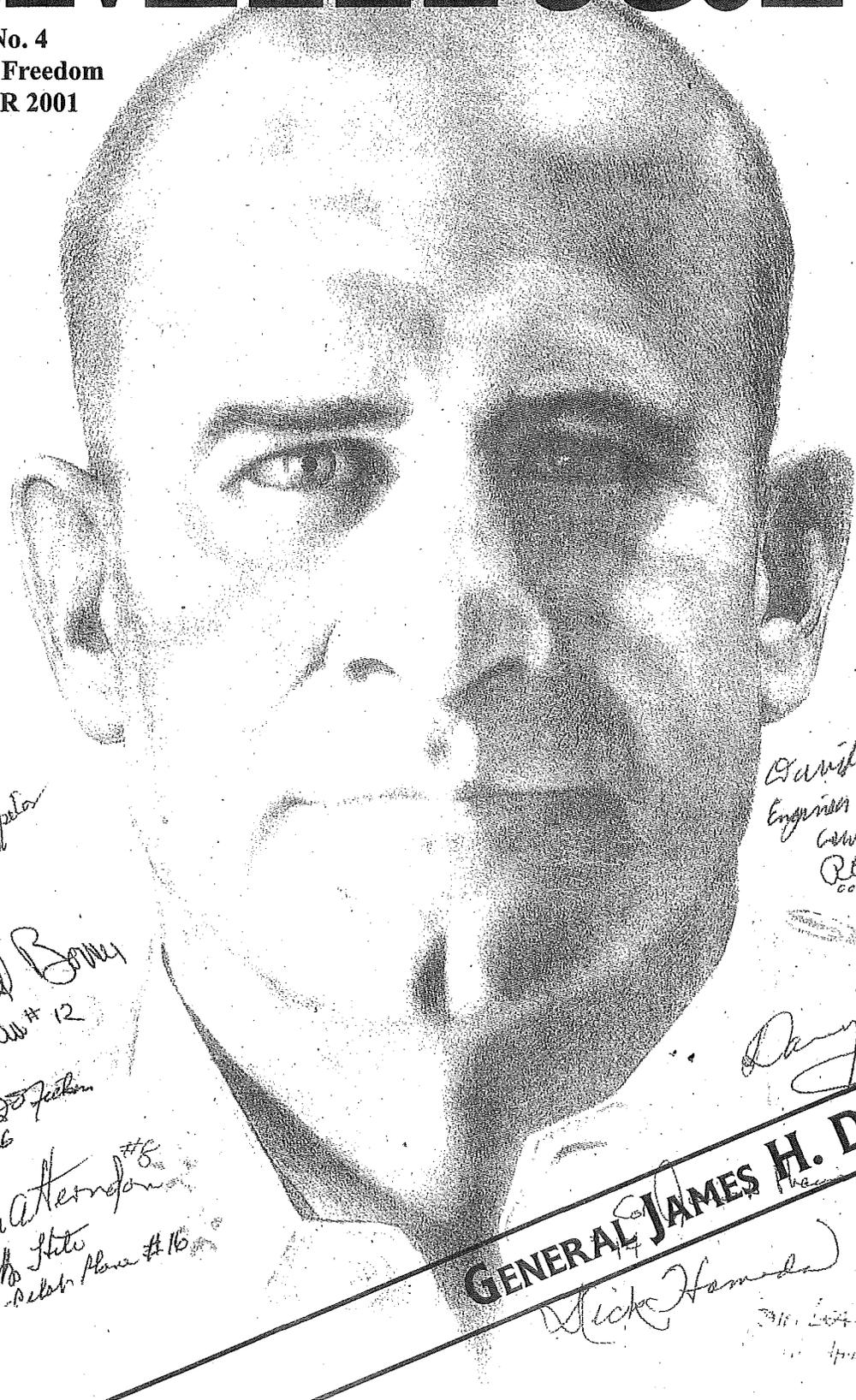


World War II, Korea, Viet-Nam & Today



Military

Vol. XVIII, No. 4
The Press of Freedom
SEPTEMBER 2001
\$1.50



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*Bill Bomy
Crew #12*

*Charles D. Jackson
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Raider*

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COPILOT CREW #1*

Darryl Jones

GENERAL JAMES H. DOOLITTLE

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History of the 12th Armored Division

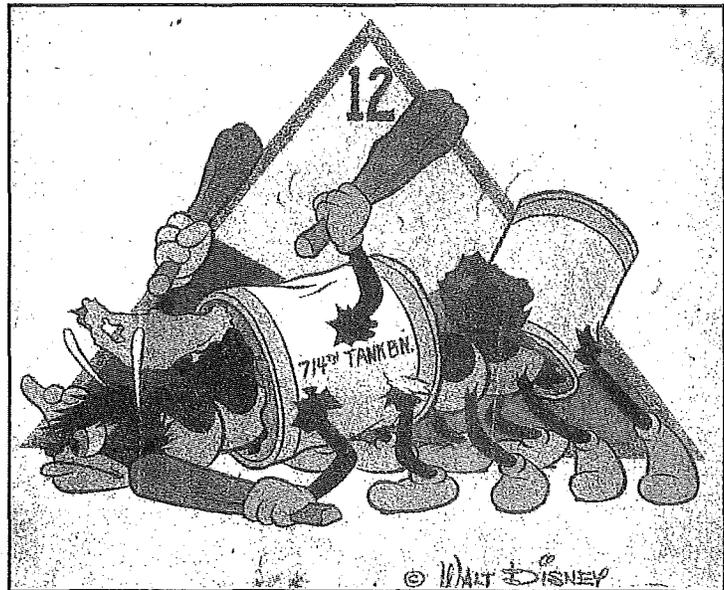
David E. Golden, Unit Rep

I'm one of the millions of WWII veterans still living in this country that we fought for so long ago. I was blessed by a gracious God to serve with a great group of men in the 12th Armored Division, 44th Armored Regiment. Our division was activated in September 1942 at Camp Campbell, KY, now Fort Campbell. Somewhere along the way we received the name "Hellcats" so we became the Hellcat Division.

Following our initial training at Campbell, where we learned how to right face, left face and march in step, along with the care and operation of the various vehicles that made up an armored division, we were off on maneuvers in the Volunteer State of Tennessee. Three months of "camping out!" Maneuvers were followed by a reorganization of armored divisions, and the armored regiments were broken up into tank battalions. We, the third battalion of the 44th, became the 714th Tank Battalion. We also became excess to the 12th Armored and when the rest of the division went to Camp Berkeley, TX, we went to Camp Jackson, SC. For about three months at Jackson the biggest job we had was "fire watch" on the many warehouses there. "Walking our post in a military manner, always on the alert, and especially on the watch for fire or disorder."

After our short stay at Jackson we

A unit insignia for the 12th Armored Division, 714th Tank Battalion created by Walt Disney.
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were recalled to the 12th to replace the 44th Tank Battalion, which was going to the Pacific. So, there we were in late 1943, once again members of the Hellcat Division! Camp Berkeley was located just outside Abilene, TX, west of Dallas. More training followed and in the summer of 1944 we boarded troop trains on our way to Camp Shanks, not far from West Point Academy. A troop ship was waiting for us in New York Harbor.

Shipping out

It was a cruise, at government expense, across the North Atlantic to England. My thoughts often go back to that day when I was standing sub watch and I saw land! A sailor told me that that was Land's End, England.

David E. Golden — May 1945.



After a night in a Quonset hut we moved to Tidworth Barracks in southern England, near Salisbury and Andover. We stayed there just long enough to be issued the necessary equipment, prepare it for combat and perhaps enjoy an evening in London.

We crossed the channel in an LST, landing in France in time for Thanksgiving dinner in a muddy field near Auffay. We, about 13,000 American boys, were ready for the job ahead! We crossed France and met the enemy near Weislingen. It was there that we suffered our first combat fatalities.

WWII ARMY DIVISION VIDEOS

1st Inf. Div.	10th Mtn. Div.	31st Inf. Div.	42nd Inf. Div.	78th Inf. Div.	90th Inf. Div.	103rd Inf. Div.
1st Cav. Div.	11th Abn. Div.	32nd Inf. Div.	43rd Inf. Div.	79th Inf. Div.	91st Inf. Div.	104th Inf. Div.
2nd Inf. Div.	American	33rd Inf. Div.	44th Inf. Div.	81st Inf. Div.	92nd Inf. Div.	108th Inf. Div.
3rd Inf. Div.	24th Inf. Div.	34th Inf. Div.	45th Inf. Div.	82nd Abn. Div.	94th Inf. Div.	
4th Inf. Div.	25th Inf. Div.	35th Inf. Div.	66th Inf. Div.	83rd Inf. Div.	95th Inf. Div.	
5th Inf. Div.	26th Inf. Div.	36th Inf. Div.	69th Inf. Div.	84th Inf. Div.	96th Inf. Div.	
6th Inf. Div.	27th Inf. Div.	37th Inf. Div.	71st Inf. Div.	85th Inf. Div.	99th Inf. Div.	
7th Inf. Div.	28th Inf. Div.	38th Inf. Div.	75th Inf. Div.	87th Inf. Div.	100th Inf. Div.	
8th Inf. Div.	29th Inf. Div.	40th Inf. Div.	76th Inf. Div.	88th Inf. Div.	101st Abn. Div.	
9th Inf. Div.	30th Inf. Div.	41st Inf. Div.	77th Inf. Div.	89th Inf. Div.	102nd Inf. Div.	

KOREA
8th army
2nd Inf. Div.
25th Inf. Div.
187th ARCT

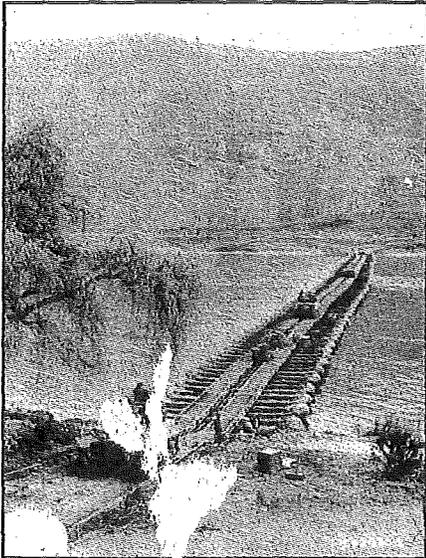
Videos made using maps, division histories, signal corps photographs, military props, shoulder patches, decorations, division statistics, heavily researched but no combat footage. \$22.00 each including postage.

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Suicide Division
The 12th captured its first German

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The 12th Armored Division built pontoon bridges for troops to cross the Rhine.

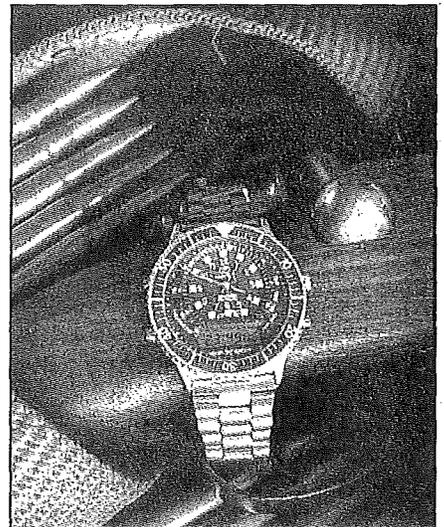
town at Utweiler on 21 Dec 44. January 1945 produced the bloodiest chapter in the 12th's combat history; we were pitted against a numerically superior and well entrenched enemy at the Gamabsheim bridgehead. The division waged its only defensive battle of the war at Her-

rlisheim. The Hellcats thwarted repeated attempts by the Germans to break out of the bridgehead and strike south toward Strasbourg. The Germans dubbed the 12th the "suicide division."

It was the swiftness and adroitness of the Hellcats that snapped the iron ring around the Colmar pocket — the last German stronghold on the west side of the Rhine River — when they joined up with troops of the 1st French Army moving up from the south.

Crossing the Rhine

On 17 Mar 45 the 12th Armored Division was secretly transferred from the 7th Army to Gen. George Patton's 3rd Army and were dubbed the "Mystery Division." Within three days the division had streaked from Trier, Germany, across the Saar Palatinate to the Rhine River. During that period over 7,000 Nazis were taken prisoner and numerous horses, wagons, supply trains, tanks, anti-aircraft guns, artillery pieces, rocket guns and trucks were seized or destroyed. The division reached the Rhine between 20 and 24 March 1945; first at Ludwigshafen. Finding all bridges blown in the Nazis'



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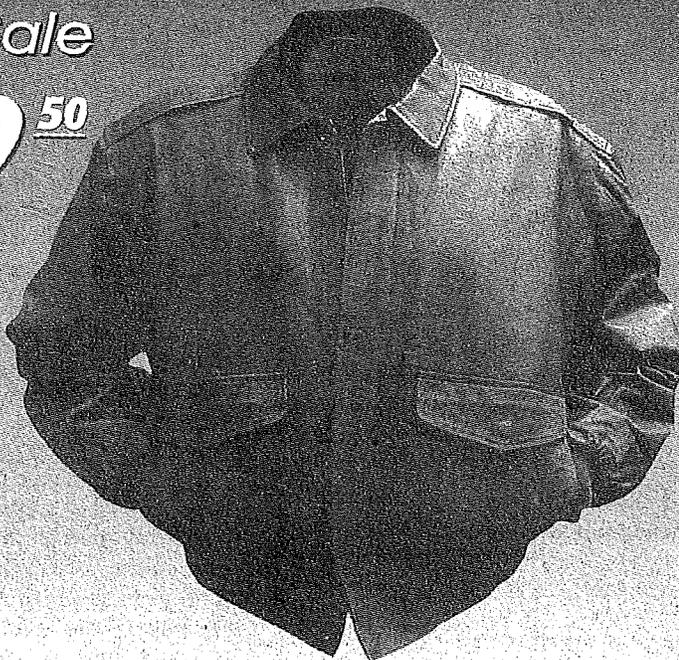
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The 12th helped liberate several Nazi death camps.

retreat, two pontoon bridges were erected near Worms and the 12th crossed the Rhine on 29 March 1945.

Once across the Rhine, the combat commands of the 12th split in several directions. The cities of Wurzburg, Schweffurt, Kitzingen, Neustadt, Ansbach and numerous others were captured under the 12th's relentless attack through southern Germany. After capturing Dinkensbuhl, the 12th sped the last 40 miles to the Danube River. After finding a blown bridge at Lauingen, the bridge at Dillingen to the east was captured intact. Thereafter, the troops who followed crossed the Danube, courtesy of the 12th Armored Division.

The Nazis were on the run as the

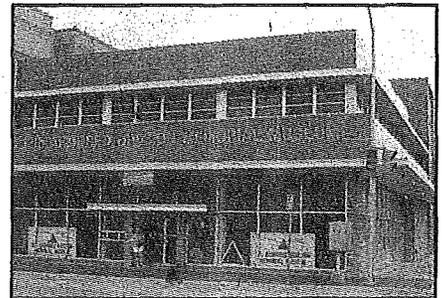
12th slashed south and east. POW cages were swollen with a daily intake numbering thousands. Airfields, planes and war factories bulging with war materiel were captured and left behind as the 12th Armored sliced ahead.

Death camps

Near the end of April 1945 the 12th began the daunting task of liberating Nazi death camps. Members of the division saw the horror of the Nazi atrocities up close as they liberated camp after camp, including Hurlag, Landsberg and Dachau. A survivor at Dachau reported that if the 12th had not liberated the camp so quickly, all the prisoners would have been killed and the camp demolished. If this had happened to Dachau and many of the camps south of the Danube, there would be no evidence of the atrocities practiced in this part of Germany and the full extent of the Holocaust would not have been known to the outside world.

After liberating the death camps, the 12th pushed south and crossed the Austrian border at Kufstein on 3 May 1945 and, on 5 May, the 12th was pulled from the front lines. In the short space

of five months, the 12th had seen their division transformed from a green, untested outfit into one of the most feared fighting machines on the Western front. Credited to the division were 72,243 prisoners and nearly 8,500 Allied POWs — including 1,500 Americans



The museum will be dedicated 6 Oct 01.

and an additional 20,000 non-military prisoners — were liberated by the 12th. The 12th Armored Division was singled out for commendation from the 7th Army, 3rd Army, French 1st Army and every corps under which it operated.

Hellcat reunion

The Hellcats of the 12th Armored Division will celebrate their 55th annual reunion in Abilene, TX, from 4-6 Oct 01 and the dedication of the museum will be held on Saturday, 6 Oct.

Our association has been active since those days, so long ago, in Germany. The lifeblood of our association is the men who served and the women who stood by them through the years. Our reunions have been held every year with the first one in New York City in 1947. These reunions are supported by various regional reunions around the country, several times each year.

A long time ago, one of our own (Ken Warnes of the 714th Tank Battalion) said, "It's great to be a Hellcat" and this expression has been echoed across the country.

We Hellcats are proud of the past, but our thoughts are of the future and it is our hope and prayer that the gracious God who gave us this life to live and this country to fight for, will bring forth generations of Americans like the Hellcats of the "Greatest Generation" — some of whom laid down their lives. Some still carry the scars of war, and all of us who remember offer our sincere thanks to our Creator for His many blessings.

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