch box and, of course, grand for parties. So let's make a batch right now.

Chocolate Chip Honey Cookies  
(Makes about 4 dozen cookies)

One-third cup shortening, 1/2 cup honey, 1 egg, well beaten, 1 1/4 cups sifted flour, 1/4 teaspoon salt, 1/4



When teaching children to cook, they will enjoy eating.

The

Count Respirations

This might be called a taking story. If you have

## Doughboys Start Out at Themselves Jap, End By Seizing Supply Depot

Private Among  
Taking Part In  
loit

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ng carefully, they  
Japs had made a  
avg behind them all

### Missing

Lieut. Robert D. Kellett, 22, Is  
Listed In American Cas-  
ualty Report

Lieut. Robert D. Kellett, 22, who  
served in France with an infantry  
company has been reported missing  
in action as of Nov. 15, according  
to word received today by his wife,  
the former Betty Bodoh who re-  
sides on North Macy street, and his  
parents, Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert J.  
Kellett, 20 North Seymour street.

Commissioned at Camp Davis, N.  
C., as an infantry officer, he left  
the country in September for over-  
seas service.

The last letter received from  
Lieut. Kellett was written on Oct.  
11. He was graduated from Senior  
High school in 1940 and was mar-  
ried in Texas Feb. 19, 1944.

SLIPPERY ROADS

## MADISON DRIVER HURT SLIGHTLY IN ROAD CRASH

Vehicle Of Illinois Priest  
Goes Out Of Control Near  
Rosendale

E. W. Morgan, 55, of 708 West  
Dayton street, Madison, sustained  
minor injuries requiring treatment  
at St. Agnes hospital in a collision  
between two cars on State highway  
26 about two miles south of Rosen-  
dale shortly before 6 p. m. Monday.

Morgan was taken to St. Agnes  
hospital by a county traffic officer  
who investigated the accident, but  
had left to return to his home by  
bus when the officer called for him  
a few hours later.

Morgan was driving a southbound  
car which collided with a north-  
bound vehicle driven by a priest, the  
Rev. Fr. Horn of Springfield, Ill.  
The vehicle was said to be owned  
by the diocese which has its head-  
quarters at Springfield. The Rev.

## New Me County Club

TOKIO RA



## s Grown In Wisconsin



Shown at the recent annual convention of the Wisconsin Horticultural society last year; C. J. Tolfer, Green Bay, president of the society of the apple institute, who arranged the exhibit; C. D. Rosa, active secretary of the horticultural society and the apple institute.

## Individual Bond Purchases In County Behind Schedule

(to the fact that Fond du)

## OFFICER KILLED IN FRENCH AREA, SAYS TELEGRAM

Lieut. Robert D. Kellett, 21,  
Reported Dead; First  
Listed Missing

Lieut. Robert D. Kellett, 21, son of Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert J. Kellett, 20 North Seymour street, was killed in action in France Nov. 20, according to a message received from the war department Tuesday. A telegram arriving on Monday had informed members of his family that he was missing in action.

Lieut. Kellett's wife is the former Betty Bodoh, who resides with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Bodoh, 379 North Macy street.

Born Dec. 1, 1922, in this city, Robert attended Lincoln school, was graduated from Senior High school in 1940, and before entering service he was employed in the engineering department at the Giddings and Lewis plant. His marriage to Miss Bodoh took place last Feb. 10, at Houston, Tex.

Entering service Jan. 23, 1943, he was attached to an anti-aircraft unit, and in Oct. 1943, was commissioned at Camp Davis, N. C. Transferred to the infantry at Camp Huie in March of this year, he was assigned to overseas duty Sept. 17 and served with Gen. Alexander Patch's Seventh army.

Surviving are his widow, his parents, a sister, Audrey, and a brother, Gary Lee, at home.

Memorial services are planned at Division Street Methodist church for the afternoon of Sunday, Dec. 17.

## COMMITTEES NAMED

## War Veteran On Probation After Arrest For Wearing Uniform Following Release

### ATTENDANCE LIST GIVEN

Two County Schools Announce  
Names of Pupils Not Absent  
In Six Weeks

Perfect attendance records for pupils of two Fond du Lac county schools were announced today for the second six weeks period.

At Morse school, Waupun, R. 1, Miss Charlotte Jacobitz, teacher, reported that Margaret Snyder, Robert Konings, Marie and Fern Kotika and Darold and Donald Strook had not been absent during that time.

Those maintaining perfect attendance at Byron village school were Allen Betz, Paul Rhein, Maxine Rucka, Yvonne Benson, Alice Betz, Walter Betz, John Kelsey, Rosemarie Scharf, Patry Rucka, Leroy Rhein, Franklin Scharf, David Scharf and Robert Rhein.

## OSCAR HERBERT VISITS PACIFIC

Son, Six Grandsons Of Mrs.  
Mary Herbert Serving In  
Armed Forces

Oscar Herbert, son of Mrs. Mary Herbert, 64 East Arndt street, has recently returned from a year's travel with the Betty Sutton show in the South Pacific area. Mr. Herbert, a native of this city, has been in amusement work for a long time as a vocalist and entertainer. Pre-

Gordon Olmstead  
Sentence Of 6 Mo.  
Federal Jail

Gordon V. Olmstead, East Division street, arrested by a federal bureau investigation agent for illegal use of a navy uniform, was sentenced to six months in a federal institution, and then probation for six months. Judge F. Ryan Duffy, department returned today.

Arrested at the Republic quarters on South Main street, later part of October, who claimed he was working as a Republican national committee in Milwaukee and before United States Court, Floyd E. Jackson. He bonded over \$2,000 and freed on a \$200 bond.

Olmstead received injury in the war, when he was the aide of a PT boat at encounter with a German. He received a medical discharge June 24, 1943, after a stay in the Commonwealth Hospital, Aug. 15. Olmstead, in an interview, claimed he still was in service, but was home on leave.

Previous to his arrest, naval chief radioman was not to wear the uniform bars of the naval shore. He made a special trip here to Milwaukee.

When arraigned before United States commissioner, Olmstead he was wearing the uniform because his civilian clothes being altered, because he

# Aides, Gray Ladies Groups

## Classes Sponsored By Chapter Of Red Cross Have Completed Studies

A group of nurse's aides and a group of Gray Ladies will be graduated Tuesday evening, Dec. 19, at 8 o'clock in a joint ceremony at Agnes School of Nursing. Classes for both groups, sponsored jointly by the Fond du Lac County Red Cross chapter at St. Agnes hospital, were instructed by M. Maurice, R. N. Mrs. E. A. Duke serves as chairman of the Gray Lady committee and Mrs. Frank Spillman as chairman of the nurse's aide committee. The nurse's aide course began on 3, 1944, and will be completed on 18. The course is covered by 40 hours of actual instruction and lectures, and 44 hours of supervised work in the hospital, a total of 84 hrs. Nurse's aides serve a minimum of 150 hours, assisting the nurses in the hospital, and under supervision in dispensaries and

## Memorial

Service In Memory Of Lieut.  
Robert D. Kellett Will Be  
Held At 2 p. m. Sunday

Memorial services will be conducted at 2 p. m. Sunday at Division Street Methodist church for Lieut. Robert D. Kellett, 21, who was killed in action on Nov. 20 while serving in France with an infantry unit in Lt. Col. Alexander Patch's Seventh army. His parents are Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert J. Kellett, 20 North Seymour street, and his wife is the former Betty Bodoh. Dr. John G. Law of Beaver Dam, former pastor at the church, will conduct the services, assisted by Dr. John H. Becker. "Onward Christian Soldiers", favorite hymn of the officer, will be played by Mrs. Esther Temple, organist and Mrs. G. L. Larsen will sing, "My God and I."

## BUILDING LOAN

# 100 DE

## Charges Against Hindrance Program

Removal of new incoming detainees against the state prison urged by Warden [unclear] in an address to the conference of the Attorneys' association this week. Many detainees, warrants a prisoner after has begun, disturb for he can not keep open when the first completed and hence effective program ties.

To remedy the who recently observed anniversary as was recommended the offense is charged the latter should

## FEDERAL ORDER

### Proposal Of P. M. P. Co-Op. Endorsed By Producers At Conference

Extension of the federal marketing agreement act to cover the milk used for manufactured dairy products, especially evaporated milk, was one of eight points of a policy approved at the twenty-eighth annual convention of the National Co-Operative Milk Producers Federation which ended in Chicago on Friday.

The program for a federal order for evaporated milk, similar to that used to control fluid milk in many metropolitan areas, was suggested by Pure Milk Products Co-Operative which has its central office in the Hutter building.

William O. Perdue, general manager and other officers and directors of Pure Milk Products attended the federation meeting. Melvin Mason of Whitewater, president of Pure Milk Products, is a director of the national federation.

#### Sponsored Locally

Other points of the federation's policy, designed to protect dairy income in the immediate and postwar period, were similar to the program approved at the fifteenth annual Pure Milk Products meeting here on Oct. 31.

The other points outlined by the federation were:

1. Adoption of a federal parity formula which will assure equitable parity price relationships between

## Killed



—Larsen Photo

Lieut. Robert D. Kellelt, 21, son of Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert J. Kellelt, 20 North Seymour street, and husband of the former Betty Bodoh, has been reported killed in action in France Nov. 20. Member of an infantry unit, he served with Gen. Alexander Patch's Seventh army. Memorial services will be held Sunday, Dec. 17, at Division Street Methodist church.

FARMER AROUND

## Lakeside Park Is Desolate As Pets Appear To Shun Visitors

There's only a desolate sign reading, "Anyone picking flowers or plants will be subject to arrest," to show where Lakeside Park a few months ago was blooming with summer flowers. The animals and birds, seemingly oblivious to the cold and snow, appear lost without the attentions of an admiring public.

Because of lack of winter living quarters for the deer, 10 of the animals have been sold. Only the older deer with one half-grown fawn remain. Most of the animals at the zoo are strictly "home bodies" this winter, venturing out of their shelter houses only occasionally. "Peggy" and "Teddy", the Wisconsin black bears, are the only ones that really look comfortable against the snowy background with their heavy fur coats.

Rather out of place in the cold are beautifully colored birds, which look as if they would rather be parading their plumage in some warm tropical garden. But even they have adjusted themselves to the winter, and step daintily with their bright tails sweeping the snow.

The only animal at the zoo that appears to welcome visitors is a little red fox that runs continuously in a circle in its cage. No one has

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THE NYBERGS, 219 NORTH ST. N. FOND DU LAC, WISCONSIN, USA, 54937-1038,

T: (920)-907-8169



## PFC. RICHARD W BOREK

### 15<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY REGIMENT, 3<sup>RD</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION.

Private First Class (PFC) Richard W. Borek was born into a Catholic family in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on February 14, 1922. His mother was Mrs. Nettie Borek Krzyzanowski, who lived at 3288 A South 7<sup>th</sup> Street in Milwaukee. Not much could be found on PFC Borek's father.

PFC Borek's education was two years of High School. He worked as a "semiskilled" machine shop worker. He stood 5 foot 6 inches, and was 134 pounds at the time of his enlistment, which was December 10, 1942. At the time, he was 20 years old.

PFC Borek fought alongside Sergeant Audie Murphy, a highly decorated US soldier who became quite famous for his heroic deeds after the war. PFC Borek was killed 3 days after Murphy earned his silver star. According to army records, the cause of death was a fractured, disarticulated skull. Besides his mother, PFC Borek was survived by a sister, Ruth, who lived with her mother in Milwaukee.

Based on newspaper reports dating October 5, 1944, the day PFC Borek was killed in action, it is possible that he was killed in an operation to eliminate a German machine gun. This was the same operation in which Audie Murphy emerged as a hero. This operation occurred several miles north of Cleurie, France in a dry creek bed. PFC Borek was 22 years of age when he was killed. Among his effects were some Italian lire as well as French francs. This fact suggests he fought in Italy as well as France. His mother received a check for \$26.55, after PFC Borek's currency was converted into dollars.

Not too long ago on the streets of Milwaukee a purple heart was found with the name "Richard W. Borek" inscribed on the back. Given the name and location this is most likely the purple heart PFC Borek was awarded posthumously, and which was given to his family for his bravery in combat. Unfortunately, no family member came forward for the award, so the purple heart was placed in the Veterans Association.

SECOND LIEUTENANT ARONY HERMAN BRANDES  
577TH BOMBER SQUADRON, 392ND BOMBER GROUP, HEAVY



This report is addressed to the staff and caretakers of The Épinal American Cemetery and Memorial of France. It includes information regarding the life and service record of Second Lieutenant Arony Herman Brandes. The authors of this modest research project hope that this information will be of help and interest to those who oversee this American Veteran's final resting place, and will bear witness to the great sacrifice of one American soldier and the many French people who helped his only surviving comrade reach safety.

Arony H. Brandes was the second of three children born to parents William and Emma Brandes on January 18, 1921 in Appleton, a small city in central Wisconsin. Brandes was of German descent, his grandfather having emigrated from to the United States and settled in Wisconsin in the final decades of the nineteenth century. In 1930, when Brandes was only nine years of age, his father died of an illness, and in 1938 his mother also passed away. By this time his eldest sister Adeline had married, so Brandes and his younger sister Eldora went to live with Mr. and Mrs. Louis Lautenschlaeger; his uncle and aunt. Brandes remained in school until his third year of high school, after which he began working as a mechanic. He continued with this work until February 4, 1942, when he enlisted in the United States military in Milwaukee, Wisconsin at the age of 21.

Brandes became a member of The 577th Squadron trained under the Second Air Force, which was assigned to the Eighth Bomber Command in England for the duration of the war. The 392nd Bomber Group was stationed at RAF Wendling near Norfolk, England and began carrying out missions in September of 1943. The 392nd flew a total of 285 combat missions, suffering 1552 casualties including 835 KIA and 184 aircraft lost while

dropping 17,452 tons of bombs on enemy targets. Brandes held the position of Bombardier, and along with nine other men made up the crew of a B-24 liberator which they named the Ambling Okie.





Kneeling left to right: bombardier 2/Lt Arony H. Brandes; copilot 2/Lt Harold D. Storey; pilot 2/Lt Gerald M. Dalton; navigator 2/Lt Baranoski.  
 Standing left to right: tail gunner Sgt Adraine L. Taylor; waist gunner Sgt Charles F. Payne; waist gunner Sgt Harner H. Hildebrand; engineer S/Sgt Homer W. Holmes; ball turret gunner Sgt John T. Brown; radio operator S/Sgt Erwin D. Conley

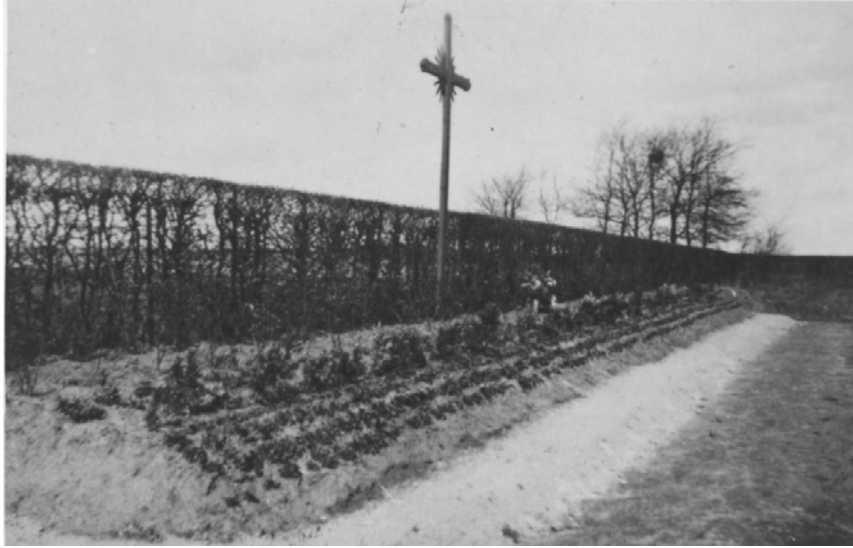
Arony H. Brandes died at the age of 23 on March 18, 1944 over Le Ployron France while on a mission to bomb Southern Germany. On this day, the 392nd set out to complete mission #53 in Southern Germany. The men were told that their targets were the German cities of Friedrichshafen and Russleheim, with the former being the primary target. This mission would turn out to be the most costly for the 392nd as it led to its heaviest losses of any raid during the war. In total, fourteen aircraft and crews were lost and nine others were damaged by enemy fighters and flak, amounting to 154 casualties. Second Lieutenant Brandes was one of these casualties.

After departing England, Brandes' B-24, piloted by Second Lieutenant Dalton, became caught in a violent propeller wash and collided with another plane piloted by Lieutenant Feran. As Dalton's plane got caught in the propeller wash it could not avoid hitting Feran's aircraft as it was simultaneously falling out of formation. The crash occurred over France while en route to their German targets. The following information comes from the only survivor of the crash, waist-gunner Sergeant Payne:

“On the way to Friedrichshafen, tail-end Charlie of our squadron peeled off and, since we were flying spare, we moved up into his position. Later he came back toward us and his rudder hit our right wing between the outboard engine and the wing tip. Our plane went up. I threw off my flak suit, grabbed my parachute, and reached for the waist window. The plane broke in two where I was standing, and I fell out at about 23,000 feet.”

The right wing and tail of the Ambling Okie were both broken off in the collision, along with the left tail and wings of Lt Feran’s plane. After jumping from the plane, Payne had to fall freely until reaching a height of about 3,000 feet before he could open his parachute. The planes crashed over the village of Le Ployron, southeast of Amiens. The entire territory was occupied by the Germans. Payne, the only survivor out of twenty, was then quickly taken in by French civilians. The Frenchmen hid him in a large cement water tank near the crash site, and eventually assisted him until he crossed into Spain. They then proceeded to bury twenty coffins, one being empty, in order to convince the German officials that there were no survivors. The images below depict the crash and initial burial site of the men.





Much information about the details of the crash were provided by French witnesses. Several years after the war, Roger Lavasseur of Le Ployron sent a letter to the mother of one of the men killed in the crash and described the event in which he bore witness. The translated letter reads:

“Excuse me, first, for taking the liberty of writing you, but I consider this task a duty. As a Lieutenant of the French Forces of the Interior and Chief of the Local Resistance Unit, I was eye-witness of the unfortunate accident which cost the life of your son and of eighteen of his comrades. Having picked up the only survivor, Charles Payne of Lake Placid, Florida, it was through him that I procured your address.

These are the circumstances of the accident: Saturday, March 18th, 1944, at one-thirty in the afternoon a large formation of Liberators passed over, flying very high in groups of six. Suddenly for an unknown reason, one of the planes detached itself and telescoped into the plane in which your son was flying. Immediately the two planes fell, rolling over each other. The rudders were torn off, the wings buckled and crushed by being struck by the propellers. One plane appeared to be about to crash on the village but in a last effort, the pilot, using full throttle, succeeded, for some seconds, in maintaining altitude. But the plane, with its load of bombs and fuel, crashed into the ground at some distance from the town. The tanks exploded, the bombs blew up, the plane was cut to pieces, and immediately there arose an immense fire. The other plane crashed near the railroad, 150 meters from the little house where we live. The children and their mother, who were alone, were terrified by the fire and explosions of the bombs which were, fortunately, not incendiary, which fact saved them from destruction.

During this time Payne, who alone had had time to strap on his parachute, jumped, and after a free fall of 4,000 meters, opened his parachute and descended slowly the remaining 3,000 meters, and landed. Upon his arrival on the ground one of my young comrades in the Resistance Movement succeeded in getting him away ahead of the Germans, who arrived rapidly on the scene, and hid him in the water reservoir of the village where he remained until nightfall.

The Commandant of the German Police Force ordered the Mayor of our village to have the victims buried near their planes. Interposing myself, I obtained, with the support of three young German pilots, a certificate at a nearby hospital which expressed clearly in French the right to bury them in the community cemetery. I obtained also, upon our promise that all would be ready by one o'clock the following afternoon, the right to place them in coffins and immediately, with the aid of young comrades, we picked up the burned bodies, which we could nevertheless recognize. Only four

gunners from the back ... without parachutes, fell free of the planes, their bodies remaining intact and unburned. Your son was one of these four. Unfortunately, they were robbed of all their personal possessions by the Germans, except for some rings which were turned over to the proper organizations.

The victims were then placed in the church, guarded by a moved and sympathetic crowd. During this time other comrades dug the grave, for we wished that all should be done by the hands of friends. A great crowd came from everywhere and pressed about the church. The Germans charged with the burial were furious. The officers forbade the priest to follow any religious service. The disgruntled soldiers made the crowd draw back, menacing them with their fists. Then they seemed satisfied in perceiving that we, ourselves, would do the burying and left rapidly.

Even though there were only nineteen victims, we buried twenty coffins. Then the crowd covered the tombs abundantly with flowers and after that they were carefully and reverently cared for and decorated by the young men and women of the village.

...Hoping that my letter will be a source of precious comfort to you in knowing in detail the last moments of him who is dear to you, I ask you to accept, dear Madam, the assurance of my respect and devotion.”

As the planes were filled with incendiary bombs, flames erupted upon impact leaving very little evidence behind. Of the nineteen bodies found, fifteen of them were identifiable because of their identification tags, leaving four to be unidentifiable by the German officials. The remains of these men were buried in a common grave in near the crash site in Le Ployron, France. Brandes body was one of these. However, upon moving the graves to the United States Military Cemetery in Le Solers, France, American officials were able to use tooth charts along with marks of clothing to identity the remains of Second Lieutenant Arony H. Brandes. He was then permanently interred at Épinal American Cemetery and Memorial. Brandes was unmarried and had no children. He was survived only by his two married sisters. His eldest sister, Adeline, had children and many grandchildren. Although they have never met him, Brandes has many relatives who are still living in Wisconsin today.

This information was compiled mainly from the Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF) provided to us by the US Army, US Census records, the online database Newspaper ARCHIVE, and the researching team with the 392nd Bomb Group who created the [www.B24.Net](http://www.B24.Net) website providing a rich source of detailed information about World War II American Veterans of the 392nd.

PFC C MYRON R. CHRISTENSEN

222<sup>ND</sup> INFANTRY REGIMENT, 42<sup>ND</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION



Pfc. Myron R. Christensen was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Albert E. Christensen. He was from Madison, Wisconsin, the capital of Wisconsin in the southern part of the state. He was deployed to France on 10 December, 1944, and served in the 222<sup>nd</sup> Infantry regiment, 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry division. Christensen was killed on 26 January 1945.

The context of his death is as follows:

“On December 31, 1944, the German Army began the last major offensive of World War II along the Western Front, near Strasbourg, France, which they named Operation North Wind (Unternehmen Nordwind). The objective was to break through the lines of the US 7th Army and the French 1st Army and take control of the region, leaving the way open for a planned major thrust against the rear of the US 3rd Army. Earlier in the month the US 7th Army had sent troops, equipment and supplies north to reinforce the American armies in Ardennes involved in the Battle of the Bulge, so their forces in this region had been depleted. The three infantry regiments of the 42nd Rainbow Division (222nd, 232nd & 242nd) designated “Task Force Linden” (under the Assistant Division Commander, Brigadier General Henning Linden) were artillery or other support, in relief of elements of the 36th Infantry Division. Defending a 31-mile sector along the Rhine, north and south of Strasbourg, the Task Force repulsed a number of enemy counterattacks, at Hatten and elsewhere. On January 24th and 25th 1945, in the Bois D’Ohlungen, and the vicinity of Schweighouse-sur-Moder and Neubourg, the 222nd Infantry Regiment repulsed repeated attacks by the German 7th Parachute and 47th VG Divisions. For this action the 222nd Infantry Regiment was awarded the



PFC. VERNON A. CHRUDINSKY  
143 INFANTRY REGIMENT, 36<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION

Vernon A Chrudinsky's records trace him to Harrison, WI in Marathon County. Historians and archivists at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum and the Wisconsin Historical Society had trouble locating Chrudinsky, as his name has two different spellings-- Chrudimsky and Chrudinsky. Records located his mother, Lona L. Chrudinsky, who lived at 5554 N. 41<sup>st</sup> St. in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This is probably where Vernon Chrudinsky grew up. He was raised in the Protestant faith.

Chrudinsky enlisted in the Army in Milwaukee County, Wisconsin and served as a First Class Army Private. He successfully landed in North Africa in either 1939 or 1940 with the rest of the 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. His regiment did not have a day off in five years as they battled their way north through Italy, then on to France. The 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division landed in southern France in August of 1944 to assist in the Normandy Operation, quickly moving north and liberating Lyon. During October and November the Division fought the German enemy at Strasbourg and Mulhouse. Chrudinsky was killed on 8 October, 1944, probably somewhere in the Rhone Valley. After Chrudinsky's death, the 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division forged ahead and ended up liberating Dachau.

Chrudinsky was awarded a purple heart for his service to his country. His mother back home in Milwaukee (Ms. Lona L. Chrudinsky) received the award on his behalf. On his burial card at the Veterans Museum in Madison, WI there are four pieces of information: his mother's name and address, a notice that Chrudinsky was Killed In Action in Europe, his SN: 36 829 379, and a statement concerning the spelling of his name: that it is Chrudinsky, not Chrudimsky as it is written upon his gravestone.

May he rest peacefully in the Épinal Cemetery in France, where he and fellow soldiers were buried after attempting to forge the Vosges Mountains during the advancement through Central France and up the Rhone Valley.

There are no obituaries for either a "Chrudinsky" or a "Chrudimsky" in either the Milwaukee Sentinel or the Milwaukee Journal in the decade of the 1940s or early 1950s.

## PFC OTIS C. EARP

### 7TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, 3RD INFANTRY DIVISION.

Otis C. Earp was born on August 1, 1923, the second child (and second son) of Joseph Jackson (Josi) Earp and Rachel A Earp. His father, Joseph, was the second cousin of the famous Wyatt Earp of the Old West. His father was a farmer and eventually had three children in all--Darrell, Joseph and Ella. His brother Darrell also served in WWII, but there is little record of Ella and her life. According to the US census, Otis was still living in Madison County in 1940, but moved to Lacrosse, Wisconsin some time between 1940 and 1943 after marrying Mary Elizabeth Fried from Dallas, Iowa. Otis Earp's wife subsequently married his brother, Darrell, after Otis' death.

Earp enlisted in the U.S. Army from La Crosse, Wisconsin in March 1943. He became a member of the combat infantry of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division, 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. He died on September 25th 1944, near Rupt-sur-Moselle. His death was due to bone fractures in the arm, tibia and leg, as well as shell wounds he received in action. Otis Earp was temporarily buried in the US Military Graveyard in St. Juan, France before being moved to Épinal for his permanent burial. He was awarded the Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster. `

PRIVATE EUGENE F. FIDLER  
7<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY REGIMENT, 3<sup>RD</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION

Private Eugene F. Fidler was born on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1924 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. His parents Viola and Elmer Fidler, resided 804 Quincy Street in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. He had a brother named Jack, who also enlisted and served in Japan, Korea and Greece. Eugene's sister, Marion (Mary) Fidler, was born in Milwaukee and attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Private Eugene F. Fidler entered the war on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1943, with the service number 36827063. He served in Company G, 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, nicknamed the "Cotton balers" because of an incident in the Battle of New Orleans when the regiment was under the command of Andrew Jackson. Fidler served in the Mediterranean Theater, Italy, and Southern France. He was killed in action on November 4, 1944 in France from a shell fragment to the back. He was awarded a Purple Heart for his service. On November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1944, Fidler was interred in Épinal Cemetery. Two prayer books and a class ring were returned to his parents.

PFC BERNARD JOHN FORESTAL

7<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY REGIMENT, 3<sup>RD</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION



Private Bernard John Forestal (“Bernie”) was born in Milwaukee, WI on May 20, 1908 to James B. Forestal and Crescentia Anne Hageman. He had five siblings: Eleanor, Loraine, Henry, Kathryn and Lydia. In 1920, Bernie, his siblings and his mother lived with his maternal grandmother in Milwaukee; they probably moved there after the father's death in 1916, when Bernie was eight years old. After their mother died in 1928, Bernie (then twenty) and his family moved in with their oldest sister, Eleanor, in her boarding house in

Milwaukee. It appears as though Bernie lived there until he went into the Army, working as a clerk for a dental supply company.

Private Forestal served in the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division. He died on October 21, 1944, in France.



Picture of Private Forestal's headstone, probably in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, his hometown



Pictures of Bernard Forestal with his girlfriend, Emily



Picture of Private Forestal with his Eschenburg nephews, Gerry and Eddie, from his sister Lydia.

## PFC MAYNARD FLANAGAN

### 30<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY REGIMENT, 3<sup>RD</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION

Private First Class (PFC) Maynard Flanagan was born to Mr. and Mrs. Francis Flanagan on March 9, 1925. The Flanagans resided on 415 Mound Street in Berlin, Wisconsin (northwest of Fond du Lac). Not much about PFC Flanagan's mother is known; she is not mentioned in the Individual Deceased Personnel File as a beneficiary of his effects. PFC Flanagan also had a sister, Mercedes. He was raised in the Protestant faith.

At the time of his Enlistment, which was 26 January 1944, PFC Flanagan was living in Green Bay, Wisconsin. He arrived in France with the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division sometime in the fall of 1944. At the end of December, he participated in Operation Nordwind launched against the Allied Seventh Army in the Vosges mountains. This winter campaign, during which the Allies attempted to push the Germans out of the "Colmar Pocket," was a bitter battle resulting in many casualties. On December 19, 1944, PFC Flanagan died of grievous shell wounds to the head at the 51<sup>st</sup> Evacuation Station or Hospital in St. Die in the Vosges mountains. He was nineteen years old.



51<sup>ST</sup> EVACUATION HOSPITAL IN ST. DIE, VOSGES MOUNTAINS

Among PFC Flanagan's effects were a Remos wristwatch "not in working order," letters and photos, a "souvenir ring" and a "gold" ring, and a Schaeffer fountain pen. PFC Flanagan's father, Francis Flanagan wrote after the war asking for information on where his son was buried. He was afraid that his "boy" had been cremated. In response, army officials reassured him that the US Army did not cremate deceased soldiers.

## SERGEANT CLARENCE N. GERARD

### 3RD RECONNAISSANCE TROOP, 3<sup>RD</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION

Sergeant (Sgt.) Clarence N. Gerard was born in Menasha, Wisconsin on April 19, 1922. At the time of his enlistment, July 1, 1940, he was living in Neenah, Wisconsin. He was assigned to the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry, which was combined with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry in the European Theater of War. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry fought Axis powers in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, and France. Sgt. Gerard was a part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reconnaissance Troop, which fought at the costly Battle of Anzio in Italy in January 1944. Victorious in Italy, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry invaded southern France in August 1944, moving northward through the Rhone Valley. It was there that Sgt. Gerard was killed in action on September 20, 1944. Sgt. Gerard was enlisted in the Army for about four years, and was a first cook at the time of his death.

On October 11, 1944 the Daily News-Times of Neenah and Menasha, Wisconsin reported his death (but misspelled his name). The headline valiantly read "SGT. Gerard of Neenah Killed Fighting Nazis." He received a Purple Heart for his sacrifice. He was survived by his mother, his eight sisters, and his two brothers.



## DOMINIC GIOVINAZZO

### 15<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY REGIMENT, 3<sup>RD</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION

There are two possible lives for Dominic Giovinazzo:

After consulting the website Ancestry.com, we found the following information about an Italian-American boy, Dominic Giovinazzo. Born in Naples, Italy on November 25, 1923 Dominic Giovinazzo was the first-born son to Mary and Ross Giovinazzo. However, the records show that a few years before, in 1914, his father Ross Giovinazzo, born 1899, was crossing the border from Canada to America in the Ontario region, with only \$50.00 in his pocket. Only a few years later in 1930, when Dominic was 6 and a half, he and his 5-year-old sister Anna boarded the Conte Grande, with their mother. They boarded on July 24<sup>th</sup>, 1930 and arrived in a New York port on August 4, 1930. The family reunited in Ravenna, Portage, Ohio. The family settled in quickly and by 1940 added two new sisters Frances, age 7 in 1940, and Judith, 3 and ½ in 1940, to their family. After the war, the veteran community in Ohio compiled information on all of the GIs from Ohio in a book, called "Young American Patriots." In the book the blurb about Dominic stated that he was a Technical Sergeant, and entered service in November of 1942. He was stationed in Camp Carson, Colorado and Fort Wood Missouri before leaving the states bound for Europe. There Dominic served in England, France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany. He was awarded the Purple Heart, four battle stars, and the good conduct medal. What is confusing is that he is listed in the American Battle Monuments Commission as entering the service from Wisconsin but he is listed in this book which is dedicated to the servicemen from Ohio.

Our main concern after collecting the information above was primarily that in the book published in Ohio, it was not written anywhere if he had passed away, and the collection was published in 1947- presumably 3 years after he was buried in Épinal Cemetery. In addition, according to the gravesite, Dominic Giovinazzo died on December 26, 1944, so he would not have had the opportunity to fight in Germany, as the Allies had not crossed the Rhine by that time.

When we went back and researched WWII veterans through the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Veterans' newsletter, we came across a letter to Giovinazzo's daughter, Phyllis Alrikas, thanking her for sending a poem to be read at her father's grave on Memorial Day. Ms. Alrikas was born one month after Dominic's Giovinazzo's death. The letter, apparently written in 2010, is as follows:

Dear Mme Phyllis Alrikas,  
You don't know me...I am the coordinator and the public relation of the Memorial Days by Children of France... Since several years, French Children decorate the grave of Pfc. Dominic Giovinazzo, your father... Each year, your mother Toni wrote a message to the French Children involved in these operations...  
In fact, since 2005, Children of the Districts of Saulx de Vesoul, Lure, Brouvelieures took part in these events... Each time, the Committees of French Remembrance Society of these Districts and the Township Community of the District of Brouvelieures offer the travel by bus of these Children, and a part of the roses for the graves... They wanted this "Duty of Memory for the American Soldiers"... And they charged me to organize these events... Last May 10, at Épinal American Cemetery, French children decorated the grave. . . Then I organized another ceremony... May 30, just before the ceremony of the Memorial Day at Épinal American Cemetery, some representatives of French Patriotic Associations, members of the "Rock of the Marne Association", and officers and non-commissioned officers of the 7th US Army (in Europe), decorated some graves I chose ! Staff Sergeant Zane M. Young and Staff Sergeant YaSheena Flemming decorated the grave of your father... You have to know that your uncle, Mr. Jerry Daddato, sent to me a picture, inquiries about your father... And your poem " World War II, Hill 351"... During this ceremony, Staff Sergeant YaSheena Flemming read your poem on the grave of your father... For him, for you, for your mother, for your uncle... For your family !  
I finished the French report, and in a few weeks the American report will be finished too... In a few weeks, your mother Toni, your uncle Jerry and of course you too, you'll receive this American report, a CD with a lot of pictures, but also several messages from French children, for you !  
We don't forget Dominic... I'll write to you very soon !  
Your French friend Eric Vandroux

The letter to Alrikas also mentioned her mother, Toni Rosiensi, who is the aunt of one of the leaders of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Veteran organization, Jerry Daddato. After running a search for Toni Rosiensi, we found her Facebook account with her full name; Toni Daddato Giovinazzo Rosiensi. In the Veterans' newsletter it is made clear that Dominic Giovinazzo died in December of 1944, and Phyllis Alrikas was born in January of 1945- a month after her father died. We did some research on Toni Rosiensi after we found her maiden name but found some confounding information. In 1940 the US Census found Toni Daddato's home in Racine, Wisconsin, which would explain how Dominic got to Wisconsin, however in that same census it says Toni Antoinette Daddato was 5 years old, meaning she was only 10 at the time of her child's birth. But we did find Dominic listed in a World War II Honor List of Dead and Missing from the State of Wisconsin, published by the War Department in June 1946 which lists PVT Dominic Giovinazzo from Racine county and shows him as KIA, killed in action with the matching the service number provided by Épinal.

PFC DONALD A. HARVEY  
7TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, 3RD INFANTRY DIVISION

Private First Class (PFC) Donald A. Harvey was a gentleman from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Due to poor historical records, little is known about his civilian life for certain before he served; there is no record of a “Donald A. Harvey” in Milwaukee city directories nor in the U.S. Census. It is known for certain that he was from Milwaukee, as he does show up on Milwaukee death records from WWII. Harvey was likely the “Donald Harvey” listed in the 1930 Census as the son of Ida G. Harvey and Edward A. Harvey. He was the youngest of nine children, with his siblings being Lorna, Edward, Robert, Harland, Myra, Nellie, Gladys and Gerald. Donald was born in 1925, making him 19 in 1944, the year he died. The Harveys were originally located in Cheboygan, Michigan; they moved to Milwaukee sometime between Donald’s birth and the 1930 Census.

Much is known for certain about Harvey’s life as a soldier. Harvey was a Private First Class for Company G, 7th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, and his service identification number was 36973316. PFC Harvey began combat on November 19, 1944 as a replacement soldier. On the following day, after his unit eradicated the enemy from La Voirve, Vosges, his squad moved into the nearby woods. PFC Harvey was digging a foxhole there when he was hit by shrapnel from German artillery. Tragically, he died from his injuries on November 20, 1944, having seen combat for less than two full days. PFC Harvey received the Purple Heart for his valiant efforts.

## PFC GILBERT J. HINRICHS

### 7<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY REGIMENT, 3<sup>RD</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION

Private First Class (PFC) Gilbert J. Hinrichs was born in 1916 in Kenosha, Wisconsin to Frank Hinrichs and Lillian Pepke. Before joining the army PFC Hinrichs completed two years of high school and was employed as a general farm hand. He enlisted in the United States Army July 29, 1940 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. PFC Hinrichs was a combat medic assigned to 2-3 Medical Detachment, 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, 7<sup>th</sup> U.S. Army. By the time of his death on January 23, 1945, PFC Hinrichs had been overseas for 28 months and likely had campaigned through Italy, and France with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division. While fighting in France around the Colmar Pocket in late January, 1945, PFC Hinrichs was hit by an enemy shell and received severe injuries to his left arm and head. Although he was transported to the 51<sup>st</sup> Evacuation Hospital located in Saint-Die-Des-Vosges, France, PFC Hinrichs' wounds were mortal and he subsequently died January 23, 1945. He was 28 years old.

PFC Hinrichs' mother, Lillian, had a difficult time accepting the fact that her son had truly died. Lillian did not understand the military's organizational structure and thus when she received letters expressing sympathy from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division she was convinced there had been a mistake. Lillian only understood that PFC Hinrichs had been in the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, a part of the 7<sup>th</sup> Army. She did not understand that the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment was also a part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division which fell under the command of the 7<sup>th</sup> Army. Therefore, Lillian was convinced the casualty list was incorrect because it claimed that PFC Hinrichs was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division at the time of his death. In August, 1947, almost two years after PFC Hinrichs' death, Lillian still did not believe her son was really

dead. An official government form from August, 1947 titled “Request for Disposition of Remains” explains: “Mother states that she is in doubt about identity—wishes body be thoroughly check for positive identification”. To make matters worse PFC Hinrichs’ family never received most of his personal possessions. His mother was sent a check for \$47.71, some type of “small stone”, and a rosary. PFC Hinrichs’ mother wrote a letter to the War Department on March 22, 1946 expressing her anger and sadness about the loss of her son and his property: “How [come] I keep thinking that there is a mistake[?] He had many things with him that I [sent] him and that he was going to have when he [came] home”. Sadly PFC Hinrichs would never come. On June 18, 1948, Gilbert J. Hinrichs, was laid to rest for the final time at Épinal American cemetery next to his cousin, Donald Lee Nickel, who was killed in action September 12<sup>th</sup>, 1944.

I honor and respect the sacrifice made by PFC Hinrichs. Having been a combat medic myself, I understand the danger and responsibility that comes with being a medic on the battlefield. Although I never knew Hinrichs, his service inspires me.

“Soldier Medic, Warrior-Spirit!”



PFC. BENJAMIN F. JANKE  
70<sup>TH</sup> 'TRAILBLAZER' DIVISION, 274<sup>TH</sup> REGIMENT



Benjamin F. Janke was born on Oct. 13, 1922. He lived with his family on a farm in Waupaca County. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. F. Louis Janke, his four brothers, and his two sisters survived him. Benjamin graduated from Marble School in Union Township.

In May 1944, at age 21, Benjamin entered the service. He completed basic training at Camp Hood, Texas. That December, Benjamin was assigned to the 70<sup>th</sup> Division and went overseas to the European theater, arriving in Marseilles, France. The 70<sup>th</sup> "Trailblazer" Division first went into action fighting in Forbach, France on December 28, 1944. Janke's division, the 274<sup>th</sup>, was code named "Wyoming." Wyoming fought in Phillipsbourg, Wingen, Rothbach, and on the Siegfried Line. Janke's regiment won the Presidential Unit Citation at Wingen for destroying two German battalions and liberating 250 Americans. This was the 274<sup>th</sup> regiment's initial mission. Just after the 274<sup>th</sup> took Spicheren Heights in late February, they moved in to attack Saarbrücken. The Germans unsuccessfully attacked the 274<sup>th</sup> regiment. The attacks only lasted an hour and a half. Benjamin F. Janke was killed in action on March 1, 1945. His regiment went on to take Saarbrücken on March 20, 1945.

The following is an anecdote from Benjamin's brother, as told by his niece, Terri Kent:

"Uncle Benjamin loved motorcycles. One cold day in the late fall in perhaps 1942 he took my dad (4 years younger) on a road trip with his present motorcycle he owned to look at another Harley Davidson owned by a police officer in Rhinelander. Rhinelander is about 2 hours away from Symco area where they lived. He said it was SO cold, and on the way home they stopped in Marion and bought an ice cream cone of all things! Because gas rationing was going on at this time, they figured they could make it on a cycle with a lot less gas than taking a car or truck. He ended up not buying that motorcycle.

My uncle landed in Marseilles' France in December 1944 and they went into war shortly after in a campaign called Operation Norwind [Nordwind. See Myron Christensen, above]. There was heavy and intense fighting along with what was to be one of the most bitter cold and snowy winters that France and Belgium has seen in 40 years. Benjamin wrote a letter home during this time he was fighting in the war and told my dad and his brothers (3 total brothers) that they should go ahead and sell his Harley Davidson motorcycle, and if he made it back he would buy a brand new one. My dad figured with all the heavy fighting they were in and the condition, he had a premonition that making it back home would be only for the luckiest. . . . Unfortunately he didn't make it back, and his oldest brother Louis bought his cycle and kept it."

#### SOURCES:

Benjamin Janke's niece, Terri Kent, Email: [tjkent@tds.net](mailto:tjkent@tds.net)

[http://www.trailblazersww2.org/Docs/division\\_history.pdf](http://www.trailblazersww2.org/Docs/division_history.pdf)

[http://www.trailblazersww2.org/units\\_274.htm](http://www.trailblazersww2.org/units_274.htm)

<http://www.findagrave.com/cgibin/fg.cgi?page=pv&GRid=56373248&PIpi=91069704>

<http://www.historicmapworks.com/Map/US/36847/Union+Township/>

PFC LLOYD V. JOHNSON  
30<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY REGIMENT, 3<sup>RD</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION

Private First Class (PFC) Lloyd V. Johnson was born on December 1, 1917. At this time, his mother, Melvina Johnson, was residing in Milltown, Wisconsin. PFC Johnson had one brother, Ray. Nothing much is known about his father. He is not listed as a beneficiary for his effects. He was raised in the Protestant faith.

PFC Johnson enlisted in the U.S. Army on 8 December 1942. At the time, he was living in Polk, Wisconsin. He fought as part of the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division. He died on October 4, 1944, in the small village of Le Tholy, France. This village is in the Vosges region where fierce fighting with the Germans took place in October 1944. (See also the entry on PFC Richard W. Borek, who died one day later, October 5, 1944.)

According to PFC Johnson's Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDTP), his skull was crushed in death, but his body was "complete." He was listed as having received a grievous shell wound to the head. Among PFC Johnson's personal effects were: a Driver's License and a social security card, a new Testament, a Burgess flashlight, a pocket knife, 33 photos and a photo holder, 171 Lire and 2120 francs. The fact that PFC Johnson carried lire suggests that he fought in Italy as well as France. Besides his personal effects, his mother received a check for \$44.64.

## SERGEANT GORDON KEATS

### 141<sup>ST</sup> INFANTRY REGIMENT, 36<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION.

Sergeant Gordon Keats was born in 1924 to George and Martha Keats in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. According to the 1940 census, he was the middle son of three boys. His older brother was Norman, born in 1923, and his younger brother was Warren, born in 1933.

Sgt. Keats was drafted into the service, and placed in the 141<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment, 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry division. The 36th Infantry Division in which Keats served was activated for service in November, 1940. He was sent overseas in April, 1943. He was killed in action on 25 September 1944. He was awarded the Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster for his service.

Sgt. Keats's brother, Warren, now 81, currently lives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Warren and his wife visited Sgt. Keats's grave at the Épinal Cemetery a few years ago and made a small film about their experience. His address in Milwaukee is: 2430 N 71st Milwaukee, WI 53213-1345

SERGEANT ORVILLE F. KEYES  
15<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY REGIMENT, 3<sup>RD</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION

Sergeant Orville F Keyes was born in 1924 in the small town of Peck, Wisconsin. Peck is a small, rural town located in Langlade County in northern Wisconsin. At the time of the 1940 census, the population was about 240 residents. Orville was the fourth of seven children born to James and Viola Keyes. He and his siblings Ruby, Charlotte, Charles, Virginia, Edward and Lila were educated through the eighth grade in Peck's one room school house. After finishing school, the children helped their father on the Keyes' family homestead.

Sgt. Keyes enlisted in the US Army in 1942 at the age of 18. He was a member of the 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, where he achieved the rank of Sergeant and was awarded a Purple Heart. His older brother, Charles also enlisted in the Army, while his younger brother Edward joined the US Navy. Sgt. Keye's youngest sister, Lila Mae, was a member of the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) in the division of the Navy, where she served as a hospital apprentice.

Sergeant Keyes died on January 27, 1945 at the age of 21. At the time of his death, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division was clearing out the Colmar Pocket (Poche de Colmar) alongside the French Army in Alsace, France.

## PFC HAROLD C. KRUEGER

### 10TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION, 3<sup>RD</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION

Private First Class (PFC) Krueger was born in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin in 1918, according to the 1940 United States Census. He was born to John and Elsie Krueger, and was later joined by younger sisters Ruth, Laurabell and Betty Mae Krueger. He finished high school before joining the United States Army.

PFC Krueger enlisted and was part of the US Army's 10<sup>th</sup> Engineer Combat Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, from 1941 until 1945. Krueger became a decorated soldier during his time in the United States Army. By the time of his death, he had been awarded the Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster, EAME ribbon, Good Conduct Ribbon and Unit Citation Ribbon.

Private First Class Harold C. Krueger was killed in action on January 26, 1945 after a shell fragment struck his head and fatally wounded him. When his body was recovered, his personal effects included two wrist bracelets, one wristwatch, a pipe and pouch, a Bible, a cigarette lighter, a German flag, a United States armband, a cribbage board and cards, a shaving kit, a souvenir spoon, a piece of slate, coins and snapshots.

Although Krueger was listed as single in the 1940 census, he was married to Louise O. Krueger of Seattle, Washington at the time of his death in 1945. Mrs. Krueger continued to live in the Washington area after her husband's death, and found employment in Seattle. After learning of her husband's death, Mrs. Krueger corresponded with the US Army to try to convince them to allow her to make a pilgrimage to her late husband's gravesite. She was refused the funds to do so.

CORPORAL FRANCIS J. LOS —  
409<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY REGIMENT, 103<sup>RD</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION



Corporal Francis J Los was born on December 11, 1918 in South Dakota. His father, Peter Los, was born around 1889 in Netherlands; he immigrated into the United States in 1911. Francis J Los' mother, wife of Peter Los, was Hattie Los. She was born around 1898 in South Dakota. Her parents, like those of her husband, were born in Netherlands. Francis Los was the second child in his family. He had three brothers, Jacob Los (born 1917), Clarence C Los (born 1921), and Wesley E Los (born 1930), and two sisters Leona D Los (born 1924), and Etheleen E Los (born 1926). Francis Los and his family lived in Hancock, Bon Homme, South Dakota in 1920, in Township 36, Todd, South Dakota in 1930. At some point during the 1930s, they moved to Walworth, Wisconsin, southeast of Madison. Records show that Francis Los was hired as a farmer laborer from 1935 to 1940.

Corporal Los reported for duty in the US Army on December 3rd, 1944 from Elkhorn, Wisconsin. At Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, where he took basic training, he was assigned to 103<sup>rd</sup> infantry regiment, 409<sup>th</sup> D-Company, 81mm mortar platoon. He was then transferred to Camp Howze, Texas in November, 1943. Corporal Los arrived in Marseille, France on the USS Monticello in October, 1944. He fought in the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Vosges

Mountain Campaign.. He was killed by sniper fire near Dambach-la-Ville on December 1st, 1944. At the time, he was 25 years old. Corporal Los was awarded both a Purple Heart, and a Bronze Star for his sacrifice and bravery.

More information about CPL Francis J Los can be found at the following links:

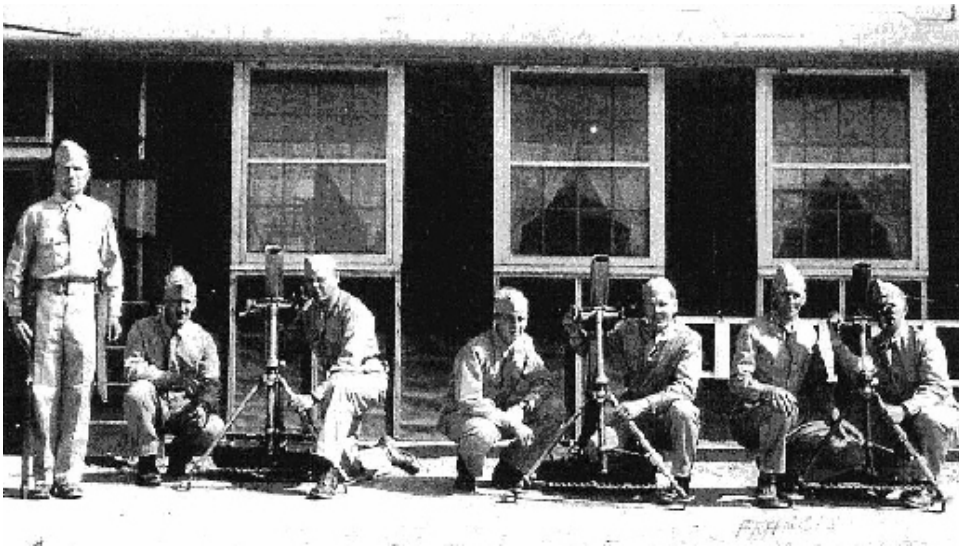
<http://103rdcactus.com/bio/409%20D/409D%20Los/409%20D%20Los.htm>

<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=56373850>.

<http://103rdcactus.com/documents/Battle%20Death/103rd%20Battle%20Death.htm>.

Corporal Los's gravesite is cared for by Karen Sallier, who is currently living in France. On October 29, 2013, she opened her own website on Los. The address is:

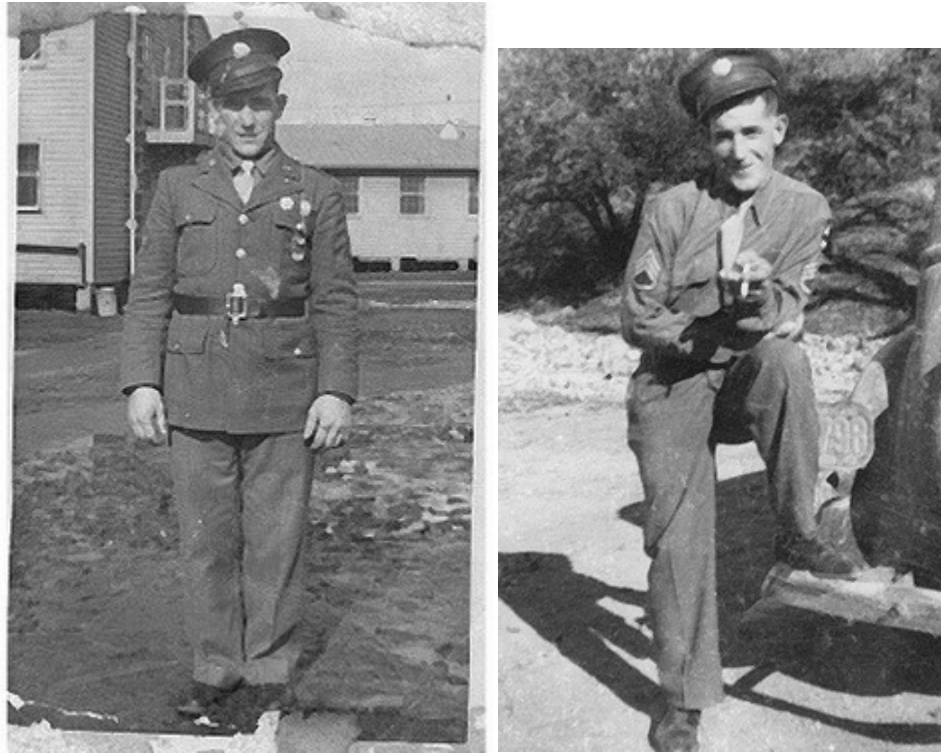
<http://arguscallison.tumblr.com/post/65434863240/godmother-to-a-soldier>.



81MM Mortar Training at Camp Claiborne in 1943. Francis Los is 2nd from the right

## LEONARD L. MARSHALL

TSGT 274<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY REGIMENT, 70<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION



Technical Sergeant (TSgt) Leonard L. Marshall was born on March 18, 1913 to Lamborn Marshall and Mary Marshall. TSgt Marshall grew up with his parents and one brother in Rockbridge in Richland County, Wisconsin. He was always active. One of his favorite hobbies was boxing. He could often be found having boxing matches with his younger brother, Loren. TSgt Marshall was also an avid family man and a great older brother. In addition to loving his family, he also loved Margaret Fogo. The two were engaged to be married when TSgt Marshall left for basic training in October 1942. TSgt Marshall would not live to see his wedding day.

TSgt Marshall trained in Fort Leonard Wood in the Missouri Ozarks. He was part of the 274<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 70<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. In 1944 his regiment was sent to France. After landing in Marseille, France, on December 24, the 274<sup>th</sup> travelled with the

275<sup>th</sup> and 276<sup>th</sup> Regiments northward in train boxcars almost 500 miles to Brumath. TSgt Marshall was part of Item Company which consisted of three infantry platoons and one weapons platoon. TSgt Marshall carried an automatic rifle and a grease gun.

On January 15, 1945, Item Company was hidden on the South side of a hill known as Winterburg. In the early hours of the day, TSgt Marshall's company was given orders to begin moving around the hill. About three hours after they started moving, a German attack halted their progress. The third platoon covered the left flank and was able to destroy a machine gun nest. However, they suffered heavy casualties. The first platoon followed suit and, with support from the weapons platoon, took out the next machine gun nest.

TSgt Marshall was ready for the chance to try his grease gun. According to the *Military Times-Hall of Valor*, TSgt Marshall voluntarily opened fire on the German troops. He shot from an exposed position "to distract the enemy fire from the rest of the men and to permit a comrade to flank the enemy position." At the moment when his fellow soldiers were finally able to wipe out the enemy, TSgt Marshall was fatally shot. *The Military Times* said that TSgt Marshall's "supreme sacrifice permitted the company to complete its mission." In this way, TSgt Marshall died in his first battle, joined in death by several comrades. Only 16 men from his regiment survived the encounter. For his bravery on this day, he was awarded the Silver Star (Posthumously).



(Marshall is on the far right)

PRIVATE EDWIN ROY SANDERS  
143<sup>RD</sup> INFANTRY REGIMENT, 36<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION.

The son of Edwin Olaf Sanders and Julia Sanders, Edwin Roy Sanders took the name Roy E Sanders upon entering the military. Edwin Olaf Sanders, born in 1903 as Edwin Hellstadt, emigrated with his family from Sweden in 1905. Edwin O. Sanders was too young to fight in World War One, but eventually he met and married his wife Julia - an American national born to Norwegian immigrant parents. Private Edwin Roy Sanders was born on August 13, 1925 in Illinois, a year after his sister Dorothy Mae was born in North Dakota. Clearly the Sanders family lived a mobile existence travelling across the Midwest, but in the years preceding the war Edwin Olaf settled his family in Milwaukee and worked as a press feeder for a paper company, making a modest living. Just 15 years old when the war broke out, Private Sanders must have spent his formative years hearing what was going on abroad.



Private Sanders lived in this one-time boarding house at 1415 S 10th Street in Milwaukee, WI before enlisting on November 1, 1943 at the age of 18. He was assigned to serve with the Texas Oklahoma Division shortly thereafter. The esteemed 36th Infantry

Division saw combat in Africa and Italy before being directed towards southern France. Private Sanders reached his division in Europe on June 13, 1944; only a month later, as part of Operation Dragoon, Sanders and the 36<sup>th</sup> launched an amphibious assault landing in Saint Raphael Frejus in Southern France on August 15, 1944. Within one month, the division had fought across nearly 700 kilometers, reaching the city of Vesoul in the foothills of the Vosges. Here, Sanders bravely fought to liberate the city's people. Alongside the rest of the 143<sup>rd</sup> infantry division, Private Sanders fought through heavy resistance at Oiselay-et-Grachaux and Fretigney to secure the heights overlooking Vesoul while the 141<sup>st</sup> launched an assault on the city. The 143<sup>rd</sup> protected the advancing troops as house-to-house fighting persisted. Just months into his tour of duty, Private Sanders was killed by enemy shelling the day the city was liberated, September 12, 1944. Among Private Sanders' possessions were a bible and prayer beads, his faith not faltering amidst the horrors of war. Private Sanders would never live to see the fall of the Nazi empire, but his and many other young men's efforts at Vesoul wrested the city from German hands. Private Sanders' unit would then go on to fight across 500 more German-defended kilometers to liberate the Dachau concentration camp in April of 1945, ending years of tyranny that cost thousands of innocent lives. Coming from modest Midwestern roots, Private Roy Sanders gave his life fighting for the freedom of those he had never met, and helped to ensure a future for those he saved.

EUGENE SANDONA  
TEC 4, 756<sup>TH</sup> TANK BATTALION



Sandona was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Sebastian Sandona. He entered the service from Illinois. He served in the US Army's 756<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion and was a T-4, which meant that he was a tank driver. The circumstances of Tech Sergeant Eugene F. Sandona's death are as follows. On September 16, 1944, Company A advanced into Vy-lès-Lure in France. One tank on a reconnaissance mission was disabled by a mine. The company commander, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Ralph Hanson, and one enlisted man, Eugene Sandona, were killed. The death notice said that he was 22 years old at the time.

PFC ARNOLD SCHMALL,  
10<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY REGIMENT, FIFTH INFANTRY DIVISION



Private First Class (PVC) Arnold Schmall was born on August 31, 1919 to August and Clara Schmall. The family lived in the same Milwaukee home on 2013 South 17<sup>th</sup> Street for all of PVC Schmall's life. While Clara Schmall was originally from Wisconsin, August Schmall was born in Germany. PFC Schmall had an older brother named Zeno and a younger sister named Loretta, according to the 1930 Census.

Arnold only completed one year of high school. He volunteered to enlist in the Army in Milwaukee, November 26, 1940. At the time he was 21 years old. Schmall was a member of the 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, nicknamed the "Red Devils." The 5<sup>th</sup> Division arrived in Ireland in May 1942; it remained stationed there until July 4, 1944, when it arrived in France. Schmall served in the Antitank Company, 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. He did not engage in direct combat. According to his IDTP (Individual Deceased Personnel File), he died from a fever of "unknown origin" on September 10, 1944 in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Evacuation Hospital near Chalons, France.

According to a findagrave.com post by Barbara O'Hagan, Schmall's granddaughter, Arnold Schmall met a woman named Maureen Whyte while stationed in Ireland. Whyte supposedly gave birth to their daughter, Barbara, in October 1944, a month after Schmall's death.

After Schmall died, his father August corresponded with the Quartermaster General's Office to recover Arnold's personal effects and to learn how Arnold had died. August's letters were emotional and loving. He wrote to the Quartermaster General's Office:

"Oh what pain it was when I received the news about my son... This young man would not even hurt a worm. What I would like to know now [were] there any last words before his death[,] if so please let me know."

Among the effects found on Schmall's body were a billfold, a deck of cards, a Polish prayer book, several pictures, thirty cents in American coins, and fifteen francs. August requested Arnold's remains be repositioned from a cemetery in Champigneulles, France to his current final resting place in the U.S. military cemetery in Épinal.

PFC GERHARD VAN ENGEN, JR.  
179 INFANTRY REGIMENT, 45<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION

Private First Class (PFC) Gerhard Van Engen, Jr. was born in Holland on 13 July 1911 or 1912. He was the second son of Gerhard Van Engen, a printer, and Olidia L. Van Engen, a homemaker. PFC Engen, Jr. had three brothers: Henry (born 1903), Marius (born 1913), and Louis (born 1917), and three sisters: Louise (born 1915), Anna (born unknown?), and Engeline (born 1922). The Van Engens moved to Sheboygan, Wisconsin in 1914 or 1915. PFC Van Engen, Jr. became an American citizen on January 15, 1941. Before entering the service, he married a girl named Lydia, who was born in Wisconsin, and worked as a manager of a meat market in Sheboygan Falls.

Although the date of PFC Van Engen Jr.'s enlistment is unknown, he fought with the 179<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. This Division was battle-hardened by the fall of 1944, having experienced combat at Salerno and Anzio in Italy. The 45<sup>th</sup> landed in southern France in August and moved northward. The Division took Épinal on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September, although the city was very strongly defended by the Germans. PFC Gerhard van Engen was killed in action on 16 September, 1944, and awarded a Purple Heart (posthumously).

SGT GEORGE J. ZATKO  
410<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY REGIMENT, 103<sup>RD</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION

Sergeant (SGT) George J Zatko was born November 11, 1918 in Superior Wisconsin. He lived there until entering the service on December 18, 1942. Before entering the service, he was an employee of the Great North Railway.

Sgt. Zatko served in Company B of the 410<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in the 103<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division. He received his training at Camp Claiborne and Camp Huze in Texas. The Motto of the 410<sup>th</sup> division is “Super Ardua Surgo” (“Arise over Difficulties”); Sgt. Zatko embodied this phrase. He was killed in action in France on November 29, 1944, having fought there for about month, since October of that year. His funeral was held at SS Cyril and Methodius Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on January 3, 1945.

Sgt Zatko was survived by his wife Elaine, his son, George junior, his father Joseph, his three brothers, Peter, Joseph, Paul, as well as three sisters, Mrs. Terry Johnson, Mrs. Clinton Calvert, and Mrs. Joseph Ronchak. At first, Sgt. Zatco’s widow, Elaine Zatko, wrote to the Office of the Quartermaster General expressing her desire to see the remains of her husband, and confirm his identity. Ultimately, however, she agreed to let him repose at the U.S. military cemetery in Épinal. Sergeant Zatko was found with his tags still on his body. Among his personal effects sent to his wife were a billfold, souvenir money, a Catholic prayer book, wallet, knife, nail clipper, French cigarette lighter, auto point pencil, 9 souvenir coins, a social security card, and a Wisconsin Driver’s License.

Sgt. Zatko’s son, George Junior, was an active member of the American WWII Orphans Network until he passed.