

Subject: Re: 97th news

Date: Wed, 1 Mar 2000 09:19:52 -0700

From: "Jim Marshall" <jmarsh29@montana.com>

To: "Gary Shingleton" <gary_shingleton@butler.k12.pa.us>

Gary,

The pictures came to me from Tom Merriss (deceased) the platoon leader. His son may have the originals. He is David Merriss LT. Col., teaching ROTC Jacksonville State. Box 422 Jacksonville AL. 36265. e-m (Mdmerl@aol.com) He is a super guy that you would enjoy knowing. I am in contact with him occasionally and will ask about a better copy. The sheets you see are about as good as my copy. How anyone carried a camera through the action is beyond me. I was hoping that maybe they were from Dick camera. I was told by Harold Yeglen, 5053 Balsam Dr. SW, Roanoke, VA., 24018-4805, PH 540-774-2614, that Dick did give a bunch of pictures to him. Harold was a member of Dicks platoon and may have been there in the action. I sure would encourage you to make contact there.

The story of April 10 action is news to me and is just the kind of thing that I would hope Dick could add to my paper as side notes, hopefully he will be motivated. I find it is a lot easier to do on the computer, than trying to tell some one about the action. Please let me know his reaction. How does he do on the phone-- thinking I could call him sometime to perk his interest.

e-m (haroldyeglin@email.msn.com)

Your note on the action of

----- Original Message -----

From: Gary Shingleton <gary_shingleton@butler.k12.pa.us>

To: <jmarsh29@montana.com>

Sent: Wednesday, March 01, 2000 9:07 AM

Subject: 97th

> Jim,

> Received your information, thanks. Would love to see the
> photo's in detail, particularly a couple of them. Any chance you might
> dabble with a scanner it'd be great.

> Just an addition to your "Dusseldorf 6-18/45". One event did occur
> for sure prior to your movements on the 11th & 12th of April. In the
> afternoon of April 10th Co. C (303rd) was advancing slowing in
> Seigburg. The platoon was attempting to advance on two machine gun
> nests barricaded in the town.

> Dashing across the street the platoon leader was wounded. With
> no thought of his own safety and in the fire from two hostile guns,
> technical sgt. Shingleton entered the street and moved the platoon
> leader to a position where medical aid could be rendered. He then took
> command and vigorously pushed the attack and overran the gun locations.
> For gallantry in action in street fighting at Siegburg this day, Tech.
> Sgt. Shingleton was awarded the Silver Star by Brig. Gen. M B Halsey.

> Good Luck in your research Jim, keep in touch...Gary

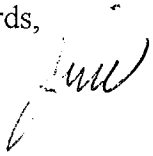
>

Hi Gary,

Great to talking with you and I do appreciate your interest in the history. Please look these pages over and make copy if you wish. I will trust to your judgment as to my letter pitch. Is it appropriate and will it be to much of a challenge or disturbing to Dick. We both want him to record but the persuasion might be in better form. I can sure re-write the letter. Probably your mom will be boxed in to take some notes. How would she feel about that extra duty? I forgot to ask if Dick is still able to read comfortably. Would it be better to try this after they get home?

Regards,

Jim

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jim", written in dark ink.

Jim and Ruth Marshall
1106 Dickinson
Missoula, MT. 59802

Dick and Dory Shingleton
6800 20th.Ave. N
St.Petersburg, Fl.33710

Wednesday, February 23, 2000

Dear Dick and Dory,

It is a great pleasure to hear from you and finally after all these years to make contact. Now that I am with a computer and spell check, my efforts are to contact those very special people.

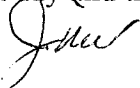
I did call Gary this evening to thank him for his good effort in getting the history for my recollection. The information sent to me by Gary is a world of help on some of the 97th.activities that I had not been aware of. Gary and family sound like you two can be very proud to have them in your camp.

I have done some writing relative to my tracks and will send a copy for your perusal. The accuracy in some areas may be in question. I would hope you will feel like making comment for side notes as you read through. I sure would like to know about where and what was happening in your shoes at about the same time . I know this is not easy to do and if it does not fit in with you routine at this time I sure do understand. It has been a project that I have rather enjoyed and I need to share it with some of the good people.

Dory, my wife is also a long time retired nurse and I say Dick, we are two very lucky dudes.

Have a great day and the best to you,

Jim



jmarsh29@montana.com
406-549-9429

5053 Balsam Dr. S.W.
Roanoke, VA 24018-4805
Nov. 24, 1992

Dear Richard:

Seems a bit informal to begin this letter with "Dear Richard." To all of us who were in the 1st Platoon serving under you, you'll forever be "Sergeant Shingleton." So...Dear Sergeant Shingleton...

Well, it's been a long time between letters! I have thought many times about you and the other guys in our compact group, moreso in the past few years as we've all passed the magic number -- Six-Five. Once you start digging back into the things lodged in memory, it seems that they become more like "gee, it seems like only yesterday" ^{rather} "geez, that was a long time ago!"

We didn't land on D-Day or storm Mt. Surabachi or any of a million other big-time things...but the ol' 97th was there when needed and I've always been proud of the outfit. We saw a helluva lot of the world, for a bunch of young guys. I see that pride nowadays in others, too, who were in the division.

I wish we could get a reunion together from among C Co. or the battalion, but tracking down people is a tough job. There are unit reunions held all over the place -- B company, D, battalion headquarters. The 97th Field Artillery just had one in Lexington, Ky., I am informed. So it's not impossible. But those groups probably kept in touch much better than we have, over the years.

Also, the 97th is alive and well in another form -- as the 97th Army Reserve Command at Fort Meade, Md. They wear the Trident patch! I'm enclosing a booklet put out by a fellow in the 97th ARCM -- a history of the 97th.

Enough about that. Maybe more in another letter.

It was great talking to you the other evening. Once the memories start flowing, no telling how long a couple of vets can talk! But it was great, and perhaps we can get together sometime when we're in Florida or you are up this way. Wife Milka and I are going to Sarasota for a convention in late January, as we have the past few years, and perhaps that would be an ideal time to stop for a couple hours on our way north. There are several of my former newspaper colleagues in St. Pete, too, and I should see them while in the area (which I haven't done in previous trips south).

Last January, we came north via Montgomery, Ala., and stopped in to see Jep and Mrs. Mitchell. It was a thoroughly wonderful couple hours at their townhouse, even though Jep has been left 99 per cent speechless by strokes. We still were able to communicate.)

--over--

As noted in our phone talk, I was a plain ol' rifleman in Sgt. Richie's squad (first squad), coming into the 97th in August 1944 at Camp San Luis Obispo. Fresh out of 17 weeks basic training at Camp Roberts, up highway 101 a short distance. The rest is history: Where the 1st platoon went, I went, until a couple months into our occupation duty in Japan when I got a call up to division headquarters to work in public relations. (We sent stories on promotions, etc., back to home town newspapers and wrote for Stars and Stripes about 97th news.)

As we prepared to go to Europe I was hauled out of the 1st squad and made a platoon runner, which meant that I carried Benton's messages from company CP back or up to the 1st platoon -- where ever you were located. Each platoon had a runner with the CP; I don't know to this day why I was picked for that duty. But it was interesting, that's for sure.

One night in the Ruhr Pocket -- one of those nights in the woods -- Benton discovered that the company was X number of yards too far out from where it was supposed to be for the night. He buttonholed me, since I supposedly knew the way back, and said, "Protect me, Take us back." We went back single file, through the black night. Me at the head of the column. Yes, that's what Benton said: "Protect me." I'll never forget that. I can still hear his squeaky voice.

One of those nights in the woods, we were digging in when some Germans came running through firing away. There ~~was~~ was a block house nearby and, as I recall, some of our guys were hunkered down there for the night. The Germans sprayed the inside of that place and at least one of the guys in there got shot up. Earlier that night the kitchen brought up a so-called hot meal and passed out mess kits from the trunk they carried. There was a lot of jangling going on -- clanking of mess gear. I often wondered if that alerted any wild-ass Germans in the area of our whereabouts.

Well, in the end, we got word to halt in place. In Czechoslovakia. Someplace past Marienbad. I wish I'd made a note as to where it was. But, anyway; Herbst or Benton or one of the honchos sent the runners out to their platoons. "Tell them the war is over." Sgt. Williams told me later: "Yeglin, when we saw you coming it was always bad news. ("be ready to move out in X minutes," or some such). This time it was good!"

it was in
(As for where it was... a village or town. I remember the guys were sacked out in some houses.)

3.

A day or so later we were back in Marienbad. V-E Day. The company took over some large houses. The one I was in was called "Villa Louise." Three stories. A couple of us took over the top floor -- a very nice apartment. I found a nice picture post card of that very house up there (loot?), saved it and a couple years ago had several copies made. Took one with me on a trip to Czechoslovakia in '91 and Milka and I found the place. The apartments on each floor had been cut up into smaller apartments -- and we went on upstairs and knocked at the third floor. An elderly lady answered. Milka is Czech (I'll get to that later) and spoke to the lady, telling her that I had been there 46 years earlier. She invited us in for what turned out to be a kind of mind-boggling visit. After 46 years....

And so it goes.

Richard, I spent my working days -- mostly nights! -- in the newspaper business. Attended the U. of Iowa from '46 to '50, and from then on worked on newspapers in Binghamton, N.Y., Davenport, Ia., and Rockford, Ill., until coming back to my hometown of Des Moines, Ia., for a job with the Des Moines Register. That was 1955. About 20 years later I became the Administrative Sports Editor. My wife died in 1983 of cancer and in early 1984 I took early retirement from full-time work but remained for seven more years in a part-time capacity while my two children were still in college.

I went back to Europe for the first time in 1990. The occasion was a Czech celebration in Pilsen commemorating the 45th anniversary of liberation by the U.S. Army, coinciding with the same dates in May 1945. I learned of this event when reading about it in a "military reunions" column in the Des Moines Register. A fellow in California who was a native of Czechoslovakia was the U.S. coordinator. I contacted him, and got all the information, ultimately deciding to go. There were only three other 97th fellows there -- none from the 303rd. A number of 16th Armored and 2nd Division veterans responded. One of the big events was the dedication of a 2nd Division monument in Pilsen. It was one memorable time!

One of the other people who returned to Pilsen for the event was the widow of a 2nd Division artillery spotter pilot. She was a native of a village near Pilsen. We became acquainted as part of the larger group of veterans and their wives, and she helped considerably because she could speak Czech. When I got back to the U.S. I wrote to her in Roanoke and thanked her for her assistance. We began to correspond. Long phone talks followed and then visits. That's how it happened -- wedding bells in April 1991 in Roanoke.

--over--

4.

A week after our wedding -- attended by my two children and her four, plus friends -- we flew off to Pilsen as husband and wife for the town's Celebration II -- a kind of repeat of the previous year's event. A big group from the 16th Armored returned as did 2nd Division gents -- some of the same from 1990 plus newcomers. Milka and I stayed in the home of one of her brothers. It was on that trip that she and I drove over to Marienbad and searched out the house/Co. C area.

No, we didn't go back this year though some did, but we are planning to return in 1994 along with some fellows from Co. B whom we met this past May during a reunion in Cleveland.

If something like that interests you, Richard, let me know. B Company is having its next reunion in May 1993 in Charlotte, N.C., and we will know more then about how many of their fellows intend to go.

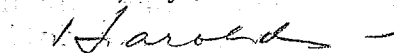
My contact in B Company is Bill Bannick of Bellevue, Wash., a suburb of Seattle. Bill was a lieutenant/ platoon leader in "B" who returned to Marienbad in 1990. I found out about his visit when we were there in 1991 and got in touch with him. We have been corresponding ever since.

He hopes to go back in 1994. Some of us then want to also drive over to Siegburg and reconnoiter the place. Bannick's 3rd platoon went up the hill and "took" the monastery-hospital on top.

In 1990, on my first trip back since '45, I flew to Frankfurt, had a rental car waiting and took off for the Rhine. Somehow I was able to read the German road signs and find my way. Spend the day driving up the Rhine. Stopped at Remagen and looked over that famous scene. Then onward to Bonn, and over to Siegburg for the night. Spent the next half day in and around the city and the Sieg River. Drove over to Hangelar, where we were holed up in the days before Siegburg. Then me and my rental VW wagon hit the autobahn and wound up in Wurzburg for the night. The next morning we set out for the border and reached Pilsen at noon, joined up with the Americans already there and got going on the festive weekend.

Well, sergeant, this letter looks like it's way too long and disjointed. So I'll cut it now, and hope that you will find at least some of it interesting. Drop me a line!

Cordially,



Harold Yeglin