

'Thundering Herd'

Newsletter of the 8th Armored Division Association



Ardennes, Rhineland,
Central Europe

Spring/Summer 2024

Vol. X1 No. 2

Welcome to the 8th Armored Division Association Newsletter

The 'Thundering Herd'

Spring/Summer 2024 Edition

Merry Christmas -Happy Holidays- Happy New Year!



8th Armored Men at Christmas 1944 – Tidworth Barracks, England

Happy New Year & Happy Holidays to the members friends of the
'Thundering Herd'!

We welcome the new year of 2024

It is also the time of year to announce the need for **DUES** payment!

Dues are the life blood of the organization and we are very grateful for
your generous support of the 8th Armored Division Association

DUES

Individual: \$20

Family: \$35

Students under 18: \$10

Donations of any amount are gratefully accepted.

The 8th Armored Division Association is a non-profit 501C3 and
donations are tax deductible

Send CHECKS made out to '*8th Armored Division Association*' to
8th Armored Division Association
2345 E. Dauphin St
Philadelphia, PA 19125

To All Members, Families & Friends,

We wish you a very MERRY CHRISTMAS; HAPPY NEW YEAR and Happy
Holidays!

Please remember the brave warriors of the 'Thundering Herd' = 8th Armored
Division who served and sacrificed to retain our sacred rights and liberties and
FREEDOM from tyranny.

The soldiers of the Thundering Herd entered combat in the European Theater of
Operations (ETO) by landing in Le Harve, France and serving in France in
the Saar-Moselle Triangle

<https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USA/USA-E-Last/USA-E-Last-7.html#:~:text=To%20American%20troops%20the%20uncleared%20sector%20was%20the,miles.%20The%20base%20extended%20not%20quite%20thirteen%20miles>

Serving with the 3rd Army under General Patton until transferred into the Battle of
the Bulge through Belgium and served in the 9th Army in the Southern

Netherlands into the Rhineland, crossing the Rhein River; combat in the Ruhr Pocket closing the ring around a huge German army group; into Central Germany and the Harz Mts. And on to the Elbe River where the end of war in the ETO finally arrived on May 8, 1945.

Occupation duty followed in Germany until the Division was transferred back to the 3rd Army and servicer in Western Bohemia (Czechoslovakia) with HQ in Pilsen.

Eventually the remnants of the Division was sent home and the Division was deactivated on 13 November 1945 at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia by Gen. Charles F. Colson.

We urge you all to remain dedicated to the preservation of the memory of the Thundering Herd and the stories and records of the soldiers of the 8th Armored Division by being active with our Association and supporting our mission.

Many THANKS

**Andy Waskie, Ph.D. president 8th Armored Division Association
Battle of the Bulge Association (BoBA)**

Our 8th Armored Division Web page with ALL details on the Division and its veterans. Please donate photos; stories and details of your members.

<https://www.8th-armored.org/>

To communicate further, we also feature a 'Facebook' account and ask all interested to enroll in order to stay in contact and share comments and information:

New Association 'Facebook' page

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/269231523148647/>

We are in need of volunteers to assist with the following:

* Future Reunions - a volunteer committee to work on the details of a potential annual reunion/Association meeting where yearly business and elections and planning can be conducted.

* Newsletter – help and contribute articles and reports to the semi-annual newsletter – the 'Thundering Herd' Ardennes, Rhineland, Central Europe We need articles, photos and stories for the 'Thundering Herd' newsletter. Please help us by sending in stories, photos and recollections of the veterans and your family members who served! Many THANKS!

The Commemorative Memorials to Honor the Veterans and service of the 8th Armored Division

GOOD news!

Our Commemorative Stone for the 8th Armored Division was placed at the Army History and Education Center (AHEC) at the Army War College, Carlisle, on Saturday, June 26, 2022. A large crowd was present at the dedication.

Below is a photo of the Commemorative Stone to honor the veterans and service in the 8th Armored Division. Also the Memorial at the Museum of the Army, Ft Belvoir, VA



Army War College (AHEC) at Carlisle, PA



Memorial at the Museum of the Army, Ft Belvoir, VA



Memorial Brick at the Chapel of the 4 Chaplains at the Philadelphia Navy Yard

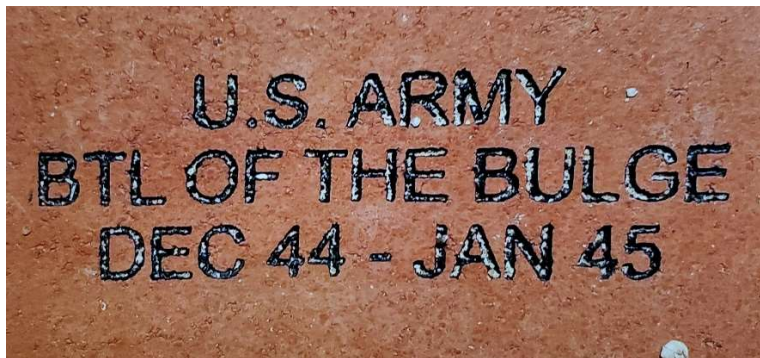


T/5 Al Ricci, left. Unk, right, dog Tanto, at 8th Armored Memorial in Pilsen. 88-Hq.

8th Armored Division Memorial Pilsen, Czechoslovakia (now Chechia)



Map of the Campaigns of the 8th Armored Division in the ETO (European Theater of Operations) January 1, 1945 – July, 1945



Battle of the Bulge Memorial Stone at the WWII Museum in New Orleans

New Veteran of the 8th Armored Division celebrates his 100th Birthday!

Robert L. Leslie, Tech 4 HQ Company 36th Tank Battalion

<https://www.8th-armored.org/rosters/36hq-rst.htm>

https://eedition.inquirer.com/infinity/article_popover_share.aspx?guid=06bca424-63c6-4b3f-a01e-7d34c30d898d&share=true

https://www.ncnewsonline.com/news/local_news/world-war-ii-veteran-bob-leslie-turning-100-on-jan-6/article_a271f8fe-a4e6-11ee-a9a2-ab152326ca49.html



8th Armored Division Merchandise

We still have 8th Armored Division caps:
Gratis to 8th Armored Division veterans
\$20 to all others (includes postage & handling)

8th Armored Division Challenge Coins
\$5 per piece

8th Armored Division shoulder patches
\$10 a piece

8th Armored Division License plates
\$20 a piece (includes postage & handling)

8th Armored Division Decals
\$5 a piece



BOBA UPDATES - NOVEMBER 2023

Introducing the incoming members of the 2024 Board of Directors and many thanks to those who served this past year! Your continued support is greatly appreciated!

ELECTED OFFICERS

President & CEO: Steve Landry
Executive Vice President: Barbara Mooneyhan
Vice President of Membership: Wayne Jacobs
Vice President of Chapters: Dr. Andy Waskie
Vice President of Military & Veteran Affairs: Doris Davis
Treasurer: Mary Ann Coates Smith
Recording Secretary: Gail C. Larke

ELECTED BOARD MEMBERS

Madeleine Bryant, Chaplain
Kristen Faller
Ken Larke
Jim Triesler, Historian
Betsy Rose

PAST PRESIDENT:

John Mohor

JOIN US TO COMMEMORATE THE 79TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE



You are cordially invited to the 79th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge from January 24 - 26, 2024 in Arlington, VA and Washington, DC!

Join our Bulge veterans, their families and friends to remember the Battle of the Bulge. The Embassy of Belgium will host a reception for veterans, family and friends on the afternoon of Thursday, January 25, 2024 to commemorate the end of the battle. We'll also have wreath-laying ceremonies at the Battle of the Bulge Memorial, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and WWII Memorial! And, don't miss our educational program on Wednesday night with special speakers and WWII displays!

We secured a special Battle of the Bulge Association rate of **\$165/night for king or \$185/night for double queen (plus taxes)** at the Embassy Suites Crystal City/National Airport in Arlington, VA 22202. This rate includes a discounted self-parking rate of \$40/night, free transportation to and from Crystal City METRO and Reagan Washington National Airport, free hotel wi-fi, and complimentary breakfasts.

DON'T DELAY! Reserve your hotel stay and register for the event
BY JANUARY 3, 2024 deadline.

[<-CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE SCHEDULE AND TO REGISTER->](#)

After the ceremonies, extend your trip and [attend the Battle of the Bulge Conference in Gettysburg on January 27, 2024!](#)

If you are unable to join us, please consider [donating to our Wreath Fund](#) in memory of a Bulge soldier. We hope to see you in DC in January!

Thank you for your continued support!



Remembering Those Who Fought For Our Freedom



"Tonight, 79 years ago, was the beginning of the Battle of The Bulge. Germans parachuted into our town and many others and our unit plus the Infantry were called out to capture them. They were dressed as Nuns, Priests and American soldiers. The Infantry captured most of them but

some escaped - to be heard from later. This was quite a welcome for us. Say a prayer or two for the guys that did not make it and are still there." - *Bulge veteran Fred Faulkner (3257 SIG SVC CO)*

Listen to This Year's Performance of "The Ardennes March"

On Dec 4, 2023, **Bulge veteran Fred Faulkner (3257 SIG SVC CO)** conducted the Florida's Richey Concert Band in the playing of his composition - *The Ardennes March*. Bravo, Fred, and thank you for your service! [Click here to watch the performance!](#)

Remember Them

Tomorrow December 16, 1944 marks the 79th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. Please take a moment to remember the fallen and those veterans who have passed. Reach out to your veteran friends to thank them for their



sacrifices. Visit one of the many [Battle of the Bulge memorials](#). Consider [donating to our Wreath Fund](#) in memory of a Bulge soldier. Thank you for your continued support to perpetuate the memory of the Battle of the Bulge!

Battle of the Bulge Association[®], Inc. | [Website](#)

During the Battle of the Bulge, why didn't the allies allow the Germans to continue their advance, so that they would become severely overextended and could be surrounded by the third army?

The Allies did not allow the Germans to continue their advance during the Battle of the Bulge for several reasons:



1. **Strategic Importance of the Ardennes:** The Ardennes Forest was a crucial region for the Allies' advance into Germany. It provided access to key transportation routes and cities, and its loss would have significantly hampered the Allied offensive.
2. **German Underestimation of Allied Strength:** The German high command believed that the Allied forces in the Ardennes were weak and poorly equipped. They hoped to quickly capture the Belgian port of Antwerp, cutting off Allied supply lines and forcing them to retreat. However, they underestimated the Allies' ability to resist and counterattack.
3. **Allied Tenacity and Reinforcements:** Despite the initial German breakthrough, the Allied forces in the Ardennes fought back fiercely, slowing the German advance and buying time for reinforcements to arrive. General George Patton's Third Army, which had been resting after taking Metz, was quickly redirected to relieve the besieged American forces at Bastogne.
4. **Allied Air Superiority:** Once the weather cleared, the Allies gained overwhelming air superiority, allowing them to launch devastating attacks on German supply lines and troop concentrations. This greatly hindered the German ability to sustain their offensive.
5. **German Overextension and Supply Shortages:** The German advance quickly outran their supply lines, and they faced severe shortages of fuel, ammunition, and food. This made it difficult for them to maintain their momentum and resist the Allied counterattacks.

As a result of these factors, the Allies were able to halt the German advance and eventually turn the tide of the battle. The Battle of the Bulge was the last major offensive by the German army in World War II, and it marked a turning point in the war on the Western Front.



**Battle of the Bulge Seminar
January 27, 2024
8:30am-5:30pm**

The site of one of the US Army's greatest battles hosts a day-long seminar on the other. Gettysburg's World War II American Experience has organized a powerful day-long lineup of speakers for the first annual Gettysburg Bulge conference.

Speakers include Stuart Dempsey, Leon Reed, Jim Triesler, and Tom Vossler. Several WWII veterans of the Battle of the Bulge will be in attendance for a meet and greet.

Saturday, January 27

Registration begins at 8:30am.

Conference begins at 9:00am.

Tickets available online with a donation of \$40.00 for Non-Members and \$25.00 for Members of WWII American Experience. Museum Admission included. Lunch items available for purchase.

How did the introduction of the Sherman Tank affect Allied strategy in WWII?

An interview with members of a British tank museum, and the way they spoke about the Sherman was a real surprise.

They actually got emotional about it, and held the first lend lease Sherman as a keepsake. They said when the first Sherman arrived it was when the British really knew they weren't alone, and America was standing behind them now. I did not expect them to have such an emotional attachment to it.

German General Erwin Rommel wrote that the first time the British showed up to combat with Shermans, it was overwhelming and he lost 2/3rds of his entire tank force.

The tanks the British had been using were extremely poorly armed, and struggled to penetrate German tanks. But the 75mm on the Sherman could destroy anything except the few Tiger prototypes available at the time.

This 75mm Sherman quickly became outdated and outmatched, but the tank destroyers based on the Sherman continued to perform exceptionally well until the end of the war.

The M10, M36, Achilles, and Firefly variants all had kill ratios around 3-4:1. And they were produced in such large numbers that it would have been physically impossible for the Germans to win against them. Which is extremely overlooked.

They had the performance and numbers to completely destroy the German tank force by themselves.

The Sherman family of tanks had a huge impact on the effectiveness of the overall Allied force.

The WWII Army mess kit

Seeing as this is November and folks will be gathering soon with their families to celebrate Thanksgiving, I thought we would take a look at something that every GI used, not just on Thanksgiving, but for meals in the field; their mess kit. Or to be more specific, the M1942 Mess Kit.

David C. Cole wrote about the history of U.S. Army mess kits and equipment for the U.S. Heritage Museum. According to Cole, the 1874 infantry board's notice of the need for a "combination meat can and plate" was the first attempt by the Army to produce an all-in-one unit. In the almost 100 years before then, the issue of mess kits was haphazard at best.

Revolutionary troops had to provide their own plates, cups and utensils. The Pennsylvania state legislation did publish a request in 1782 for "500 tin cups, tin plates 10 inches in diameter and at least 1/2 inches deep," but no record of the request ever being filled has been found.

In the American Civil War, whether a soldier got issued a complete mess kit was more dependent on when he enlisted and where, than any results of an organized system. States like New York, Ohio, and Illinois provided cups, plates and utensils for almost all of its troops, especially in 1861 and 1862, before the federal government got the procurement up to the level needed for the tens and hundreds of thousands of troops enlisting. Other states like Iowa and New Hampshire sent its troops off to fight with equipment from home, or in the case of the 9th Iowa, bought mess kits for the troops after a local fundraiser from local Dubuque, IA, businesses.

The Army's new, 1874 model meat can design consisted of two tin plates that would fit together to form a container. The long handle for the one would lock the two separate pieces together. If this sounds familiar, it's because other than some changes in dimensions, and a central divider in the one half that came into being with the M1942, the 1874, M1910, and M1942 were largely the same design.

The M1942 style that a GI would have used for Thanksgiving dinner in 1944 would be the same as the ones used by soldiers in Korea in 1954, or Vietnam in 1969. In fact, it's a documented fact that soldiers in Vietnam were issued mess kits with 1943 and 1944 manufacture dates. While the U.S. Army would stop issuing the metal mess kits in the mid to late 1980s, they remained in the Army's inventory and supply system until 2002.

Focusing on the M1942 version, the two dish system was designed in such a way that the soldier could carry the two plates with the handle used to lock the containers together. This allowed the soldier to get their rations dished onto the plates while holding it with one hand. While great in idea, the system took some practice to get to work as designed, as any soldier who spilled half their meal in the dirt when the divided plate fell off the handle of the meat can plate, can attest to. Numerous makers of mess kits worked to produce as many as were needed during the war. Aluminum Goods Manufacturing Co. (AGM Co.), Buckeye Aluminum Co. (BA Co.), Eastern Aluminum Co. (E.A. Co.), Knapp Monarch Co., Southeastern Metals Co. (S.M.Co.), and Vollrath produced the most, with several smaller manufacturers producing a few hundred to a few thousand more total. While the exact number of M1942 mess kits produced during World War II is not readily available, estimates suggest that several million units were likely manufactured to meet the demands of the war effort. The scale of military mobilization during World War II, coupled with the need for portable and practical field gear, would have necessitated a substantial production of these mess kits. Unfortunately, due to the passage of time and the lack of precise records, an exact figure remains elusive.

Army Bands

A history of **Army bands** that appears to be part of an Army class at its School of Music.

Military bands were originally created to use field music to control troops on the field, in addition to providing entertainment. Music could be used to issue commands, keep morale up, especially on marches, and perform duties such as the playing of Reveille. I have been in the presence of the Camp Chase Fife and Drum Band a few times, and it is remarkable how clearly such a band can be heard from a distance, even over the firing of muskets and cannons at a Civil War exhibition.

On the topic of Civil War bands, the first thing that comes to mind is the playing of The Campbells Are Coming, by the fife and drums of the 'Iron Brigade' at

Gettysburg. The Wisconsin, Indiana and Michigan troops arrived at the battlefield playing that song, which was one of several that the unit favored. They approached in columns of fours, and due to battlefield exigencies, went straight to their left flank and charged on the double quick instead of assembling by companies and attacking in a more organized manner. The Campbells Are Coming was a final motivational hurrah that stirred the members of the Iron Brigade as it blunted the Confederate attack and was all but destroyed in the process. This action helped the Union hold key ground that would lead to a Union victory at the battle, and perhaps the entire Civil War.

In the First World War, General Pershing launched an initiative to expand American military bands because he believed they were critical for morale. Congress approved 20 additional bands for the duration of the war, and Pershing increased band strength to 48 instruments. He also established an Army band school at Chaumont, France. Commanders initially gave these bandsmen many duties not related to music, but Pershing relieved them of all duties not pertaining to the band, that they might continue to entertain troops, play for wounded soldiers, and perform for local civilians. My Civil War friend knew a bandsman from the 166th Infantry in World War I that stated that many of his fellow bandsmen suffered serious wounds, being used as stretcher bearers before Pershing's directive was issued. Approximately 500 bands served the Army during the war. The bands were categorized into three types. Special bands included the U.S. Army Band and U.S. Military Academy Band, while separate bands were controlled by the Adjutant General and supported administrative, technical and training centers to which they were attached. Organization bands were infantry units attached to combat commands to provide music. Prior to 1943, they were organized at the regimental level, but around the time of the restructuring that changed the 12th Armored from a heavy armored division to a light one, regimental bands were abolished and consolidated at the division level.

These division bands were authorized 56 bandsmen and two warrant officers, and unlike the World War I generation, the life of a bandsman in World War II often revolved around guard duty of supply trains, command posts, and especially POWs, and once again as stretcher bearers. When one considers the trek across Europe undertaken by the Allied Armies, 1945 likely would have placed a great deal of precedence upon these non-musical duties, and without rehearsals, many division bands became musically inoperative until rehearsals could be held. They

also appear to have served mainly as Military Police for much of their time in the ETO.

While stateside, the band performed for troops within the unit and experienced trouble with animals while at Camp.

It can be pointed out that division bands were often in the action like regular troops. Notably, the 28th Infantry Division Band took up arms and fought the German advance during the Battle of the Bulge to a standstill. Only 16 of their 60 members survived the fighting in the Ardennes. The 7th Armored Division Band also helped to hold the line during the Bulge.

Their band's war diary also cites POW marches, guard detail, ration breakdown, and special quartermaster duties as their most common activities while in the field. The 101st Airborne Band fought in Bastogne with the rest of the division, and the 82nd Airborne Band manned the line as replacements while holding off the German spearhead.

With VE Day, the war ended, and the music returned.

Later, it was announced that the band would also stage three weekly radio shows to be broadcast over the Army's radio station. They next performed for CCR, CCB, and Div Arty's Memorial Day ceremonies. Elements of the band also supported various units in their follies and programs.

November 2023 HELLCAT NEWS

Concentration Camp Langenstein-Zwieberge (newsletter)

Langenstein, Saxony-Anhalt (state) Germany

This Camp was liberated by elements of the 8th Armored Division in April, 1945

Stiftung Gedenkstätten Sachsen-Anhalt

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Twitter https://twitter.com/langenstein_zb

Into the Death Factory of the Hürtgen Forest

Soldiers called it things like "The Death Factory" and "Green Hell". We all know it as the Hürtgen Forest. We're taking a few episodes to explore this dense, rugged forest that was the scene of some of the worst fighting that the Americans saw in WWII. Starting with the 9th Infantry Division, the Hürtgen Forest would be a place that would grind up and test the limits of several units in what would become the longest battle for the U.S. in WWII. This episode was produced in partnership with The Gettysburg Museum of History. See how you can support history education & artifact preservation by visiting their website & store at <https://www.gettysburgmuseumofhistory...> Map animations courtesy of [@SandervkHistory](#) with inspiration from the king himself, [@TheOperationsRoom](#) (who gave his blessing on this prior to the upload :)) Support the effort to expand history education on

PATREON:  [/ historyunderground](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhqdysAq9go>

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/c6iUeJCoyCw>

Christmas during the Battle of the Hürtgen Forest

https://youtube.com/shorts/XIwO7pu9bHE?si=YbVHhn_Jn80EvF6w

Sherman M 4 Medium Tank of WWII

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wL4IWO_YBQg

From Friend and Honorary Member of the 8th Armored Division Association –
Bohuslav ‘Bob’ Balcar – ‘Honorary Member’ (Czech Republic)

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Report from **Domažlice, Czechia (near Pilsen)**



On December 24, 2023, the Crown Jewels (Bohemia; Holy Roman Empire) are once again stored in the Imperial Palace Hofburg in Vienna. The imperial crown was also worn by the most famous Czech king and Roman Emperor Charles IV. (On this theme does exist a very interesting book : Hitler's Holy Relics by Sidney D. Kirkpatrick, published by Simon & Schuster, N.Y., 2010.

The beginning of December this year was really wintry – one day before our trip to Nuremberg a lot of snow fell, but in one week it was completely gone and the weather forecast for the Christmas days announced only rain, no snow - as it has traditionally been for the last three decades! And today, this reality we have here - permanent raining, snow only in higher areas!

Although no snow is expected, our town, as well as all towns and villages in Bohemia, are nevertheless decorated for Christmas - I send you a small sample including my wife Natasha.

I wish you a very merry Christmas and good health in the New Year 2024!

Bob Balcar



Armored Force
News 8th Armored.p

September 7, 1942

Thanks to Karl Ciemniecki