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WWII REENACTING

The re-enacting experience can be as ‘immerging’ as you’d like it, complete with era music, newspapers, magazines, books, etc... I was enthralled the entire weekend; 27-30 January: Fort Indiantown Gap: The Battle of the Bulge re-enactment. I’ll give you some highlights by running you through my days there.

**Day One; 27 Jan:** I left home latter than anticipated because the weather was not cooperating, and I wanted to ensure the roads would be clear for travel. I arrived at Fort Indiantown Gap (FIG) around 1430 or so, found the parking area, and then hiked back to the registration desk. Since this re-enactment has been occurring for decades, this was a very methodical process. I was given a registration form which I had to keep with me at all times. After that it was back to the car to load my stuff (duffle bag and barracks bag) onto a flatbed trailer with car seats being hauled by a farm tractor. It took me to the row of barracks – actual WWII barracks that FIG has been using for over forty years. We walked to Civil Air Patrol sponsored Chow Hall, a Tactical Event: into the woods to have mock battles between the Axis and Allied forces present.

I immediately met “Gramps,” a Gent one year older than I, who has been doing this for a while, and he does live in the Pittsburgh area. Gramps has been to this re-enactment for years. He just recently had back surgery so was not going to go to the tactical events (Tactical Event: into the woods to have mock battles between the Axis and Allied forces present). I got off the trailer, collected my stuff (duffle bag and barracks bag) onto a flatbed trailer with car seats being hauled by a farm tractor. It took me to the row of barracks – actual WWII barracks that FIG has been using for over forty years. We walked to Civil Air Patrol sponsored Chow Hall, a Tactical Event: into the woods to have mock battles between the Axis and Allied forces present.

Gramps introduced me to Dave, who does hail from Syracuse. I made my bed – with hospital corners – sat down and waited for the friend who had the rest of my impression.

Impression: the person you are when in your era garb. For me, a “slick sleeve” infantryman from L Company, 2 Battalion, 109th Infantry Regiment, 28th ID or Co L 2/109, 28ID.

I was missing boots and a weapon. My friend Mike was bringing both for me. As I sat on my bunk and chatted with Gramps and Dave, I received an email from Mike that he would not be in until Friday early morning. I shared this with both – who know Mike – and Dave told me I could borrow a pair of boots from him so I did. It felt really good to get out of my street clothes and be a part of the impression. My only regret was I did not have the 28ID patch (a Red Keystone or as the Germans called them, the “Bloody Bucket”) on my sleeves, but that would come later.

We walked to Civil Air Patrol sponsored Chow Hall, and it was the first time I was outside in full WWII Kit. I was wearing the wool uniform of an enlisted man from WWII, later war boots (‘two buckle’ for those of you who know), an M43 field jacket, and an overseas cap. It felt good. I spent the evening talking to many people and even went to the “Enlisted Club” – an impression that several people do each FIG re-enactment; to include music from the time by a live four piece band and the standard adult libations and smoking (neither of which I partook). Sleep came easy because I had ear plugs in, and they muffled the noise of an open bay barracks.

**Day Two, 28 Jan:** Friday morning I was up waiting for Mike to show up so that I could complete my impression. Dave was heading out to the tactical and told me to help myself to his boots. Gramps was still sleeping. I heard about another impression that ran a ‘canteen’ so headed over there for coffee. This Impression was really neat; three couples (complete with one of their babies) re-enacted the British equivalent of AAFES – NAAFI; Navy, Army, Air Force Institute. Anyway, they ran the canteen and provided breakfast and lunch, for a nominal fee, but coffee and tea all day long. They did a great job, and I found out all they wanted to do was break even on their food purchase. They usually made just enough in tips to pay for their gas to/from North Carolina!

I made several trips to the shopping area where multiple vendors of WWII paraphernalia hawk their wares. There were several things I wanted to buy that were within my budget. I wanted a net to cover my helmet. I wanted the English version – which had smaller half inch holes – and I wanted 28ID unit patches. I wandered through all of the vendors several times and did find what I was looking for. I ended up purchasing five original 28 ID patches, which I think is pretty neat. I did get a net, and that leads to the next story.

I came back with my net and tried to figure out how to get it on the helmet. When you purchase it, it is about 8 inches square and has to fit on a helmet that needs something that is 12 inches square! I asked Gramps about it, and he said he used hockey tape to hold his in place to stretch it. If he could find some, he’d help me. Later Dave came hobbling back from his tactical (another story) and told me he would put it on for me. He sat with ice on his knee on the edge of his cot and proceeded to work that net stretching it constantly. As it was getting close, he stopped and looked at me and asked, “Did you know this was a fixed bale helmet?”

I looked at him quizzically and remarked, “Is that good?” He gave me a look that declared I was nuts. Once again the ‘nuts’ look followed by shock and mumbling. “Well over one hundred dollars just for the helmet! Do you think this is worth it?”

Sheepishly I replied, “No.”

“Well over one hundred dollars just for the helmet plus the liner.” He then continued his mumbling...
under his breath something about painting and head ringing. When Dave was done, the net was in-place on top of a non-newly painted helmet and, in my opinion (and that is what matters), looked really cool!

Friday afternoon I was sitting in a very warm building listening to a woman pontificate about knitting. I sat in this class with three other women who all knitted. (I do NOT knit, and there is a story behind that but that would be for another time!) I am sure you are wondering what in the world was I doing there? Was this a mistake? In some ways, yes it was a mistake; however, I already had WWII patterns for knitting projects, but I had no idea what yarn to buy for the projects. I went to the class hoping that I would find out what brand of yarn and color, and I would call it a success. The class was scheduled for a half an hour, and I could survive that ... couldn't I? Did I mention the instructor liked to talk? I had the information I needed five minutes before the class started because a lady (her impression was a Nun) showed me her yarn, and I wrote down the information. I was trapped because the class started, and one of the first things mentioned was, ‘I've never had a man in my class before!’ This woman could talk. The first half hour ticked by, and there we sat listening to stories, name dropping (as if any of us had ever heard of all of these “famous knitters”), and some history thrown in for good measure. The next half hour dragged by slower than the first and mercifully ended only because the instructor for the next class came in and had set up for whatever her topic was – oh that’s right, applying makeup as they did in the 40’s. I had my information, and I was happy ..., or maybe I was happy because I was out of the class. Either way, there was a smile on my face!

At some point on this day, Gramps was introducing me to the AAF pilots on the floor, and the fact that I was in the National Guard came up along with the normal questions of, ‘what do you do,’ ‘what rank are you,’ etc.... When Gramps heard that I was a colonel he about fell over and exclaimed, “A full colonel! And here I am telling you about stuff!” Dave wasn’t too impressed and said, “well that’s your name now ‘Full Bird’”. Gramps never got over the shock, so everyone we met learned I was a colonel and what a goof he was for trying to tell me the ropes. I tried to tell him, I was brand new to this and I needed people to tell me, but he wasn’t buying it.

And now for the rest of the story ... around 1500 (3pm for you non-military types) Dave comes gimping into the barracks. He has a severe limp and starts to struggle out of his tactical kit. He explains to us that he slipped in the snow and hurt his knee. After some more prodding, I found out that the snow was about 14 inches deep, and no one could see the downed trees and rocks beneath the snow. Poor Dave ended up slipping on a rock with his left leg and slamming down on the point of another rock with his right knee. Within the past year, Dave has had his right hip replaced so he was a little concerned about that. He used a towel and got ice sickles from outside to wrap his knee. It worked reasonably well along with the Motrin he brought. With my knees, I decided right then and there, I did not need to go out on this particular tactical.

Sometime late in the afternoon, Mike showed up! He walked into the barracks in street clothes. We all went to the CAP Chow Hall for dinner, and he proceeded to tell me that he had brought the boots and M1, but that the M1 did not have the trigger assembly so would do me no good. I told him not to worry that I was okay with not going to a tactical (as per the story above). I had done my share of that just not in a WWII uniform. He seemed relieved by my comments and relaxed a little more. He disappeared after dinner, and we did not see him again until early Saturday afternoon.

**Day Three, 29 Jan:** This was the day I was really looking forward to because this was the day the public came to visit and see what this was all about. With his busted up knee, Dave decided not to go to the Saturday tactical. Along with bringing an extra pair of boots, Dave also brought two rifles; 1 X M1 Garand and 1 X 06 Springfield. He handed me the 06, and we both headed out in full combat gear to stand outside in the snow and visit with the public. That day I spoke to a multitude of people to include two very animated little boys, several adults, a PaANG Lt Col I knew (who took pix of me since our camera broke), and his Dad – got to Stuttgart just after the war ended, and a Battle of the Bulge veteran and his son. I enjoyed all of my time talking to folks about the hobby, the era, equipment, weapons, vehicles, etc. When not talking with the public, I was talking with others involved in the hobby. Most are in it to honor the men and women of that time who sacrificed so much.

The Battle of the Bulge Veteran with whom I spoke told me that he was taken prisoner during the battle and spent the rest of the war in prison camps. His first prison camp was the high school in Pruem, Germany. Pruem is the village we were stationed in from 1982 – 85. I told this Veteran that I knew exactly where he was held, as I had seen the building. He wanted to know how the village looked now. I told him that when I was there, there were no longer any signs of the war. That surprised him because he said the place was a terrible mess when he passed through it. An amazing story on an amazing day!

I shared the barracks bay with about a dozen men whose impression was RAF aircrew. On Saturday evening, they held a small formal dinner. They all dressed up in their blue Class A's and invited the three AAF pilots, in their pinks and greens, and went through the rituals of a formal mess. I sat at the other end of the bay with several others and explained what was occurring and the traditions behind what is done. Today’s USAF has formal dinners that are based on the traditions of the RAF that Lt Gen Hap Arnold saw when he was with the RAF during World War II. Gen Arnold called his dinners “Wing Dings.” The folks with me asked a bunch of questions and really seemed to enjoy my explanations. USAF has formal dinners that are based on the traditions
of the RAF that Lt Gen Hap Arnold saw when he was with the RAF during WWII. Gen Arnold called his dinners “Wing Dings.” The folks with me asked a bunch of questions and really seemed to enjoy my explanations.

That night ended after a lot of storytelling and hobby swapping ideas. I was invited to an ‘invitation only’ tactical in March back at FIG hosted by one of the German Impression units. I cannot make that weekend but it was nice to be asked.

**Day Four, 30 Jan:** We had to be out of the barracks by 0700 so it was up and out. I was on the road home by 0700 and back in time to attend church with Amy.

All in all a very good experience. I really enjoyed the interaction with the public and sharing the history with others. My lovely wife has agreed to (over time) knit era garments for me and sew on my Division insignia – what a woman! I look forward to my next event – whenever that will be. There are many events scattered throughout the year but sadly most of them are on weekends I work. The next one I may finally be able to attend is the local Memorial Day event in Boalsburg, PA. This is another time of interacting with the public and sharing history and they even have a scripted battle or two the public gets to watch. Maybe Mike will remember all parts of his M1 and I can borrow it for that!

I remain, your ‘war correspondent’,

JOEL F. PANNEBAKER, 33215294, Pvt, AUS Infantry

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**2011 CALENDAR OF HISTORY & EVENTS**

| OCT  | Columbus Day | 24  | Thanksgiving |
| DEC  | Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day |
| NOV  | Election Day | 9   | Hanukkah |
| 11   | Veterans Day | 25  | Christmas |

| MAY  | 2012 |
| 21   | 11th Annual Armed Forces Day (Harrisburg) |
| 22   | 28th Infantry Division Memorial Service (Boalsburg, PA) |
| 25   | 3rd PNGMM Picnic |

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**THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS**

The Pennsylvania National Guard Military Museum is run by a staff of very dedicated volunteers and some that worked behind the scene. We would like to thank them for their tireless efforts because they are the reason that our museum is what it has become today.

LTC Rick Shertzer (USA, Retired) has been very helpful in doing tasks around the museum. He had worked on the outside with planting new flowers and more work in our library. Joe Hovis and his volunteers for the Range House work.

Finally, the museum would like to thank “Doc” Woods who has supported the PNGMM in various aspects of material and work related services thru the State Reservation Maintenance Office.

It’s the people who make the museum projects come alive and insure that the story of the Pennsylvania National Guard is told. If you have some time and talent to contribute, in any amount, please contact us at the museum at 717-861-2402.
DONATIONS

213th Artillery Flag donated by Richard Bleistine from the Lebanon Chapter of the Society of the 213th Artillery.

British MK II Sten Gun and German MP28-11 submachine gun, a World War II mine marker kit with marker flags, and an identified WWI Gas Mask bag by Clifford G. Walters.

Six rare NGP Sergeant’s chevrons purchased from the Hershey Story Museum.

World War II uniform parts, overcoat, drawers, caps, brown boots, swing kit, leggings, etc… by Maureen Gallo.

Ashtray originally give as a souvenir at the 5th reunion of Service Company, 110th Infantry, July 17-18, 1970, Scottsdale by Tom Phillips.

Cigar box full of miscellaneous Spanish American War and Civil War badges, buttons, medals, insignia and Civil War related histories and documents by William Irvin.

MUSEUM TOUR GROUPS

Lithuania Military (State Partnership Program)

Cup Pack 86 (Elizabethville)

N.C.U.H.S. Jr. R.O.T.C.

Civil Air Patrol Squadron 811 (Reading)

A.A.C.A. Antique Auto Museum (Hershey)

BSA Troop 12 (Allentown)

Pennsylvania Virtual Charter Schools

Gary Keller’s Tour Group

Lebanon Home School Group

Elite Coach Bus Tour Group

Pine Grove Antique Car Club “Varmits”

Pennsylvania Air National Guard

3-103rd Armor Tour Group

Wayne Anspach’s History Club

Philadelphia Police Explorer Cadets
Thank you to our recently rejoined or new members. The military museum is a 501 © (3) non-profit organization, and tax deductible dues or donations may be sent to:

PNG Military Museum  
Building T-8-57  
Fort Indiantown Gap  
Annville, PA 17003-5003

Although space constraints prevent us from listing everyone who has joined or renewed their PNGMM memberships over the last couple of months, we would like to recognize as many patrons as we can. Here is a list of partial listings of Regular, Family, and Business memberships for the 2011 year.

- Karl Spohn (Regular)  
- Joel F. Pannebaker (Regular)  
- Horace Pysher (Family)  
- Donald Young (Regular)  
- Frederick Bailey (Regular)  
- Joseph Perugino (Family)  
- Mary Sibrava (Regular)  
- Elite Coach Bus Company (Corporate)  
- Michael Demko, Jr. (Regular)  
- Thomas Rulis (Family)  
- A. James Shedlauskas (Regular)  
- Richard Shertzer (Regular)  
- Stephen Shayter, Jr. (Regular)  
- Peter Krenitsky (Regular)  
- Chandra Capps (Regular)  
- Larry Powell (Regular)  
- James M. McKeon (Regular)  
- Jay Field (Regular)  
- Jamesway Construction Inc. (Corporate)  
- Timothy Patches (Family)  
- Andrew Sakmar (Regular)  
- David Sakmar (Regular)  
- Larry Erdley (Family)  
- James Clarkson (Regular)  
- James Ferrari (Regular)  
- Jack Mosholder (Family)  
- George Garber, Jr. (Regular)  
- Aldred Allison, Jr. (Regular)  
- William Kuba (Regular)  
- Richard Weber, Jr. (Regular)  
- Richard Prescott (Regular)  
- Horace Chadwick Pysher (Family)  
- John J. Watson (Regular)  
- K. Ronald Rutt (Regular)

We would like to also thank those members and patrons of the military museum who donated financial support for the care of artifacts or in memory of someone who have served.

- Elite Coach Bus Company  
  Paul Boltz  
  Peter Krenitsky  
  Larry G. Powell  
  Jay H. Field  
  Larry L. Erdley  
  Richard A. Weber, Jr.  
  K. Ronald Rutt

If you have objects that you are interested in donating to the Museum, please contact us at (717) 861-2402. Please have some information regarding the item types, their age or the conflict where they are related to, their connection to Pennsylvania, your contact information, and, if possible, photographs of the object ready. The more information the better. Below is just some of what we are looking for:

- World War II M-1 Carbine.  
- Civil War Items.  
- Spanish American War Items.  
- Items from Mt. Gretna during the time the Pennsylvania National Guard trained there.  
- Military History books for our museum.
3rd Annual MG Frank H. Smoker, Jr. Foxhole Invitational

The Foxhole Invitational Golf Tournament originated in September 2009 to support the Pennsylvania National Guard Military Museum. The museum serves as a tribute to our veterans-past, present, and future. It is through their dedication and sacrifice that we are able to enjoy our freedom, and we’re proud to honor them at the museum.

In 2010, the tournament was dedicated to Major General Frank H. Smoker, Jr., who passed away on July 16, 2010. General Smoker served as president of the Pennsylvania National Guard Military Museum since its inception in 1985 until January 2010. The museum was a labor of love for General Smoker, and we are proud to call him a forever friend of the museum.

The 2011 tournament was a great success. Pictures of the event can be seen on our museum website. The next museum newsletter issue will contain information on the tournament.

GOLF TEAMS & SPONSORS SLOTS FOR 2012 ARE NOW AVAILABLE!!

For Further Information contact
Sharon Flaig
717-821-3790
FOXHOLEGOLF@GMAIL.COM

CURATOR’S CORNER by CHARLES B. OELLIG

Walter S. Garman of Pittston, Pennsylvania, enlisted in Company C, 9th Infantry Regiment on April 19, 1898. He was enrolled on April 27 and mustered into service on May 11, 1898, on the eve of the war with Spain.

Garman was mustered out with his company on October 29, 1898. The 9th Regiment spent most of it’s time in service at Chickamauga Park, Georgia, and Camp Hamilton, Kentucky, near Lexington.

Walter Garman was commissioned a second lieutenant in Company M, 9th Regiment on July 1, 1902. He was promoted directly to Captain and company commander on July 2, 1907. He resigned from the National Guard on September 9, 1910.

Shown here as a young second lieutenant wearing a model 1895 dress coat with a model 1902 officer’s cap with state coat-of-arms. On the collar are two brass keystones and infantry insignia with company letter and regimental number. His shoulder straps are that of a second lieutenant. He also wears a silver five year marksmanship qualification and bronze revolver qualification badge.

This is the 30th in a series of historical photographs of the Pennsylvania National Guardsmen of the past, submitted by Charles Oellig, curator of the Pennsylvania National Guard Military Museum at Fort Indiantown Gap. The museum is open Mondays and Fridays, from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or other days by appointment. Call (717) 861-2402 or visit:

www.pngmilitarymuseum.org

for more information or to schedule an appointment. The museum is closed on major holidays.
HOURS

Hours are 10:00-4:30 (Monday & Friday).

To schedule an appointment to visit the museum at a time not listed, call our Museum Director, Mr. Charlie B. Oellig at the museum Monday & Friday at 717-861-2402, our Command Historian, SGT Damian J. M. Smith, at 717-861-2464, or the Cultural Resources Manager, Ms. Rita Meneses at 717-861-9415.

DIRECTIONS

From I-81, take exit 85B(northbound) or exit 85 (southbound), Fort Indiantown Gap exit, and proceed north on Route 934. At the first red light on post, turn right onto Service Road. Drive four tenths of a mile down the road. The museum is located at the corner of Service Road and Wiley Road, building number T-8-57. Look for the Civil War Cannon, Korean era tank, and the museum signs on the right hand side.