

October 2011

*Fifteenth Infantry Regiment*  
*"The Old China Hands"*



www.15thinfgregtassoc.org

October 2011

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Fellow China Hands,

I would like to welcome aboard LTC Joel Smith, the new commander of the Third Battalion. I know all of our members join me in wishing him great success. I also would like to express my best wishes to LTC Shoemaker as he moves on to even greater challenges in the Army after his highly successful command tour at Fort Stewart.

Thank you to Charles O'Neil for sharing his father's story of WWII with the Regiment with us. I am sure that reading this reminiscence will bring vivid memories of the fighting and the awful weather in the Colmar Pocket for our WWII veterans, as well as giving the rest of us an idea of the severity of the actions there.

I ask all our non-life members to please get your dues payments in to Bart quickly. Our association is facing significant financial challenges due to dwindling membership and rising costs of printing and mailing the DRAGON. I also need each of our members to actively recruit new members.

Thanks to Tom Heitzer and Jane Dojutrek for ensuring we have a complete listing of our association's founders in this issue. We owe each of these trail blazers a great debt for what they created, and we further owe it to them to keep the association going, which includes getting new members and re-enlisting lapsed members.

Monika and I just returned from the Congressional Medal of Honor Society Convention in Louisville, KY. One of the recipients from the Korean War, Colonel (ret.) James L. Stone, was a Lieutenant with the 8<sup>th</sup> CAV of the 1<sup>st</sup> CAV Division in November 1951 and spent 22 months as a POW. He later served with the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry at Fort Benning in 1957 and moved with the unit (1<sup>st</sup> Battle Group) to Bamberg in 1958. He shared some interesting stories of his time in the Regiment, which he recalled with great fondness, especially about the excellent quality of marksmanship in the 15<sup>th</sup>, as well as the ability of many of its officers to handle their liquor. **(See picture of Col. (ret.) James L. Stone on page 15 of this issue).**

The Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation, which supports the CMOH Society and sponsors educational and outreach programs to teach Americans, especially today's youth, citizenship, espouses seven values: Courage, Sacrifice, Patriotism, Citizenship, Integrity, and Commitment. These are derived from the values exhibited by our country's Medal of Honor recipients, including the 20 recipients from the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. These are values which we all should continue to hold and should form the basis for the way we lead our lives. I encourage our members to visit the Foundation's website to learn more about their activities and to see how we may be able to support their efforts. <http://www.cmohfoundation.org/>.

Congratulations are due five Association members who recently received awards at the Society of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division's Annual Reunion in New Orleans. As has long been the case, the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment continues to lead in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division and the Society.

These men truly epitomize our Regimental motto – "Can Do!"

Tim

15<sup>th</sup> INF Regiment Association Founders

Please see special article on our Founders in this issue

The Dragon is the quarterly publication of the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment Association. It is published in January, April, July and October.' Neither its editorial nor articles content carry official endorsement of the Association. Input for the Dragon is due the 15th of each month prior to publishing.

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**ASSOCIATION OBJECTIVES**

- To perpetuate and foster the history and traditions of the Regiment.
- To provide opportunities for uniting past and present members of the Regiment into a close and cooperative alliance.
- To promote morale and high esprit de corps among members of the Regiment. ~ To acquire and maintain a repository of regimental historical memorabilia.
- To perpetuate and foster the history and traditions of the Regiment.
- To assist in the maintenance of monuments dedicated to the units of the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment.

**Send dues and new addresses to:**

Bartolo Viruso, 116 Harriett Road, North Babylon, NY 11703

Annual dues \$10 for regular members and \$5 for active duty members, due October 1 each year.

Life membership: To age 60 = \$150; Age 61-69 = \$120; Age 70-79 = \$100; Age 80 and above = \$50.

Send or Email news items to:

**EDITOR, THE DRAGON**

MSG Ed Holt  
17200 Park Circle  
Eden Prairie, MN 55346  
952-937-8116  
edwin.holt@us.army.mil

**PRESIDENT**

LTC Timothy Stoy  
6531 Milva Lane  
Springfield, VA 22150  
703-912-4218  
Timmoni15@yahoo.com

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Addison D. (Tad) Davis V  
78 Spring Pond Lane  
Spring Lake, NC 28390  
910-814-1208  
Tad.Davis@us.army.mil

**SECRETARY**

Robert Faulkender  
813 Dalrymple Rd NE  
Atlanta, GA 30328  
(770) 913-0400  
bobfaulk1@comcast.net

**TREASURER**

Bart Viruso  
116 Harriett Road  
North Babylon, NY 11703  
631-587-0587  
Viruso8@aol.com

**MEMBERSHIP**

Michael Friend  
6018 Old Dominion Road  
Columbus, GA 31909  
706-568-6436

**COMMANDER 1<sup>st</sup> BN**

LTC Nelson Kraft  
HQ, 1-15  
Ft. Benning, GA 31895  
706-544-1633

**COMMANDER 3<sup>rd</sup> BN**

LTC Joel Smith  
HQ, 3-15  
Ft. Stewart, GA 31314  
706-767-2791

**CSM 1<sup>st</sup> BN**

CSM Angel Ortiz  
HQ, 1-15, Bldg 9161  
Ft. Benning, GA 31895  
706-544-1228

**CSM 3<sup>rd</sup> BN**

CSM Mark Barnes,  
HQ, 3-15 Fort Stewart, GA  
31314  
796-767-2791

**CHAPLAIN**

Charles C. Trout  
10191 Birchwood Drive  
Huntington Beach, CA  
92646-5432/706-544-1735  
chaptrout@aol.com

**HSGMOR**

Tom Twomey  
1923 Wendover Dr  
Fayetteville, NC 28304  
910-484-8886  
ttwomey@nc.rr.com

**HCOR**

Jerry Bates  
1903 Mallison Way  
Alexandria, VA 22308  
703-360-5271

**HISTORIAN**

LTC Timothy Stoy  
6531 Milva Lane  
Springfield, VA 22150  
703-912-4218

**TRUSTEES**

Richard N. McKiddy  
9520 N. Twinkling  
Shadows Way  
Tucson, AZ 85743  
520-572-3772

Charles R. Crain  
312 Don Drive  
Greenville, SC 29607  
520-744-6197

Lloyd D. Whitmer  
7500 Mose Road  
Navarre, OH 44662  
330-756-2803

Charles C. Trout  
10191 Birchwood Drive  
Huntington Beach, CA  
92646-5432  
706-544-1735

**CHINA ROOM  
CUSTODIAN**

LTC Nelson Kraft  
HQ 1-15IN, Bldg. 9161  
Ft. Benning, GA 31905  
706-544-1 633

**WEBMASTER**

Tom Twomey  
1923 Wendover Dr  
Fayetteville, NC 28304  
910-484-8886  
ttwomey@nc.rr.com

**DATABASE**

**ADMINISTRATOR**

Tom Heitzer  
231 Normandie Drive,  
Bonne Terre, MO 63628  
573-358-1830  
theitzer001@charter.net

# TAPS

from the Armed Forces of the United States of America

**STANLEY WILSON**  
4354 Waterview Cir.  
North Charleston, SC  
29418-5721  
PVT, A CO, 1<sup>st</sup> BN WWII  
DOD – April 24, 2011  
*Reported by Rich Heller*

**JASPER PREWETT**  
2502 W. Eastern Court  
Tulsa, OK 74112  
CPL G CO, 2nd BN, Korea  
DOD – July 11, 2011  
*Reported by Melba Prewett*

**BOBBY A. MCCOUN**  
1120 Harry Wise Rd.  
Lawrenceburg, KY 40342  
9231  
CPL 15<sup>th</sup> INF/B Korea  
DOD July 1, 2011  
*Reported by Betty McCoun*

**WAYNE R. DERRICKSON**  
5915 W. 900 S.  
Geneva, IN 46740-9623  
SSGT, K CO 15<sup>th</sup> INF WWII  
DOD – April 28, 2011  
*Reported by June Derrickson*

**RICHARD H. WOOD**  
1548 Idaho Ave.E.  
St. Paul, MN 55106  
SSG, B CO, 1<sup>st</sup> BN WWII  
DOD July 6, 2011  
*Reported by Bill Hood*

**RICHARD R. HASS**  
14 Bridlewood Drive  
Palmyra, VA 22963-2633  
CPL E CO 2<sup>nd</sup> BN Korea  
DOD March 22, 2011  
*Reported by Rich Heller*

**DEAN E. MULLIGAN**  
105 N. Carico Street  
Tuscola, IL 61953-1364  
SFC G CO, 2<sup>nd</sup> BN Korea  
DOD September 29, 2011  
*Reported by Rich Heller*

## A Tribute to our Founders

Shortly following the publication of the July Dragon, we were contacted by Jane Dojutrek, wife of deceased Founder Edward Dojutrek. She pointed out that several Founders' names were not listed on the second page banner of the Dragon and asked that the listing be updated to include Founder members of the Association that were not listed.

Very fortunately, Tom Heitzer was able to conduct extensive research and came up with a list of Founding members. This effort included contacting many of these living Foundation members and checking with others in the Association to come up with a complete list.

As a special tribute to our 19 Founders, we are listing all of the Associations Founders. Asterisk denotes deceased Founder.

### 15<sup>th</sup> INF Regiment Association Founders

Donald Chase	Ramon Clark	Charles Crain	Jerry Cunningham	Edward Dojutrek*
George Doyle*	Tom Godfrey*	Andrew Gunderson*	Michael Halik	Jack Jordan
Maurice Kendall	Leonard Lassar	Norman MacIntyre*	George Mohr*	Whitney Mullen
James O'Dell Sr.*	Howard Quick*	Raymond Taylor	Frank Yokum*	

# 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment veterans attend the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division Reunion

**New Orleans, LA** – Several 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment veterans gathered at the Astor Crown Hotel in New Orleans, La. 8-11 September to participate in the Society of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division's 92<sup>nd</sup> Annual Reunion.

The occasion brought together some current and former Dragon Soldiers serving as recently as Operation New Dawn and as far back as World War II. The 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry veterans made up the majority of the attendees at the event.

Although for 18 years the Association has held a Regimental Dinner with program at the Society of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division's reunions, none was scheduled this year. However, during an open evening the Association members gathered for dinner at a popular local restaurant. The occasion was extra special due to the attendance of some of the founding members. In attendance was MG Maury Kendall, who as Honorary Colonel of the Regiment, was the primary starter of the Association in 1993. Also in attendance were Founding members Michael Halik, Leonard Lassar and Whitney Mullen.

Five Association members were recognized for outstanding service to the Society and awarded the Society Special President's Awards. The recipients were as follows:

Richard Guimond for his re-recruitment program in 2010 and 2011

John Shirley for service to the Society in numerous offices and committees

Bartolo Viruso for his service as Sergeant at Arms and President of OP #5

Henry Burke for his service as Sergeant at Arms and Membership Chairman

Nile Stuart for his service as Sergeant at Arms, Western Region Committeeman, C&BL Committee and Awards Committee Chairman



Pictured Front Row left to Right: Homer Hungerford (KW), Tom Heitzer (CW), Michael Halik (WWII), John Burke (KW), George Burkes (WWII), Maurice Kendall (WWII), Howard Swacina (WWII)

Second Row: Nile Stuart (KW), Richard McKiddy (KW), Whitney Mullen (WWII), Chad Meyers (OIF), Carmen Solano (CW), Matt McKenna (OIF), Leonard Lassar (KW), John Shirley (WWII), Henry Burke (KW) Roy Brumfield (WWII) (Photo by Rich Heller)

Not pictured: Ernest Buckholz (KW), Ed Macdonald (KW), David Mills (KW), Warren Sessler (KW), Joe Todisco (KW)

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## CHINA 6 SITREP

Fellow Members of the Regiment:

CAN DO! The Benning Dragons have been training extremely hard since our Rendezvous in May. Before I get into training, I need to tell you about a few unfortunate farewells we've had to do and some additions we've had to the team.

In July, the rock of the headquarters, MAJ Mel Sanders, departed to take a job as a Brigade Operations Officer. This is certainly a step up for Mel and we sincerely miss him. In September, two of our Senior NCOs left the battalion. 1SG Morneault, the Hellraiser 1SG, left the battalion to assume a position with the Ranger Training Brigade. Although we will miss him, we know he'll be working hard to get us the Rangers we need.

SGM Rovira, the former Dragon 7 and Operations Sergeant Major, decided to retire. This is a huge loss for the Army, but he's paid his dues—with more deployed time that you can shake a stick at. God bless SGM Rovira and his family. They will certainly be missed.

With the sad farewells, we've brought a lot of super stars onto the first string team. MAJ Matt Morgan, the new Dragon 5, is no stranger to the Regiment. As a former commander in 3-15, Matt brings some new energy to the fight that is already improving everyone in the battalion daily.

Also new on board is 1SG Lindsey, the new Baker 7 and 1SG moore, the Phantom 7. Both of these Senior NCOs bring experiences to their outfits that has raised their Soldiers level of competency to a new height.

Also noteworthy is 1SG Matthews of Destroyer Company being selected among all 1SGs in the Brigade to take the reins of Hellraiser Company. Congrats again 1SG. Now on with the training.

Since being fielded with our new Bradleys and Tanks, we've spent an extensive amount of time in the woods getting used to them. Following our Bradley and Tank crew gunneries, we moved on to the qualification of our wheeled vehicle crews in Phantom Company and Hellraiser Company's Scout Platoon, Saber. In addition, we qualified our Mortar sections and culminated this initial period of training with Fire Team live fires with Hardrock and Baker Companies. Next we moved to Section and Squad level training.

This training proved to be invaluable in getting our troopers used to fighting on the ground together, both mounted and dismounts. Just as we finished this training, we took a short halt to participate in the Sledgehammer Brigade's Sport Tournament. CSM and I are happy to report we placed first in three of the five events and second in the other two. A great showing by the Can Do Battalion with little to no preparation time – HOOAH!!

Following that short halt, we headed back to the field to qualify our platoons: infantry, armor and scouts. The Armor Platoons from Crusader and Destroyer did phenomenal as did Hardrocks Infantry Platoons. I literally snuck out of the field to send you this report!! Now I will head back out to evaluate Baker's Infantry Platoons and Saber Scouts from Hellraiser.

Around all of this training, Phantom is doing an awesome job sustaining and maintaining the Battalion while Hellraiser continues to shine with its Medical support and thankless planning and battle tracking from the staff.

October 2011

The Marne Express – as we like to call it – is moving fast and we love it! Our formations at all levels will, without a doubt, be ready to close with and destroy the enemy when our Nation calls us again. We promise never to let you down and to always remember what you did before us – when you were called upon.

That's it for now – we'll see you on the high ground.

**CAN DO!**

LTC Kraft and CSM Ortiz

The Benning Dragons Command Team



**Tanks train in the field**



**Infantry train at a MOUT site**



**The unit brought in awards all around**

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## **Membership Notice**

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**It's October again and this is the month the annual membership is due. In the past we have sent out separate requests to the members informing them of their fee renewal. In an attempt to rein in on costs, we are going to dispense with this procedure and instead ask the membership to look at their mailing label on the front of the DRAGON.**

**If you see a "2011" next to your name, you need to renew your membership with the Association by year's end. This can be done by sending a check payable to "15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment Association" to:**

**Bart Viruso  
116 Harriet Road,  
North Babylon, NY 11706**

**The amount of renewal is as follows:**

<b>Regular Annual</b>	<b>\$10</b>
<b>Associate Annual</b>	<b>\$10</b>
<b>On Active Duty</b>	<b>\$5</b>

**If you want to upgrade to a Life Membership, send the following:**

<b>Up to age 60</b>	<b>\$150</b>
<b>Age 60-69</b>	<b>\$120</b>
<b>Age 70-79</b>	<b>\$100</b>
<b>Age 80 &amp; over</b>	<b>\$50</b>

**Please show on check that this is a Renewal Membership**

**Anyone who hasn't paid his/her membership fee by January 1, 2012, will be dropped from the membership rolls and will no longer receive the DRAGON. Please remit you check as soon as possible so you remain a member in good standing and continue to receive the DRAGON without disruption.**

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT SEPTEMBER 15, 2011**

**Eligibility:**

**Regular: Persons eligible for regular membership are those with present or prior honorable service with the Regiment or units attached or supporting the Regiment.**

**Associate: Spouse, parents, children or siblings of any person eligible for regular membership and any person with a special interest or affinity for the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment.**

**Members By Type**

**Periods Represented**

Regular Life	255	China Hands	2
Associate Life	10	World War II	87
Regular Annual	297	Korea	219
Associate Annual	<u>15</u>	Cold War	78
	577	Ready Forces	35
		OIF	131*
		Associate	<u>25</u>
			577

\*Members currently serving with the active battalions, 1/15- 56 and 3/15 - 21.

**Would you like to sponsor a membership for Active Duty soldiers? For each \$10.00 contribution an Active Duty soldier can be brought on the rolls for two years. If interested, make contributions to the Association Treasurer, address shown on page 2**

**New Member**

Kevin A. Kling (Associate Member)

Special Note: Kevin's grandfather, Henry Lewis served with the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry as a Major General in WWII from 1943-1946

## A notable promotion

Photos and story presented by John Burke



LTC Nelson Craft administers the oath of promotion to CPT David Gross who served as Battalion Action Officer in planning and executing the 2011 Can Do Rendezvous last May. CPT Gross has served in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion since December 2008.

The ceremony was conducted in the China Room at the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry. Also pictured is CPT Gross' father who travelled from Pennsylvania for the ceremony.

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**Editors Note:** The following article was written by Associate member Arthur O'Neil. Arthur recorded the experiences of his father, Charles O'Neil. Charles O'Neil told his son the story of his experiences as a member of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry during conflict in the Colmar Pocket region in France and subsequent action during World War II. It is published here with Arthur O'Neil's permission.

# A Dog Face Soldier on the Forgotten Front

As told by Charles O'Neil and recorded and written by his son Arthur O'Neil



Charles O'Neil in France

"I know when I go up that hill I am a dead man," the Dog Face Soldier thought of the mission ahead.

Charles O'Neil was the "Dog Face Soldier", a nickname for an infantryman in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division. He was a radio broadcaster from Manchester, New Hampshire, a life and world that was now only a memory. A world he thought he would never return to as he contemplated his mortality surrounded by bodies, German, American and French in the basement of a schoolhouse that had been reduced to rubble in Bennwihr, France.

The hill was called Hill 216 and was just outside of the town located near the German border in the Alsace-Lorraine region of France. The area was known for growing grapes for the famous French wine in the area called the Colmar Pocket. The fighting there is not well known because of a battle that occurred at the same time further to the north, one that the allied commanders considered to be more important.

"We got counterattacked in Colmar at the same time the Germans counterattacked further up north and caused the Battle of Bulge, O'Neil said. "The generals thought that the Bulge area was more valuable than Colmar. They were sending most of the supplies to the Bulge area and we were getting very little artillery. We were limited to 10 artillery rounds a day."

Because the generals and history focused on the Bulge, Colmar is known as the "Forgotten Front". But December 1944 was a time that O'Neil and the men fighting for lives near Bennwihr never forgot.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Division was part of the 7<sup>th</sup> Army and on the southern end of the front line. O'Neil was in the 15<sup>th</sup> Regiment, the same regiment that had the most decorated Soldier when the war ended, Audie Murphy. Murphy's Company B was not chosen for this hill patrol. Company I, 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, 2<sup>nd</sup> Squad was selected.

O'Neil was one of only eight men who were sent to take the hill. Over 35 years later, in a taped interview, O'Neil was able to recall in detail the fear eight young men faced heading to their deaths.

“We knew if we ever left that building, we were going to die,” O’Neil said. “That’s definite. We were terrified. We knew that when we started up that hill you could count the seconds before we were long gone.”

That omen that foretold their doom was bullet riddled cow carcasses on the hill. In 1944, the area was a wasteland of desolate vineyards and abandoned farmland.

“The area was devastated because there were many battles there. It kept changing hands. First, the French took it. Then the Germans pushed them back. This happened again. Then the American 36<sup>th</sup> Division pushed through and the Germans also pushed them back. It was back and forth the whole war.”

Some farm animals persevered through the bombardments and wandered over the bleak landscape.

“There were a lot of cattle that use to walk around,” O’Neil said. “In the day time you would see a cow, then at night the Germans thought it was movement. Whatever they thought, they just opened fire with an artillery barrage and the cows were in the way. The next morning you would see the cows dead on the hill.”

There were severed legs and heads scattered over the hill. Blood oozed out of the stained hill. This was the battlefield the eight infantrymen without artillery support were going to engage the enemy. It was a suicide mission and the men knew it.

“We needed to find out what was up there because we had to take that hill to get out of town,” O’Neil said. “Someone decided that the 2<sup>nd</sup> squad of the 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon would be the patrol to go up the hill, find out what the Germans had up there, come back and make a report...if you come back.”

“We figured half the German Army was on that hill. On top of that, the hill was mined. We were terrified because we would either be blown up by the mines or cut down by the machine guns and automatic weapons they had up there.”

They thought of a desperate attempt to somehow survive the patrol.

“We thought if we had the cows and animals in front of us, we could push them up the hill and explode the mines,” O’Neil said. “Then we were told we couldn’t use the animals, we would have to find the mines and Germans as best we could.”

The German arsenal included tanks and artillery. The eight men had rifles and a machine gun. They were on their own and even though they trusted their leader, they knew he could not save them.

“We were going to be led up the hill by our sergeant, a fella by the name of Sylvester S. Suyhada, from Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, a tough sergeant, a real tough guy and a great combat man. We had faith in him,” O’Neil said, “but we also figured this was our last night on earth.”

The men were battle hardened and had moments where they briefly questioned their mortality, but this time was different.

“We had been shot at before. I had a machine gun fire go between my legs as I was running across a hill and it did not affect me much,” O’Neil said. “Naturally being in a war, I was scared, but when a battle was actually going, I was not really thinking about it. It is survival, but everybody is running around and there is a lot of movement going on. There were other times when we thought if we go in there like this, we are going to get wiped out. That was more or less in the back of our minds but really we did not think it would.”

"Of course, in the back of our minds, we always had the thought, 'maybe I will get killed today,'" O'Neil said. "But, it would pass and we would think 'I'll make it, I'll make it, I'll make it' except that one time in Bannwihr. We figured we will never make this. It was impossible. We were just sitting there thinking, in two hours I have to go up that hill and I know when I do that, I'm a dead man. It really played on our minds. We were panicking, we really were. It was right around Christmas time too but this was no Christmas present coming our way."

The entire Colmar campaign had not been a Christmas present for Company I.

"We were cut off and the company had been really beat up. We had lost an awful lot of men and now another eight were going to be lost. There were some French and American outfits trying to break through to us but they hadn't made it. So morale was really low."

As the time approached to go out on patrol and the squad prepared for the inevitable, two separate events converged to alter the lives of eight men.

"Someone in charge finally realized that if the squad was sent up the hill they would probably just get wiped out. It made no sense to send a squad out and report on what they found when they were not to come back," O'Neil said. "They said it would be suicide to send us up the hill. WE had figured that out long before."

As the brass was coming to the obvious conclusion, there was finally a Christmas present coming, a big one. The American 45<sup>th</sup> Division, comprised mostly of the Oklahoma National Guard, was spearheading a drive, taking all the cities and towns around Colmar. They were charging towards Bannwihr and were close, real close, maybe just a day away from breaking through. It made sense to hold off a suicide patrol and give a division time to arrive and reinforce the area with sufficient men and artillery to battle the Germans in a winner take all outcome for the hill.

"About two hours before the attack was supposed to go off we got word that the whole thing was off. They were not going to bother to send us up. We were hoping that the 45<sup>th</sup> would break through and the next day they did," O'Neil said. "They replaced us and we were sent back to an R&R area for rest and relaxation. We were glad about that; we figured we would have a lot of birthdays now."

After R&R, O'Neil rejoined the 3<sup>rd</sup> assault through the Colmar Pocket, but they were stopped two towns short of Colmar, not by the enemy.

"The allied government, England, France and the United States wanted to make sure that the French people saw their army retaking France territory because it had not happened in any of the big cities before. Paris was taken by Americans," O'Neil said.

"This was the first chance for the French people to have an opportunity to see their own army fighting and defeating the Germans. Of course, the people did not know that their army had not done the fighting until they went into the city of Colmar. For three weeks prior to that, the 3<sup>rd</sup> had done all the fighting to soften up everything. We stopped and the French Army came through us, went down the road and into the city. We just sat outside."

But they did not sit for long. They were sent to the Pont-a-Mousson for river training in preparation for the Rhine River crossing. The training was not needed because the Ludendorff Bridge at Remigan was taken and the 3<sup>rd</sup> crossed the Rhine in a line of trucks. Ironically, they trained for a river crossing but their last big battle occurred at an airport.

"We were fighting across the airport at Nuremberg, it was a wide open field and we were getting shelled pretty hard, but not by planes. The German Air Force was pretty much gone by then. We were getting shelled by tanks, it was a tough battle, but it was different than Bannwihr. We had tanks too and they were firing at the German tanks, so it was even-

steven thing. We were thinking, maybe I'll get killed, but we figured we had a fighting chance. In Bennwahr, we said we will never make this."



**O'Neil stands next to a jeep in one of the towns**

Another reason Nuremberg was different was because the company had their own tank support which eventually beat the Germans into submission. The 3<sup>rd</sup> marched the four miles into Nuremberg where they along with the 45<sup>th</sup> Division's 120<sup>th</sup> Combat Engineers attached to the 3<sup>rd</sup>, provided two historic moments of the war.

In April 22<sup>nd</sup> at Nuremberg Stadium, where Hitler held his famous rallies, the 3<sup>rd</sup> raised an American flag over the large Swastika at the top of the Zeppelin Grandstand. Then they held a Victory parade and marched in front of the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Commander General Alexander Patch and 3<sup>rd</sup> Division Commander General John "Iron Mike" O'Daniels. This was the same ground the Nazis goose stepped in front of Hitler in their heyday. The climatic event occurred on April 25<sup>th</sup>, when the 120<sup>th</sup> literally completed the destruction of Nazi Germany by blowing up the Swastika.

"After Nuremberg, we knew the war was over because Hitler had already committed suicide and the Germans were surrendering all over the place. So we just finished out that string in what was called the Redoubt Area."

The Redoubt Area stretched from the Alpine Mountains in southern Germany and into Austria. It included Berchtesgaden and the Eagle's Nest, Hitler's mountain retreat. Even though the Eagle's Nest had been abandoned, it was one of the last prized remembrances of Nazi power that had not been claimed by the Allies. Bragging rights were at stake and every outfit in the area wanted to claim it.

"The 3<sup>rd</sup>, 36<sup>th</sup>, 45<sup>th</sup>, 101<sup>st</sup> and some French people were all racing to get there first," O'Neil said.

Contrary to popular belief, the 101<sup>st</sup> Band of Brothers, was not the first to reach Hitler's hideaway.

"The French were actually the first ones to reach it," O'Neil said.

French General Georges Buis of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division, the Regiment de Marche du Tchad, claimed that he and Officer Paul Repiton-Preneuf were those people. The reason they did not receive recognition is because they did not stay when they saw American troops arriving.

But those troops were not the 101<sup>st</sup>. It was the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment from the 3<sup>rd</sup>. They reached the Eagle's Nest on May 4<sup>th</sup>, one day before the 101<sup>st</sup>. One reason the 3<sup>rd</sup> did not receive recognition is because the Eagle's Nest was not in their assigned zone.

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The 3<sup>rd</sup> had been ordered to stay in their area, but General O'Daniel decided to keep moving. They too did not stay, but did raise a flag on May 5<sup>th</sup> before the 101<sup>st</sup> arrived later that day. The 101<sup>st</sup> gained the fame for reaching the Eagle's Nest.

"We went to Salzburg, Austria, about ten miles from the Russian front and the war ended. That night we said, "Remember that night in Bennwihr when they were going to make us attack that hill?" O'Neil said. "Then we said, 'Yes, thank God they didn't because if they did we would not be here today."

Another group did attack the hill in Bennwihr.

"We actually met some tank guys, fellas who were in a tank outfit who were in Bennwihr after us," O'Neil said. "They attacked that hill with tanks and 100 men and it took them two days to get the Germans off that hill. The tank guys said it was real devastation, that is was a real, real war they had on that hill. The Germans had everything on that hill, tanks, artillery, everything. These guys had a heck of a time with 100 men and tanks and we were going to be sent up that hill with a couple rifles and a machine gun. You can see why I was so scared."

Today there is a plaque on that hill commemorating the climatic battle that took place there long ago, but not so long ago to forget the carnage that changed or ended so many lives. Today it is aptly called "Bloody Hill."

As for Charles O'Neil, he returned to Manchester, New Hampshire and resumed his radio career. He remained in radio for over 40 years, covering events such as astronaut Alan Sheppard's return to his native New Hampshire after being the first American in space.

O'Neil also covered the New Hampshire primary in five separate decades and met every future president from Eisenhower to the first George Bush as they campaigned through the state. O'Neil was one of the first people in the state to learn of and report that President Kennedy had been assassinated.

The one even he always dreamed of covering but never had the opportunity to witness, like all New Englanders of his generation, was seeing his beloved Red Sox win the World Series.

O'Neil passed away on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1992. That was 12 years before the Red Sox brought joy to New England.

Shortly before his unexpected death, he had a chance to visit the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division Monument in Arlington National Cemetery. While there, he found the grave of fellow Dog Face Soldier, Audie Murphy.



**A visit to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division Monument at Arlington National Cemetery**

# Change of Command for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion

LTC Joel Smith assumed command of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment on September 23, 2011.

After graduating from high school in Brisbane, Australia, LTC Smith attended the United States Military Academy. He graduated in 1993 as an Infantry Officer with a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering.

His first assignment was with the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division where he served as a Rifle Platoon Leader, Mortar Platoon Leader and Headquarters Executive Officer in 1-27<sup>th</sup> Infantry. He also served as an Aide-de-Camp to the Assistant Division Commander (Operations) and as a Rifle Platoon Leader in 4-87<sup>th</sup> Infantry during a deployment to Haiti for Operation Uphold Democracy.

LTC Smith's next assignment was with the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division where he served as the Logistics Officer and the Bravo Company Commander in the 2-187<sup>th</sup> Infantry. Following command, he earned a Master of Science degree in Counseling and Leader Development from Long Island University and served as a Tactical Officer at the United States Military Academy Preparatory School.

LTC Smith next served with the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division for four years which included operational deployments to both Afghanistan and Iraq. He spent two years in the G3 branch as the Chief of Plans, as a Training Officer and as the Liaison Officer for CTJF-76 (Afghanistan) to the Pakistan Army's 11<sup>th</sup> Corps. He then spent two years with the 2-14<sup>th</sup> Infantry as the Battalion Operations Officer and Executive Officer.

Most recently, LTC Smith served two years as a Plans Officer in the Australian Army's Forces Command Headquarters in Sydney, Australia followed by one year at Ohio University as the professor of Military Science.

LTC Smith is a graduate of the Infantry Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, the TOW and Mortar Leader's Courses, the Combined Army Services Staff School and the Command and General Staff College. He has earned the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Expert Infantryman's Badge, the Parachutist Badge, the Air Assault Badge and the Ranger Tab. His awards include the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Army Commendation Medal and the Army Achievement Medal.

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**Tim Stoy with Korean War Medal of Honor recipient Colonel James L. Stone, CMOH, 15<sup>th</sup> INF (1957-1958)**

October 2011

15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment Association  
**Tom Heitzer, Database Administrator**  
231 Normandie  
Bonne Terre, MO 63628

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