

20th Combat Engineer Association of World War II



March 2006

C.O.N.F.I.D.E.N.T.I.A.L

HQCS TO COMBINE FORCES
OFFICE OF LICENSE COMDR

- YOU/me
APO 250 U.S. ARMY
~~JANUARY~~ 1945
FEBRUARY 2
1. OPERATIONS "CUPID"
 2. CODEWORD I DO
 3. FORCES INVOLVED JOHN G. AULD &
MARIBEL E. DORTON
 4. OBJECTIVE TO TIE THAT KNOT
 5. REVENUE OF APPROACH THE MIDDLE AISLE
 6. LINE OF DEPARTURE 3RD AUX. SURG. GP.
 7. H-HOUR 1030 A.
 8. SUPPORTING FORCES YOU
 9. THE ENEMY NONE
 10. EQUIPMENT REQUIRED OLD SHOE N' RICE
 11. PASSWORD ROLLING - PIN
 12. TIME INVOLVED FOREVER

By order of GEN. MUTUAL A. GREEMENT
Twoas Cheapasone Jr.
TWOAS CHEAPASONE, JR.
COLONEL, U.S. ARMY

What is this document?

It is a humorous invitation signed by fictitious General Mutual A. Greement, Colonel, U.S. Army, to attend a very real wedding at 10:30 a.m., February 2, 1945, in Sart Le Spa, Belgium.

The Bride-To-Be is Captain Maribel E. Dorton, who was a nurse in the U.S. Army Third Auxiliary Surgical Group. The Groom-To-Be is Major John G. Auld, who was executive officer of the 1340th Engineer Combat Battalion.

Read the details of this "World War II Wedding -- Combat Engineering Style" starting on page 3.

Wavy Arrow Contributions

We thank the following for having made a contribution to keep the *Wavy Arrow* coming to you on a regular basis. Please consider one if you haven't made a contribution recently.

Dominick Funaro (H&S, 20th)	\$25.00
Jane Gilcrest (spouse of Peter Gilchrist, F/20 and C/1340)	\$50.00
Rose Marciano (widow of Santino (Smoke) Marciano, B/1340th)	\$25.00
Lynn Morris (daughter of Anthony J. Faliskie, Jr., B/20th)	\$50.00
Steve Poulos (B/20th)	\$25.00
Ben Scronce (A/20th)	\$25.00
Truman Setliffe (Commander/1340th)	\$100.00
Lilya Mae Smith (widow of Dan M. Smith, Hq/1171)	\$10.00
Brenda Street (daughter of Bernard J. Hall, B/20th)	\$20.00
Emanuel J. Wasinger (D/20th; A/130th)	\$25.00

Lost But Not Forgotten

Anthony J. Faliskie, Jr. (B/20th) died October 30, 2005, at his home in Venice, Florida. His daughter, Lynne M. Morris, writes, "After leaving the Army, Dad worked for 26 years as an electrician with the Bendix Corp. in Sidney, New York. He then moved to New York City where he was a superintendent and retired to East Hampton, New York, becoming a beekeeper. After my Mother passed away, he lived his last years in Venice, Florida. He looked forward to receiving the *Wavy Arrow* which reminded him of "war" stories that he related with great enthusiasm."

George D. Jones (C/20th) of Waynesboro, Tennessee, has been reported as deceased by the Post Office on the envelope in which the December 2005 issue of the *Wavy Arrow* was mailed. Does any one have any further details?

Charles Jefferson Riser (D/20th; A/1340th) died November 22, 2005, of a massive stroke at the age of 84. His widow, Dorothy L. Riser, writes that her husband participated until his death in all activities of the Council on Aging in Monroe, Louisiana. He enjoyed talking about his time with the 20th Combat Engineers, and would tell his war stories over and over again.

Letters Received

Dominick Funaro (H&S, 20th) writes: "Since I joined the 20th Engineers in January 1944, I was one of the last GIs to join the outfit. So far I am in pretty good health. You may think that I am crazy because I enjoy the cold weather here in Mechnicville, New York. Shoveling the snow keeps me busy and it is great exercise. My wife and I still drive to Florida each October but I want to get back home for the snow. I do enjoy all the news in the *Wavy Arrow* so here is a few dollars to keep it going."

Jane Gilcrest (spouse of Peter Gilchrist, F/20 and C/1340) writes: "Thank you for sending the *Wavy Arrow*. Peter has macular degeneration of the eyes and I read the *Wavy Arrow* to him. He asked me to send a donation to keep it coming.

Ann Kaffe (daughter of Wilbur Hansen, B/20th) writes: "I thank you for sending me the December issue of the *Wavy Arrow* and the certificate in which the First Infantry Division decrees that all members of the 20th Combat Engineer Association of World War II are honorary members of the Society of the First Infantry Division in recognition of outstanding combat support of the Big Red One during WW II. I am sending the certificate to my son, Sgt. David Hansen who has served in both Afghanistan and Iraq. He loved his Pop and carefully listened to his 'war stories.' My father was proud of his service with the 20th Engineers. He attended several Reunions and was always thrilled to meet the men with whom he served. I would like to thank each of you for your devotion and service to our country. It is men like you who allow all of us to enjoy the freedom in our great country."

World War II Wedding - Combat Engineer Style

This story starts in North Africa in November 1942 near Casablanca, French Morocco. After the invasion, the 20th Engineer Combat Regiment provided direct support to the front line troops. Soon thereafter the Third Auxiliary Surgical Group arrived to set up units to provide the first medical services for seriously wounded troops. On May 12, 1943, the Axis (Germans and Italians) had surrendered near Bizerte, Tunisia. To close the shipping lanes to the Axis, the next Allied landings would be on the island of Sicily, the west end of the island of which was about 170 miles from Bizerte's Mediterranean sea port.

July 10, 1943, was D-Day for General Patton's Seventh U.S. Army, and Field Marshall Montgomery's British Eighth Army. Their objectives were to drive the Axis force towards Sicily's northeast corner. From the start, General Patton was hell-bent to reach Messina before Montgomery. He did so 38 days after D-Day. On August 17, 1943, at the City Hall of Messina, Patton received formal surrender from civil and military officials.

Cupid Strikes on the *Sloterdyke*

In mid-October 1943 the 20th Engineers and the Third Auxiliary Surgical Group moved to tent camps in Palermo for re-deployment. On November 8, 1943, both units boarded the Dutch-operated *USAT Sloterdike* and set sail on November 11 for a 16-day voyage to England. By happenstance, Maribel and John were assigned seats at the same table in the same dining room. This was their first meeting in a social setting. Cupid had also boarded the *Sloterdike* because Maribel and John were hit at the same time with a single arrow. One of Maribel's companion nurses, Lieutenant Betty Asselin, recalls that, "when Maribel and John met the sparks began to fly. These sparks continued to fly through the six months in England waiting for D-Day in France. They saw each other as often as possible."

It has been reported that John claimed that he got pushed by Maribel against the railing of the ship and threatened to throw him overboard if he didn't agree to marry her. Since John couldn't swim, he agreed. However, Maribel contended that she was the one who was pushed against the railing and she agreed because she couldn't swim. In any event before the 16-day voyage was over, they agreed to get married.

After disembarking at Greenock, near Glasgow, Scotland, and moving south into England, the Third Auxiliary Surgical Group trained replacement personnel, and did a full complement of sight-seeing all around England and Scotland. Maribel was busiest of all planning leaves of absence to see John or exchanging letters with John.

Meanwhile on December 5, 1944, the 20th Engineer Regiment picked up new equipment and moved to Truro in Cornwall, the southernmost county in England. The Regiment was then assigned a mission of constructing tent camps for the troops that were being assembled for an assault on Europe.

The 20th Engineer Combat Regiment was reorganized January 21, 1944. The first battalion of the regiment became the 20th Engineer Combat Battalion, while the second battalion became the 1340th Engineer Combat Battalion under the command of Truman Setliffe with John Auld as the executive officer. Headquarters of the old 20th Regiment became the 1171st group, and the newly formed 1340th was assigned to V Corps of the U.S. First Army. Although already experienced in actual combat missions in North Africa and Sicily, the 20th and 1340th battalions conducted extensive training for anticipated combat on the continent of Europe.

On May 17, 1944, the 1340th moved to staging camps near Plymouth and Falmouth and on June 4 and June 5 boarded ships that headed for Omaha Beach in Normandy. The Third Auxiliary Surgical Group arrived in Normandy soon thereafter. Obviously thoughts of the Maribel - John Auld wedding had to be placed on the back burner.

From June through November 1944 John was involved in activities of the 1340th Engineers that have been described in previous issues of the *Wavy Arrow*. These included building a Bailey Bridge across the Aure River under fire on June 9th; construction of the "Victory Circle" and bridging the Vire River in July, the race to Paris in August, building the first bridge in Germany that was constructed by American forces in September; and serving as infantry in the Huertgen Forest in November.

Also from June through November 1944, the Third Auxiliary Surgical Group followed the fighting forces performing delicate surgery in field hospitals. Maribel was attached to a specialist team performing neurological surgery.

When the Battle of the Bulge commenced on December 16, 1944, the 1340th was in Sart le Spa, Belgium to anchor the northern flank of the German offensive. The Third Auxiliary Surgical Group was also in Sart le Spa, and Maribel and John were again in the same area.

The Wedding At Last

In January 1945, the 1340th was maintaining the roads during the heavy snowfalls, and the Third Auxiliary Surgical Group was still performing surgery. Thus January became the month for planning the wedding. Arrangements were made for a local pastor to hold the wedding in a huge, unheated, old stone church in Sart le Spa. Maribel and her brides-maid acquired summer white, sleeveless dresses.

Truman Setliffe was scheduled to walk Maribel down the aisle and give the bride away. John's best man, Bob Argus, and Setliffe were to wear their uniforms. The time and date was set for 10:30 a.m., February 2, 1945. Other details are shown on the "confidential field order" which is shown on the first page of this issue of the *Wavy Arrow*. Recipients of this field order were invited to attend, subject to duty requirements.



Early on the day of the wedding, Setliffe had to take a short trip to check some nearby road work and he was delayed in getting to the church by snow and road conditions. The wedding commenced with Maribel starting to walk down the aisle on the arm of another man. Setliffe walked into the church, unshaven, in wet boots and an olive drab uniform. Maribel smiled, let go of the other man's arm, took Setliffe's arm and they continued down the aisle to the alter. Maribel and her brides-maid wore their white, sleeveless dresses in the frigid church, beautiful but cold. The rest of the ceremony was short and sweet. Immediately after the pastor announced, "I now pronounce you husband and wife," there were quick exits to a warm reception arranged by the nurses of the Third Auxiliary Surgical Group. A photograph of the bride and groom is shown on the left.

* * * * *

As reported in the March 2003, issue of the *Wavy Arrow*, "Truman Setliffe walked Maribel down the aisle. John Auld reciprocated on May 19, 1948, in New York City when he was best man for Truman Setliffe's wedding to Dorothea Marchard. As reported in the March 2003 issue of the *Wavy Arrow*, John Auld died in 1979, and Maribel moved to Sacramento, California, to live with her daughter, Jennifer. She still lives there. Her telephone number is 916-363-0675.

More Letters of Interest

Charles C. Libby, (H&S/20th Band) writes: "I recently wrote that we have pleasant memories of our voyage from Sicily to England on the Dutch ship *Sloterdyk*. But Albert Biginini (H&S/20th Band) thought that I was being sarcastic and wondered where they got all that beef tongue. He says that he survived on bread, and I consumed a lot of Cream of Wheat. I cannot always remember where we were during the war, but I do recall that after our departure from the Huertgen Forest we moved to Robertsville, Belgium, where H&S Company used a hunting lodge for shelter. This sure was an improvement over the Huertgen Forest. My friends in Luxembourg have been sending me books and magazines about their experiences during World War II. Just last week I received a volume devoted to their liberation in September 1944. The only problem is that most of them are published in French or German. It is so good to have someone with whom I can discuss those days. Even the older people that I live with are unaware of such events as the Battle of the Bulge. In fact, one retired professor doesn't understand what I was doing over there. Thank you for keeping the memories of the 20th Engineers alive."

Rose Marciano (widow of Santino "Smokey" Marciano, E/20th and B/1340th) writes, "I enjoy reading the *Wavy Arrow*. Each issue reminds me of some stories that my Smokey used to tell me. I was saddened to read about the death of Ed Lutz. My Smokey used to tell me there is no greater man than Ed Lutz. My sympathy goes out to Mrs. Lutz."

Steve Poulos (B/20th) writes: "I am fine and still going about my business. I am now 91 years old. I very much enjoy the *Wavy Arrow* and especially liked receiving the certificate from the Society of the First Infantry Division. Enclosed find a donation to help with the printing and mailing of the *Wavy Arrow*."

Brenda Street (daughter of Bernard J. Hall, B/20th) writes: "My dad would have been pleased to know that you have been sending me the *Wavy Arrow* since his death. He was a devoted reader and loved to keep up with his 'pals' in the 20th Engineers. I am enclosing a small token in memory of my dad, and I will keep the December 2005 issue of the *Wavy Arrow* since it has so much history in it."

National D-Day Museum

We are still waiting for news as to when the National D-Day Museum New Orleans will reopen after it was hit with two devastating hurricanes, Katrina and Rita. The ground floor of the Museum suffered the most damage but the upper floors where the bulk of the storage collections and the exhibits are located is in good shape. We understand that the re-opening of the museum is still scheduled to take place early in 2006.

Send Contributions, Letters, Articles, Photographs, Obituaries, and other News Items for inclusion in future issues of the *Wavy Arrow* to editor George Griffenhagen, 2501 Drexel Street, Vienna, VA 22180. The next issue of the *Wavy Arrow* is scheduled for July 2006.