

As we sat talking that afternoon the realization gradually grew on me that he too had been afraid, and had chafed under the regimentation. Much more significantly, though, he had also felt the enormous burden of leading and protecting us, the members of his platoon. He had felt responsible for us, almost as if we were his sons or younger brothers, in situations where that sort of responsibility was virtually impossible. He and we could do all the right things at the right times and still be killed or maimed by mindless forces at any moment. Some were killed, others wounded—he was wounded—and as we learned that day, so many years later, each instance was to him like losing a piece of himself. And yet with all that strain and impossible compassion he did continuously a superb job of basic leadership.

Those were some of the most poignant few hours I've ever experienced, but there is more. I felt then, and still do, the closest imaginable affinity to the men we saw at that reunion. Somehow the closeness, the intensity, of experiences we shared 40-plus years ago had survived intact, and this with literally no contact whatsoever with one another in the interim. The following June we went to California and visited two of those old comrades—one reason for the trip—and though we didn't talk much more about shared experiences it just seemed that we belonged together, like long-separated members of the same family. Now no less than 14 more reunions have come and gone, of which I've managed to get to 11. I've met many others from the old Company, and have made new friends among the Division veterans as well. The wonderful feelings of brotherhood and affinity remain strong.

The sharp-eyed reader will note that everyone in my original memoir is anonymous. I did it that way in the beginning because I felt it would give me more freedom to tell details without offending anyone unnecessarily. The *Newsletter* contributions could not have worked that way, of course, because we had no anonymous contributions (well, maybe one, and I don't think that will fool many who were there), but I saw no necessity to go back and change the original part fourteen years after writing it.

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In all probability there would never have been a “G” *Company Newsletter* without the inspiration and hard work of its Publisher, Richard A. Welke. In the beginning he did all the hardest work: kept the mailing list up to date, did the mailings, handled all the finances, and was responsible for the lion's share of finding all the people to send it to in the first place. And of course my debt to those whose *Newsletter* contributions are presented here is enormous. Merely listing their names again is inadequate thanks, but

here they are anyway, more or less in order of their appearance: Dr. William S. Joyner, Frank Branco, the late Alfred C. "Bud" Stimes, the late John Heron, Richard La Fleur, the late William "Buckeye" Smith, the late Jack Porter, William Matthews, V-----n C-----r, Jack Pointer, Bernard Jerding, Daniel Capozzi, and Hugh Gillin. Though I have edited most of the contributions—some more, some less—in no case have I added anything to the material we were given; there is some elimination of repetitions and some reordering of items. In all cases the intent was not to change anything, but rather to increase readability.