

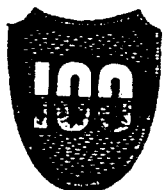
MEMORIES OF A REMARKABLE GENERAL AND GENTLEMAN



Lieutenant General Withers A. Burrese

Commanding General
100th Infantry Division
U.S. Army

November 1942 — September 1945



April 8, 1994

Dear Mr. Possess:

I am so very touched by your plans to commemorate the 100th anniversary of my father's birth, in 189⁴~~8~~. For years my husband and I have been — I can only say in awe — of the loyalty, brotherhood, SPIRIT, of the men of the 100th Infantry Division. I know, that during his lifetime you were a source of deep pride to him. He felt an affection for the men of the 100th that really can't be put into words. But I expect you know what I'm trying to say. You've really, in a profound sense, kept his spirit alive. How very pleased he would be!

Please keep me posted on your celebration plans, and if there is any way I can contribute to the occasion, I'd be honored to do so, and thank you again for thinking of me.

With best regards -

Cynthia Dalvin

Memories of a Remarkable General and Gentleman

Preface

This is a collection of remembrances by former soldiers who served in World War II as members of the 100th Infantry Division commanded by then Major General Withers A. Burress. They served as officers and enlisted men in the United States and in combat in France and Germany. Many continued their friendships and relationship with General Burress and the 100th through this Association, which holds its 47th Annual Convention this September in this centennial year of the birth of General Burress.

As was said by Michael Norman in his fine book, "These Good Men," page 293:

I know now why men who have been to war yearn to reunite. Not to tell stories or to look at old pictures. Not to laugh or weep on one another's knee. Comrades gather because they long to be with men who have once acted their best, men who suffered and sacrificed, who were stripped raw, right down to their humanity.

In that context, it has been my great pleasure to have had a role in compiling this tangible commemorative recognition of the superb and sensitive leadership of General Withers A. Burress.

I am grateful for the cooperation I have received from all who participated in this effort, with a special heartfelt thanks to Cynthia Dolvin, the General's gracious daughter; to Frank Gurley, our excellent Association Historian; and, of course, to my L.S.R.

Stanley Posess

Private First Class
B Company
First Battalion
397th Infantry Regiment
100th Infantry Division

Introduction

As Ed Casazza so aptly observed, second lieutenants (and surely PFCs) rarely encountered generals under most wartime circumstances — and General Burress and I were no exceptions!

However, during his tenure as First Army Commander at Governor's Island in New York City, and as fate decreed, I was the president of the newly created New York Chapter of the 100th Infantry Division Association and had the good fortune to work with the general General Burress on building up the Association. He provided unstinting and enthusiastic support. We also shared other Association projects as the annexed letters show.

General Burress was the kind of man who exuded genuine warmth and humanity regardless of his rank and status because we all shared that emotionally charged relationship that was so much a part of our experience in the 100th Division in wartime. At our conventions he was personable, warm, and welcoming to all, and the father-and-son images mentioned by others were right on the mark! In our younger years, at various reunions, he was always in demand and occasionally found himself overwhelmed by the liquid cheer pressed on him by his enthusiastic troops as he circulated through the Unit C.P.s.

Fortunately, Walter Lester, his loyal and loving fellow Centuryman, quail hunter, and a neighbor was always there to help out if the enthusiasm of his troops got to be too much in the wee hours of a convention morning. I will always remember his gracious hosting of our elaborate mini-reunions at First Army Headquarters when, if the truth now be known, the Army's liquor and food reserve took a beating!

So let us give thanks for Lieutenant General Withers A. Burress, this wonderful leader of the 100th Infantry Division to whom we owe so much. We are blessed in having known him in war and peace. He was indeed an officer and a gentleman in the finest sense of those words, and a wonderful credit to his family, his country, the 100th Infantry Division, and all who served under him.

— Stanley Posess

HEADQUARTERS FIRST ARMY
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL
GOVERNOR'S ISLAND, NEW YORK 4, N.Y.

16 November 1954

Dear Stan:

I want to thank you and the members of the New York Chapter of the 100th Division Association again for the perfectly splendid dinner you had for me the other night at the Hotel Park Sheraton and for the handsome silver bowl so beautifully inscribed, which you presented to me on that occasion.

I can't tell you how much it means to me to be remembered so nicely, on the occasion of my retirement from the service, by those with whom I served during World War Two.

We have a great and loyal group, as I have said many times before, and the highlight of my military career was to have had the opportunity to command the 100th Division.

Again, I was deeply touched and will always remember and be grateful for your thoughtfulness and kindness.

Sincerely,

W.A. Burress
Lieutenant General
United States Army

Mr. Stanley Posess
51 Chambers Street
New York, N.Y.

LT GEN. W.A. BURRESS, U.S.A. RETD
720 ELIZABETH AVENUE
SALEM, VIRGINIA

May 31, 1960

Mr. Stanley Posess
51 Chambers Street
New York 7, New York

Dear Stan:

Thank you for good letter of May 24. I am glad to see our executive committee go into action on the subject of an infantry museum.

I would be only too glad to serve as honorary chairman. As I visualize the project, it would be a building in which sufficient space would be allotted for each division of the Army and separate infantry units which could be used as a repository for documents, objects of historical significance, colors, etc.

If the building is placed at Fort Benning, Georgia, it would be of value to the thousands of young officers who go through there every year.

Mrs. Burress and I look forward to seeing you and Mrs. Posess in September. In the meantime, please call on me for anything I can do towards the infantry museum.

Sincerely,

Withers A. Burress
Lt. Gen., U.S.A., Ret'd.

WAB:r

The "Secretary"

Sgt. Fred Lyons

Remembrances of My Days as
"Secretary" to Major General Withers A. Burress
April 14, 1943 — September 1945

First, some background —

On completion of basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, I was assigned to the Office of the Chief of Staff of the 100th Infantry Division in early December 1942. I became the third enlisted man in that office. I was 32 years old at the time (I was called "Old Man") and was assigned specifically to Major General Withers A. Burress.

The office of the Chief of Staff was always next to the Commanding General's and the office of the Assistant Commanding General was always nearby. (In 1943, those officers were Colonel Mark McClure, General Burress, and Brigadier General Maurice A. Miller.)

Gen. Miller had one EM assigned to him, so whenever 24-hour coverage was needed, the four of us divided up our time. Since I was the only one with stenographic experience, I acted as secretary to both the C/S and the CG. I never claimed to be an "executive or administrative" secretary but both General Burress and Col. McClure (and later Colonel Richard G. Prather) were pleased with my work — and the General, in particular, expressed it to me in writing on several occasions.

On one occasion in 1943 — after the General had had me on prior occasions take notes at some high-brass meetings — it was planned that he meet with other high-ranking officers in Virginia (though the meeting never did later take place) and the General told his aide at that time, "I want Lyons with me at all times." (After one of those meetings, I wrote home that "generals galore were present." All such reporting on my part ceased when we went overseas, as explained later herein.)

I was closely associated with both the Chief of Staff and General Burress from April 1, 1943 until September 1945 and was manning the phone the day the General later talked about, when, during our Vosges Mountain campaign General Edward H. Brooks, his superior at VI Corps, called at 5:00 A.M. saying tersely "This is General Brooks; I want to speak with General Burress."

I was present when he was telling General Burress that our action couldn't have been as heavy as he was given to believe because he could tell from the night's report that there weren't "enough casualties" to support that claim. I think I proved my worth on that occasion, for as soon as the call came in I, knowing that the General had been up until after 1:00 A.M. at G-3 and was just getting a very few hours of sleep, quickly got the G-2 (Lieutenant Colonel Paul S. Reinecke) and the G-3 (Lieutenant Colonel Eckland), who were closest nearby in adjoining rooms and still on active duty, to quickly brief the General as to the night's actions before he got to the phone. I did this rather than get the General's aide to just awaken him while he was "cold" as to what happened the previous four hours.

Gen. Brooks was a nasty hard-driver but, as events later proved, this was his method of operations — to put great pressure on those under his command. After the Vosges Mountains campaign, he issued a very laudatory commendation to General Burress and the 100th Division.

So much for background. Now I want to make these points:

1) I admired General Burress greatly. He could not have been more gracious and thoughtful than he was to me, *every single day*, as I wrote in a letter I sent home on June 9, 1944:

"As far as men go — and bosses — there aren't any better than he. He has a very even disposition, and is the same every day."

2) During all the days that the Division was in combat, General Burress was "on the go" all the time and certainly was not sitting down and dictating to me. After checking with the Chief of Staff every

Memories of a Remarkable General and Gentleman

day, he would be away, first spending much of his time at G-3 where, on the basis of information provided by other Assistant Chiefs of Staff (Lt. Col. Reinecke, G-2, and Lieutenant Colonel Robert M. Stegmaier, G-4, he directed the planning of all combat operations subsequently set into motion by Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth E. Eckland, G-3.

Each day that the 100th was in combat, General Burress would be *on the move*, being escorted by a team of Recons to the infantry regiments or to artillery units engineer battalions, etc., sometimes dangerously near the front lines. (It was during the Vosges Mountains campaign, as I remember it, that Colonel William A. Ellis was killed on his way to the front lines of his 397th Infantry Regiment.)

After General Miller was forced to return to the U.S. in December 1944 due to his heart attack, Colonel Andrew C. Tyschen, of the 399th Regiment, became the Assistant Division Commander. (Col. Tyschen later became a Brigadier General.)

General Burress, Col. Tyschen, and Brigadier General John B. Murphy, of Division Artillery, were always meeting at G-3, heading out to visit different units, and returning to G-3, while the Chief of Staff — by then Col. Prather, who went overseas with us — handled all the important affairs at Division Headquarters.

At this point in this account, I again bring attention to General Burress's daily dependence on the three Assistant Chiefs of Staff, Lt. Col. Reinecke (G-2), Lt. Col. Eckland (G-3), and Lt. Col. Stegmaier (G-4).

The General's aides performed important tasks, needless to say, and were often (as far as I know) used as couriers — along with Lieutenant Colonel W. R. Betz, the Chemical Officer — to personally go and communicate the detail's of the General's decisions to different units.

As for my association with General Burress in Europe, I was always available in the C/S van, but he was always so busy being active — "leading his troops" — that he spent a minimum of time in it. Almost all written material was "Secret" or "For Officers Only" so I and the other three EM were mainly used during the days of "active combat" to maintain 24-hour coverage of the phone. There were always some occasions where I would have to prepare Endorsements to *Secret* communications from higher headquarters that were delivered to his Chief of Staff, which the General would later sign in my presence. These were cases where the contents were so important that there wasn't time to go through AG channels. I would handle them promptly (in quadruplicate) without ever being allowed to see what was in the message itself.

As you can gather, Division Headquarters moved about quite a bit and I and the other three EM — and the General's orderly, Walter H. Yee — would be doing the moving and setting up new quarters. To show you how understanding the General was, I remember one time when the C/S was at one end of a floor in a baron's residence in Germany that had been taken over for martial use, and I had set up General Burress at the other end. One of the first things he asked me for was a pencil, but in going from one end of the corridor to the other end several times I had forgotten his request. I recall exactly what he said to me: "Lyons, will you get me a pencil — just a plain old ordinary lead pencil!"

To end my recollections, I'll conclude with the comment that, in addition to General Burress's being such an admirable man personally, I could also tell from every association I had with him that he was a great leader of officers and men — that he was especially proud of what he himself called the "esprit de corps" of all officers and men in his 100th Division — and that, in essence, while achieving combat objectives, he always wanted to keep that "body count" down.

— Fred Lyons

Career Assignments With the General

Kenneth E. Eckland

Colonel, G-3

100th Infantry Division

The first time I met General Burress I was aide de camp to General William Hood Simpson, then Commanding General of XII Corps and stationed on the campus of the University of South Carolina in Columbia, South Carolina. As Gen. Simpson had two aides I was placed on special duty with Corps G-3 while the junior aide, First Lieutenant Davenport Plummer, functioned full-time as aide to the general.

The second time I met General Burress I was statistical Officer of Headquarters XII Corps Testing Office at Fort Jackson when the 100th Infantry Division had completed its basic training phase and was being tested by the XII Corps. General Burress dropped by XII Corps Testing Headquarters at least twice daily and was briefed by me on the results of the various tests being recorded as completed.

When the basic training tests were completed and the final report was forwarded to Headquarters Third Army in Memphis, Tennessee with an information copy to Headquarters 100th Infantry Division, General Burress went to Gen. Simpson and requested that I be released to be his Division G-3 as I had intimate knowledge of the training status of the units in his division and had written the final report for Headquarters XII Corps. Since it meant a promotion to lieutenant colonel for me, Gen. Simpson agreed. Once I was assigned to the 100th Infantry Division, General Burress assigned his senior aide, Major William V. Rawlings, to be my executive officer in the G-3 Section. Rawlings had been a captain as his aide de camp.

Brigadier General John B. Murphy was the artillery commander in the 100th Infantry Division. Following VE Day in Europe Gen. Murphy was transferred to be Commanding General of Fort Logan, outside of Denver. He requested General Burress to release me at the end of December 1945 to be in command of the Separation Center processing hundreds back to civilian life every day, seven days a week. General Burress agreed to my release.

In November 1946 I was transferred to Camp O'Donnelle, Luzon, Philippine Islands, to command the Third Battalion, 57th Infantry Regiment, 12th Infantry Division (Philippine Scouts). After one year of troop duty, I was transferred to Headquarters United States Army Philippines Command to be Statistical Officer as the United States Army transferred everything over to the Army of the Philippines.

When I returned to the United States in April 1949 I was ordered to Fort Benning, Georgia, where General Burress was Commandant of The Infantry School and Post Commander. In July 1949 I was ordered to the Armed Forces Staff College at Norfolk, Virginia. On graduation in February 1950 I was ordered back to Fort Benning, Georgia. General Burress was still Infantry School Commandant and Post Commander.

In July 1950 General Burress was transferred to Camp Atterbury, Indiana to command Headquarters VI Corps, which was being activated there. He had me transferred from Fort Benning to Camp Atterbury as executive officer of his G-3 Section under Colonel Nunez Pilet.

While we were at Camp Atterbury the General's aide, Captain John A. Hine, Jr. died of leukemia. General Burress had me placed on orders to accompany the captain's body to West Point for military funeral services and burial. General Burress flew into West Point on the day of the funeral.

Memories of a Remarkable General and Gentleman

A year later General Burress was ordered to command VII Corps in Kelly Barracks, Stuttgart, Germany. In a matter of months I was ordered from Headquarters VI Corps to be G-1 of Headquarters VII Corps in Germany.

One of the more interesting events of my association over the years with General Burress took place while the 100th Infantry Division was at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He was going to Fort Jackson for some training conference and asked me to accompany him. We knew that the Division was being readied for shipment overseas. Where or when we did not know but we knew it would be soon. As we were seated on the back of his sedan driving on those Carolina highways, he turned to me and asked, "You seem to be uneasy. What's on your mind?" Without hesitation I told the General that I thought certain changes needed to be made on the general staff if we were to be ready for shipment overseas and combat duty on arrival. "The present G-1 is too old and is not in good health. Replace him with my executive officer, Bill Rawlings, and bring up Bill Zimmerman to be my executive officer."

Both Rawlings and Zimmerman were VMI graduates while General Burress was Commandant of the Virginia Military Institute and were highly regarded by him. When we arrived at the Wade Hampton Hotel in Columbia, South Carolina he telephoned the chief of staff, Dick Prather, and the changes were made the following week.

General Burress was a great man, a great commander, and a great leader. He was a protégé of the United States Army Chief of Staff, General George Catlett Marshall. He was the Assistant Commandant when General Marshall was the Commandant of the Virginia Military Institute. Hence, the 100th Infantry Division had as many VMI officers as it had West Point officers and both served to make it a better division.

No one has greater fond memories, love, and respect for General Burress than Eunice and Ken Eckland.

— *Kenneth E. Eckland*
Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.)

Forming a Division, the C.I.C., and the Movie Star

Paul S. Reinecke, Jr.

G-2 (Intelligence) Staff Officer
100th Infantry Division

I first met Major General Withers A. Burress while I was a student at the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. I was taking a G-2 (Intelligence) special course for regimental and division staff officers. I was at that time assigned as S-2, 305th Infantry Regiment, at Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

While undergoing this training I received orders to the Cadre, 100th Infantry Division, for duty as Assistant G-2, Fort Leavenworth. This was on August 17, 1942. I then joined the Eighth "New Divisions" Course and met General Burress and 21 staff officers who were assembled at Fort Leavenworth to undergo training. As I recall, we stayed until the end of September. During this time we had many meetings with General Burress, at which he would stress certain aspects of our training or would give us his views.

It is interesting to note that of the 22 officers shown in the photograph of the original staff at Fort Leavenworth, only five officers, including General Burress, remained in the picture of the staff taken at the end of the war (Reinecke, Stegmaier, Rawlings, Betz, and Burress).

Some key staff officers — Brigadier General Miller, Lieutenant Hudson, Colonel DeLang, Lieutenant Colonel Eckland, Reinecke, Stegmaier, Kemble, Walker, and Delamater — under the command of Brig. Gen. Miller, flew to Marseilles, France as the advance party of the 100th Infantry Division, leaving on September 24, 1944. Our mission was to do all we could to facilitate the arrival of the Division and its entry into combat. We found we would be assigned to VI Corps, so some of us visited that Corps as "observers" to make ready for the Division to enter combat. Prior to the Division landing we returned to Marseilles to assist in the Division's arrival.

General Burress, at all times, treated his staff with dignity and respect. He did not "rant and rave" as some Commanding Generals did. At a staff meeting he did not embarrass us by his questions, but was always dignified and proper and always thanked us for our presentation. He was an ideal boss.

However, at dinner in the privacy of his own C.G.'s Mess (in which attendance was limited to the generals of the Division and the four general staff officers) he would "pick on" one of the staff officers and "chew him out" for something that went wrong during the day. As we assembled for the evening meal prior to the arrival of the generals, we (the four general staff officers) would wonder whose turn it would be tonight to receive the wrath of "Pinky." Since General Burress took turns at this "game" we really didn't mind and it blew over quickly.

One custom that General Burress did not like pertained to the C.I.C. (Counter Intelligence Corps) team attached to the Division and assigned to the G-2 Section. The officers and enlisted men of the CIC were known as agents and during combat were acting as civilians and were called Mr. _____, and they did not salute. General Burress recognized some of these agents as members of the Division and when they walked by without saluting him the G-2 heard about it and wasn't happy. The problem was solved by having the agents stay away from the General by bivouacking in another town and saluting when they did see General Burress.

After the war was over General Burress rewarded his key staff officers by sending them on trips to Switzerland and the French Riviera. He also allowed his staff officers to meet, mix with, and dance with VIP entertainers who visited the Division after the war was over and ate their meals in the CG Mess. On one occasion Ingrid Bergman visited the Division and *this* staff officer danced with her — an event he will remember the rest of his life.

— Paul S. Reinecke, Jr.
Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.)

I Was a Second Lieutenant

Lewis M. Bloom

Formerly CO, Order of Battle Team #30
Attached to Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2
100th Infantry Division

I was a second lieutenant, commanding officer of Order of Battle Team #30 (one officer and two enlisted men) when the Military Intelligence Service assigned me to the 6th Army Group for duty with the 100th Infantry Division on 1 November 1944. Prior to that, I served in the same capacity at the 28th Infantry Division in the Normandy and Northern France campaigns. Pneumonia in Luxembourg set me back long enough to be replaced at the 28th Infantry Division. MIS then appointed me to some special projects pending the arrival of my new assignment, the 100th Infantry Division. Order of Battle Team #30 arrived at 100th Infantry Division headquarters in Raon L'Etape just as the Division was moving into the combat area.

Order of Battle Teams are responsible to the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2; in the 100th Infantry Division to Lieutenant Colonel Paul S. Reinecke, Jr. The team fully integrated into the Division's intelligence function, yet concentrating on its special intelligence responsibilities directed towards the German Army.

My relationship with the Division's Commanding General, Withers A. Burress — being a second lieutenant — was remote. The team's efforts were directed to the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, who, in turn, placed them in the Daily Periodic Report and, I presume, if necessary, orally submitted them to the Commanding General. On those times I was in his presence, he impressed me greatly, far more than the CGs of the 28th Infantry Division (three in the few months I was with that unit).

I perceived him as an infantry commander in the best traditions of a democratic army. He seemed most sensitive to the lives and welfare of his men. Though his bearing was courtly, his demeanor was calm, without airs, yet astutely professional. He surrounded himself — in almost all instances, it seemed to me — with talented and dedicated men. In addition to my experience with the 28th Infantry Division, my work took me to many other division headquarters, yet few possessed the *esprit* that existed at the 100th.

I got much closer to General Burress after World War Two. It began with a congratulatory letter I penned to him in January 1951 when he was assigned as Commanding General VI Corps in Camp Atterbury, Indiana. His response was warm and sensitive. I wrote to him again when he was later assigned to command The Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia and again received a cordial response.

Time went by and to my surprise the *New York Times* announced his appointment as Commanding General, First U.S. Army, in December 1952. Now, again, I could say he was my Commanding General since I was in the Active Reserve in the First Army area. His reply to my letter of congratulations was typed; however he hand-wrote a note at the end, "...hope to have the chance to see you before long." I called him some weeks later and was invited to visit him at his sumptuous and historic headquarters at Fort Jay, Governor's Island.

These visits were repeated about every four months and proved quite exciting. I found him well read on post-World War Two works of famous Allied and German commanders. Our discussions lasted about one to one and a half hours and were quite stimulating.

Memories of a Remarkable General and Gentleman

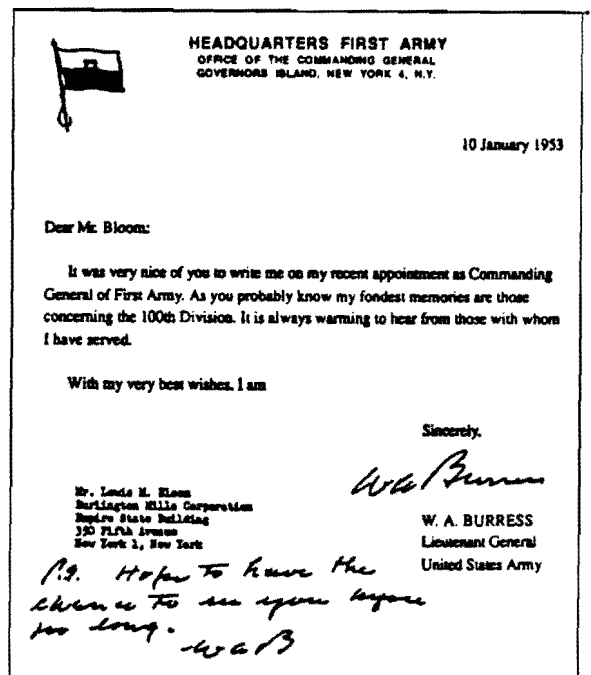
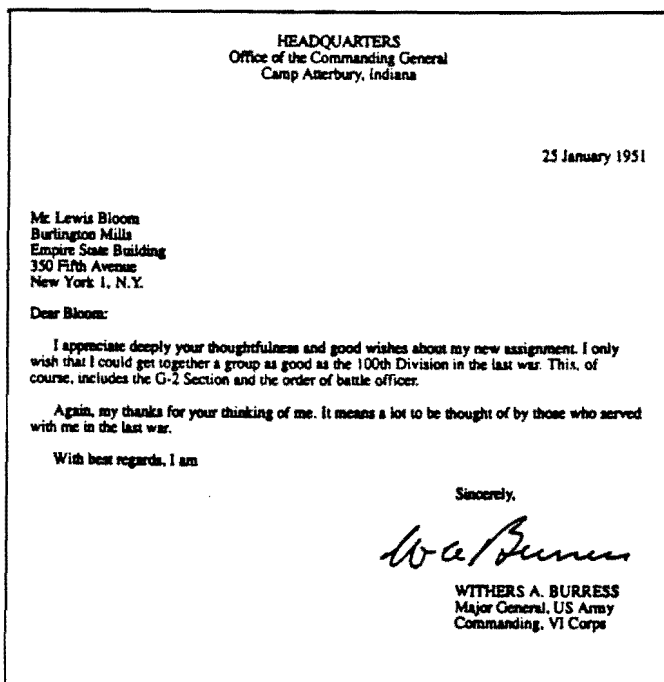
One such meeting involved my being present during a heated discussion with the office of the Secretary of the Army regarding Senator Joseph McCarthy's accusation against the then Brigadier General commanding Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. When I moved to leave his office because of the subject's obvious sensitivity, he motioned me to stay in my chair. He did not raise his voice but his attitude and comments were as hard as steel and he was not at all intimidated by the public accusations of Senator McCarthy or the position of the person to whom he spoke. If memory serves me, the then Secretary of the Army, Robert Stevens, was one of the persons he spoke to.

I also met with General Burress at the annual USAR Command and General Staff exercises (FAREX). He would single me out and humorously advise those with whom I worked to check out their decisions with me. One such incident turned on a problem based on the Alsace area where the 100th Infantry Division fought and with which I was very familiar.

I did not see General Burress after he retired until August 1986 at his home in Roanoke, Virginia. My wife and I were returning from a vacation and passing through Roanoke. We stopped, called his home, and before asking if we could stop by, he got on the phone and insisted that we come. It was a delightful visit albeit tinged with some melancholy. Refreshments were served, we reminisced about the 100th and the fine people who served under him. He also expressed keen interest in world affairs. He began to tire but did not want us to leave. His maid came to the rescue and said he had to rest. We left, never to see him again.

Withers A. Burress was a military commander and leader by whom I often measured other individuals, be they civilian or military. In my mind's eye, I found him to be unpretentious, forthright, with an astute mind. He somewhat camouflaged the kind of quiet intellectual that I found him to be. His sincerity was most evident in the way he communicated with all persons on an equal basis.

—Lewis M. Bloom
LTC MI-USAR (Ret.)



As I Knew Him

Charles H. Prout

Public Relations Officer (G-2); Asst. Intelligence Officer (G-2)
April 1942-September 1945
100th Infantry Division

I can remember the day I first met General Burress as if it were yesterday.

Actually, it was 27 October 1942, a little more than two weeks before the 100th Infantry Division was activated. I was a bright and shiny second lieutenant out of OCS at Fort Benning. I was sent to Fort Jackson to join the cadre of the 100th, which was being assembled at the time. Initially assigned to the 397th Infantry Regiment, I was plucked out by division headquarters because of my civilian background to join the G-2 Intelligence section as division public relations officer.

I reported for duty on 27 October. The G-2 at the time, Major William R. Parient, having satisfied himself on my qualifications, took me in to meet Colonel Mark McClure, the chief of staff. Apparently having passed muster with Colonel McClure I was taken by the two of them to meet General Burress.

Of course, like everyone, I was immediately impressed with his light red hair, fair complexion, and abundant supply of freckles. But he quickly brought my attention back to the business at hand.

In a friendly manner, but with the stiff formality of the Virginia aristocrat that he was, he reviewed my background and offered a few comments on his hopes for the division. Then he said something that I always have remembered and which I thought was a real measure of the man.

"Prout," he said, "I want you to remember that this division is going to be made of more than 15,000 officers and men. It does not consist of just a commanding general and a few other high-ranking officers. When you are doing your job I want you to see that the officers and men who do the work and the fighting get recognition for what they are doing."

That was before the division even had any troops. There were just officers and noncoms on duty at that time. But already he was thinking of "his men." That was characteristic of General Burress in my experience.

I think I probably served with the General during World War II longer than any other Centuryman. From that beginning in 1942, I served under him in the G-2 Section, first as PRO and later as Assistant G-2, from second lieutenant on up to captain, through the end of the war and on into occupation duty in Germany. Then in September 1945 General Burress was transferred to Headquarters of VI Corps in Esslingen, Germany as Commanding General. A month later orders came through transferring me to VI Corps as public relations officer, where I continued to serve with him until I came home in February 1946.

During all those years I had frequent contact with him. Not as frequent as the chief of staff and the four Gs (1, 2, 3, and 4). But frequently. Often daily. At minimum, several times per week. I can say that a consistent concern for the well being and safety of his men was one of the hallmarks of his personality. Overseas there were some who thought he might have made a bigger name for himself if he had been a little more daring in his battle maneuvers, as some of the more swashbuckling generals were.

But that was not his style. And it certainly was not his heart. General Burress always took the objectives assigned to him, but he approached them cautiously, always with the safety and welfare of "his men" foremost in his mind.

I have not been active in the 100th Infantry Division Association over the years since the war. But from what I have read I gather it was General Burress's moral support and faithful attendance at annual reunions that had a lot to do with the early success and amazing vitality of the Association. That doesn't surprise me. His involvement was just another manifestation of his loyalty and interest in "his men." I'm sure there was no one who enjoyed the 100th Infantry Division Association's activities more than Withers A. Burress.

— Charles H. Prout

A Lowly (but Self-Exalted) Second Lieutenant

Edward G. Casazza

Headquarters Company
1st Battalion
399th Infantry Regiment

We are all approaching retirement age or beyond (except for some A.S.T.P. "replacements" and those who are forever young) and we become concerned about ourselves, our current illnesses, or how "we" won the war.

Over the past several years too few references have appeared in our newsletter to Lieutenant General Withers A. Burress. It is time that some of us should relate some reminiscences about our good friend and leader so that personal incidents will not be forgotten.

As a lowly (but self-exalted) fairly new second lieutenant in an infantry company of the 399th Infantry Regiment, it could not be expected that General Burress would note nor long remember *this* average soldier.

My first recollection of General Burress and his staff was at a meeting of all the cadre personnel where he conveyed to us in no uncertain terms our Division's mission — to be trained and to be prepared to enter directly into combat. Little did we realize how true that statement would become. The 399th Regiment was on the line ten days after landing at Marseilles, and the rest of the Division soon followed. In any case, that young, trim, reddish-looking Division Commander with two stars on his shoulders and head gear impressed us all. The nickname "Pinky" was unknown to us at the time.

During training, maneuvers, and combat the paths of generals never crossed mine directly, except for the then Assistant Division Commander. He was more interested in the condition of the men's shoes on the rifle range, rather than keeping the muzzle of the M-1 pointed down range the first time the men were firing live rounds. I was duly informed about his interests.

As stated previously, General Burress's path and mine did not directly cross; indirectly they did. As the expression goes, the buck stops here, and our General was responsible for all Division activities — morale, supply, training, tactics, and results.

Although I was wounded on the east bank of the Neckar River at Heilbronn, I can attest to the command and leadership that General Burress demonstrated. I am certain that others in our Division are more knowledgeable than I to give us their personal recollections about his leadership qualities. All that I can do is reiterate incidents that all of us have since become familiar with. The best and most accurate recollections must come from those whose path directly crossed the General's.

After the war, we became more friendly. At each reunion, General Burress would visit our Company C.P., stay a while, and refight the war. However, this time the troops would have the "big picture" as we also had the assistance of General Tyschen's and Colonel Lentz's knowledgeable insights at our C.P.

At each reunion General Burress would be accompanied by his entourage, those officers from the Division who would move with him from assignment to assignment, and who would fly with him to the reunion location.

General Burress's last assignment was that of Commanding General, First Army, then located at

Memories of a Remarkable General and Gentleman

Fort Jay, Governor's Island, New York. At that time, our recent Association president, Stanley Posess, was President of the New York Chapter of the Association. Through his efforts, members in the New York area had the opportunity to participate in the General's retirement ceremonies, along with many distinguished guests. Although that day in November 1954 was cold and windy, it was a memorable affair and the General was well pleased to see so many of his old "buddies" from his division.

Due to the General's efforts, I was able to join the Officer's Club at Fort Jay. Our 1955 reunion was held in New York City so I made arrangements to take the General and his family to the club for dinner and informed the public relations officer that the former Commanding General, First Army was returning. A good time was had by all.

These are some of my reminiscences of General Burrell, but I am certain that those in the Division who worked more closely with the General, or whose paths he crossed, have better and more personal incidents to relate. Those should be recorded before the Association's demise and will help to bring back into focus his deeds and leadership that made us a combat division.

In time of war a lieutenant is never too close to a general, except to be "reamed"! However, I and my family have many fond memories of Pinky Burrell, for which we are most grateful.

— *Edward G. Casazza*

We Need to Get Rid of These Shoepaks

Bill Law

Commanding Officer
E Company
397th Infantry Regiment

As a young 2nd Lieutenant in the 397th Regiment, I had a unique and frequent contact with General Burress, beginning at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, in April 1943 through February 1944. As a result of a minor accident, I was put on limited duty at Regimental Headquarters and specifically assigned as a liaison officer to Division staff and other regiments and support units. This function caused me to accompany Colonel Ellis to Division for all staff meetings, and especially during maneuvers in Tennessee. At any rate, I was no stranger to General Burress and his staff.

Therefore, in March 1945, at the start of the spring offensive, General Burress and several staff officers happened to meet up with Company E, 397th Infantry, my command, on a front line inspection. After greeting him and a few personal words by him as to how we were getting on, he asked, "Do you need anything?" I said, "Yes — we need to get rid of these shoepaks and replace them with combat boots so we can pursue more quickly and more comfortably." The shoepaks, good during winter, were killing our feet in the spring.

He thanked me, wished us good luck and good hunting, and drove off to another unit. The next day we got our first issue of combat boots and were completely outfitted in a few days. General Burress had a unique compassion for his men and took action when he could to make us more comfortable.

On another occasion, Company E was leading the 2nd Battalion on an attack march to Neckargartach to clear an area on our way to the Neckar River and Heilbronn. The S-3 of the battalion picked me up and we rode forward to Neckargartach where we met General Burress, several members of his staff, and the 10th Armored Division C.O.

General Burress quickly outlined a problem. The 3rd Battalion, 398th Infantry, had crossed the river farther west and established a beachhead but was being counterattacked by larger German forces and extremely accurate artillery. Unless supported quickly, they would be wiped out, captured, or forced into the river.

My mission was to assemble Company E quickly, cross the river, attack the area of the glass factory, and protect the right flank of the 398th. This was to be done with the 325th Engineer but without artillery or mortar support, as both were in the process of moving to a new location. I asked the 10th Armored Division C.O. for a platoon of tanks for direct or artillery support. He said no.

It was a bright sunny day; every movement drew enemy artillery or mortar fire. General Burress said he could not leave the 3rd Battalion of the 398th without help, but he knew he was assigning E Company a very difficult task in less than ideal conditions. He was apologetic as he drove off. He wished us good luck — "But get the job done."

We crossed the river in midafternoon, attacked to the right of the 398th, and stopped the counterattacks from their flank. By midnight on that eventful day we had lost three officers and 54 men killed, wounded, or missing.

Our lives continued to cross as I was assigned to General Burress's staff at VI Corps, where we were again in contact on a daily basis. During the holiday season of 1945 the General asked all officers to join him at his quarters for some good cheer. We did, on Christmas night. Around his tree was a set of trains. Old and young spent the evening playing with his trains, while he sat in a lounge chair as happy as a father or grandfather with all his young, playing with trains on a happy holiday, as the war was, indeed, over.

I could go on relating personal stories about this wonderful man. He loved the 100th Division even more than the 2nd Division, with which he served in World War One. However, our procedure of laying a rose next to each division unit during the Friday memorial service came from the 2nd Division, and his principle of keeping the Association devoid of politics has prevailed to this day.

— *Bill Law*

It Was Meant to Be

Alden K. Small

**Commanding Officer
Headquarters Company
100th Infantry Division**

There are some moments in one's lifetime, on reflection, that endorse the concept of predestination or, at least, that there exists a proper order, or "it was meant to be." Perhaps one such moment was my first meeting with the Commanding General of the 100th Infantry Division, Withers A. Burrell, on the last Sunday morning of December 1942.

A first lieutenant at the time, it was my good fortune to be the advance officer to bring to Division Headquarters the personnel files of the infantry components, as well as some field artillery and other soldiers, officers and men of the Army War Show Task Force (some 500 soldiers) being disbanded at Atlanta, Georgia.

C.O.s McClure and General Miller (A.D.C.) explained that the C.G. was expected momentarily, and in he came, on time, with a cordial greeting and a "let's get down to business" attitude, with no doubt about who was in charge. My apprehension at being in the presence of so much "brass" immediately disappeared. This was a commendable characteristic of W.A.B. (Withers A. Burrell). You respected his position in rank, but were also comfortable in dealing with him. (Others might have, but I never did refer to him as "Pinky.")

The General questioned me intensely on what the A.W.S. did, its state of training, maturity, discipline, morale, and many other matters. It was obvious that his first thought was about how he could best employ these soldiers in training the 100th Infantry Division. Some thought was to hold them as a unit — a rifle company, a heavy weapons company, and a field artillery Battery; in other words, as demonstration troops.

My heart sank, for at that moment among the A.W.S. group riding the rails toward Columbia, South Carolina were Staff Sergeant E.L. Bull, Sergeants J.P. Albaugh, E.G. Miller, and N.L. Webster, Corporal P.J. Esposito, and Private First Class M. Winit, A.T. Kovalick, F.J. Kaminski, et al. Also on the train were heavy weapons company men, Staff Sergeants J. F. McNulty, R.W. Thorn, M.H. Bangert, and Private First Class H.M. Mathis, J.M. Walsh, and Corporal R.S. Atkinson, et al. Each had ambitions of moving up in rank, and each had a couple of years of experience.

I took a deep breath, and where the words came from I do not know, but I spoke of the ambition of these seasoned men who had served with the 29th Infantry Division on the Carolina Maneuvers, at Fort Meade, and at A.P. Hill, Virginia. I referred to its seasoned officers, i.e., Captain J.M. King, Major Coleman, Lieutenants Edwards and McGowan, Captain Munoz, Captain Louis Mussler, et al; I mentioned, too, the Texas A & M officers, Rothe and Webb; most all of them had served the 29th and had proudly led every successful well trained show through 28 major cities, appearing before millions of U.S. citizens.

W.A.B. responded, and I believe it was out of empathy for and his comprehension of the keen desire of the A.W.S. men to have a chance for promotion and his awareness of using these experienced men throughout the Division to train the citizen soldiers so new to the 100th Infantry Division. We

Memories of a Remarkable General and Gentleman

proceeded to take the service records one by one and rotated from 397th, 398th, and 399th, etc. At times, recognizing that there were those who would rather not be separated, he respected my suggestion that some buddies stay together. The same procedure was maintained for the officers.

In a few hours the assignments were completed. Once more, one of those moments presented itself. When W.A.B. asked, "What shall we do with you?" I recited my limited experience since completion of Basic 10 at the Infantry School in the fall of 1941, indicating that this was my first experience at seeing the Division at this level. He said, "Major Williams, our Division Headquarters Commandant, is leaving for C&GS School. How would you like to take his place?"

"Yes sir," was my reply, somewhat weak in the knees. It became a real privilege to serve in that capacity — Commanding Officer, Division Headquarters Company — until October 1945.

The 100th Infantry Division was meant for Withers A. Burrell, and vice versa. His experience in dealing with young men at Virginia Military Institute and in other assignments, made him very sensitive to their needs. He was determined to have a well trained division. Colonel Stegmaier's report on the intense training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and on maneuvers in Tennessee, as well as the rapid special training given the A.S.T.P. men at Fort Bragg, bore out the General's determination to bring out the best in his officers and men — and he did it.

Late one starry night in October of '44, aboard the U.S.S. George Washington, I chanced on W.A.B. pacing the deck, apparently in a very solemn mood. "You know, Small, I get awfully concerned about these fine men I am bringing over, for I know I am not going to bring them all back." This is why training was so important to him.

W.A.B. was very sensitive to the need of the individual soldier — avoid the hurry-up-and-wait formations, music on pay day, competitive sports, avoid idleness, maintain visibility with the men, train, train, train, build confidence, maintain good, fair discipline.

Postwar, W.A.B. was loyal to the 100th Infantry Division patch, and supportive and enthusiastic toward the Division Association. A southern gentleman in true Virginia style, you were welcome to call at his home in Salem, Virginia at any time. One could sense his real pride in having served his country well.

It was always apparent that his real joy was that he brought the 100th Infantry Division from its very activation on November 15, 1942, at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, to the gallant accomplishment of the mission he set for it, namely "Success in Battle."

The late Colonel Leonard F. Oliver, our last Adjutant General, gave me an envelope that contained a remark by the General when he left command of the Division. It read,

"We must expect and tolerate the effect of the suddenness that brought us together in the same manner it takes us apart."

It is indeed fitting that we honor the memory of Withers Alexander Burrell, who touched our lives in such a very important way. As young citizen soldiers, we were extremely fortunate to come under his influence. He cared for each one of us.

The General enjoyed a long and distinguished career, retiring a Lieutenant General, whose last command was as First Army Commander. His outstanding achievement had to be his leadership of the 100th Infantry Division. All of us who served under him will be eternally grateful.

— Alden K. Small

Across Alsatian Plains

Colonel Hodge

Commanding Officer
117th Cavalry Reconnaissance
While Attached to the 100th Division

In planning for the continuation of my objective of Strasbourg, my unit, the 117th Armored Cavalry, was attached to the 100th Division. The 100th Division and ourselves had the mission of operating on the north flank of the VI Corps. On our immediate left were elements of the XV Corps, and that corps contained the Second French Armored Division, commanded by General Le Clerc. We operated with him in taking the village of Baccarrat. The battle plan for the 100th Division was to move from the town of Baccarrat, across some very high mountains from Badonviller, through the Col du Donon, which is a gorge-type of terrain feature leading into the town of Schirmeck. Schirmeck is just east of Badonviller and east of Baccarrat.

Our own mission was to conduct an armored movement at night on the roads leading to Schirmeck and to be in town by daylight the next day, hopefully with the town in our hands. This was to be a bold move, because a movement at night by armor is a very difficult movement indeed, especially when troops are moving into the attack and seizure of an important town. The 100th Infantry Division was to move by foot over the hills into the town of Schirmeck and hopefully would be there to back us up by the time we either attacked the town or secured it.

The commanding general of the 100th Division, General Burress, was a fine tactician. In laying out his plans with his staff, he had called me in and had asked me if we thought we could pull off a night attack as a surprise movement. After careful thought by my staff and myself, we thought that the element of surprise would be so great at this point that we could get away with it. We did not anticipate that there would be enough snow or ice on the roads to hinder our operations, but that the surprise element contained in this move would far outweigh the risks that might come up. When we had informed General Burress that we thought we could do it, he was delighted and very happy. The 100th Division had just been brought into the lines after we had secured the town of Baccarrat and was really being led into battle by us.

The movement took place as planned, and I believe it was one of the remarkable small movements in our sector. We truly surprised the enemy, in the sense that we came to roadblocks that were formidable at times. The Germans were so surprised by the force of the armor and the capability of destruction this armor carried with it that we really swept the roadblocks away and moved into the town of Schirmeck about three or four in the morning. The town was so surprised, as were the German garrisons, that while there was some infighting later, especially as the infantry came up later to aid us, it was not the determined resistance that one would have expected in this town of Schirmeck, an important defense point to the Alsatian Plans and to Strasbourg.

Now a little human interest incident, which took place at about 11:00 a.m. December 25, 1944, Christmas Day. I was asked by General Burress to come up for a little drink. This was only about two miles back, and I went because I admired General Burress and I personally liked him very much. Also

Memories of a Remarkable General and Gentleman

present was his his new artillery commander, General Jack Murphy, whom I had known as then Colonel Murphy at Fort Knox at the Armored Forces School and had liked him very much. We had a drink of bourbon, while sitting in a little shack.

When we had our hors d'oeuvres on that Christmas Day , Murphy said with a weak smile, "I must have ulcers. I just can't eat anything. I can hardly get this drink down."

General Burress looked at me and I looked at him and he said, "Charlie, why don't you tell him what's the matter with him."

I said, "General, I'm not his rank. I can't tell him that. You'd better tell him."

He said, "No, you tell him."

I said, "It's going to be very embarrassing."

Pinky said, "Go ahead and tell him."

I said, "General Murphy, you're going through the same thing all of us have gone through. You're so scared that your stomach won't accept any food. And that's the honest truth."

General Burress started to laugh and I couldn't help but laugh because I think all of us, upon our first real baptism of severe combat, don't feel like eating much."

At any rate, at that Christmas Day gathering, I might say that our hors d'oeuvres were some hardtack and some K-ration cheese. Please don't get the idea that we had very fancy hors d'oeuvres. As a matter of fact, they were hard to swallow.

New Year's Eve, 1944-45, in that particular area. Let me describe the setting to you. It was a bright moonlit night with snow on the ground. The forests were beautiful. The moon on the snow, with the machines of war strung along our line, provided quite an ugly contrast.

— Colonel Hodge



Germany, March 1945
—drawing by Al Vidmar

The Royal Road to Recovery — and Later

Roland Giduz

Private Second Class

Company C, 399th Infantry Regiment

The Ranking Private in the 100th Infantry Division and Its Grand Exalted Biggest S.O.B.

As the ranking Private Second Class in the entire 100th Infantry Division (27 months and never promoted) I was deservedly the most unlikely of all dogfaces to have any contact with our Commanding General, and I never did, except for my distant, though loyal, salute across the dusty Fort Bragg parade grounds.

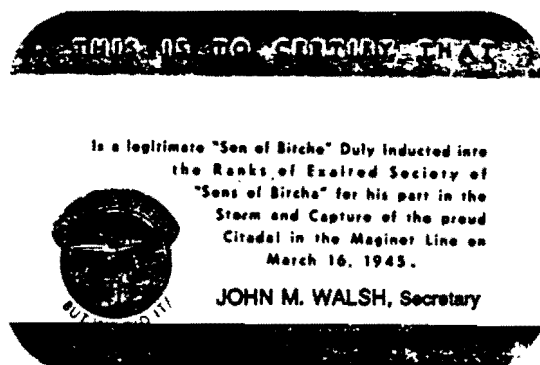
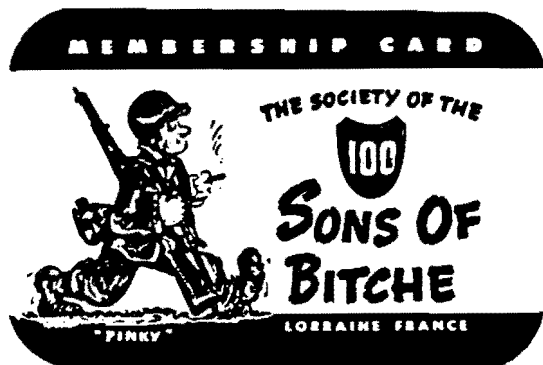
It was during and after my time at the "Royal Road to Recovery," as we called Ashford General Hospital (the former Greenbrier Hotel in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia), that I met Pinky. He and other high-ranking army officers were occasionally invited to come there on leave from their wartime duties I suspected that he, particularly may have been invited since he hailed from nearby Lexington, Virginia and was a Virginia Military Institute alumnus.

When I learned he was at Ashford, where I was a patient in 1945, I contacted him and he invited all past 100th Division personnel to meet with him, which we did, and had a very cordial visit.

I also, coincidentally, met Pinky later that year (1945) when I learned that Cynthia Burress was in Chapel Hill visiting a close friend, daughter of the Commanding General of the 78th (Lightning) Division, which had trained at nearby Camp Butner.

As I recall, during a several-months period he and Cynthia and I met on various occasions and, of course, we corresponded and had many friendly conversations during and after formation of the Century Association.

He was one of the friendliest and most respected persons I've ever known.



Society of the Sons of Bitche

From *Beachhead News*, Germany, July 13, 1945

A brotherhood that will commemorate the fighting of the 100th Division at the famous fortress of Bitche, France is launching its initial membership drive, and the Society of the Sons of Bitche is gaining momentum which it will carry on after the war.

So far as is known here, this organization is the first of its kind — named for a battle which figured in World War II — to be established in the American Army. As planned now by the Grand Exalted Biggest Son of Bitche (president) S/Sgt. David Swift, Attleboro, Mass., 20-year-old 399th infantryman, the Society will continue in peacetime as a social order with annual get-togethers, and has no ambition, political or otherwise, other than that.

The Society is named after the fighting for the southern Maginot Line fortress city of Bitche — a town that had witnessed the attacks of three previous wars — which the Century Division eventually took in March after a three-month siege.

The current membership enlistment is taking place in chapters which correspond to the regiments and separate battalions of the 100th. Each man who served at Bitche will be eligible, including those in the division as well as attached units — and will be admitted upon an application stating the qualifications for becoming a Legitimate Son of Bitche. Colorful membership cards have already been printed.

Unit chapters will be named for the important fort series at Bitche — Fort Schiesseck, Freudenberg, College de Bitche, etc.

A formal knighting of the first member will take place soon with Grand, etc. Sgt. Swift waving the sword taken from the captured commander of the city. A toast in schnapps, popular native potable of the Bitche area, will figure in the ceremony.

A Friend and Neighbor

Walter Lester

Headquarters Company
2nd Battalion
398th Infantry Regiment

Although I knew who Major General Withers A. Burress was from the time I joined the 100th Infantry Division at Fort Bragg in 1944, I never really knew him until he moved to Salem after his retirement from the U.S. Army.

Sometime in the late-1950s we spent a beautiful fall day together, grouse hunting in Giles County, Virginia.

From that time on, General Burress would make himself available for an occasional day of looking at his 100th Division records, and we would lunch together.

We attended the Awards Ceremonies at Virginia Military Institute and the 100th Division reunions together.

General Burress's love for the 100th Division and to the men who served in it were something he never missed a chance to speak about. No soldier ever stood as tall, ran as fast, walked as far, or fought as well as a 100th Division soldier, in the opinion of General Burress.

His love for the 100th Infantry Division and the men who served in it was carried over to the 100th Infantry Division Association.

Lieutenant General W.A. Burress was the most remarkable person I ever met. His kindness, wisdom, and knowledge have been, and will always be, missed by the members of this great organization. His positive attitude about the Association and the officers who served was a subject he always commented on, and the Association reunions are continuing, as he predicted they would.

In writing this about General Burress on what would have been his 100th birthday, a few words about his lovely, wonderful wife should also be included. The members of this Association who know me have heard me express my respect, admiration, and love for General Burress, and I always say that he was a *southern gentleman* and Mrs. Burress was a *southern lady*.

The memories I and my family have of the visits with General Burress and Mrs. Burress will be treasured forever.

— *Walter Lester*

From Privates to Association Presidents

Lou Witt

PFC, E Company, 2nd Battalion, 398th Regiment

Arch Handy

PFC, Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 398th Regiment

100th Division Association Past Presidents

In the early 1960s my 100th Division Association friend Arch Handy told me that he had been asked to have his name placed in nomination to the Board of our Association. He said he had agreed to run and asked me if I would help him with the reunion if and when he became president. I agreed to help.

How does all this relate to "Remembrances of General Burress"?

Until that time *our* personal connection with the General was most limited! Oh, I remembered, as an ASTPer in the spring of 1944, having General Burress visit the training battalion that he had formed to bring us up to some minimum degree of training so we could be assimilated into various units of the 100th Infantry Division. And *we* also remembered him addressing the Division and informing us that we would soon be packing up and leaving Fort Bragg to ship out "overseas."

In the postwar years we had gotten to know him as a Lieutenant General who still went to "his" Division reunion, where we had a Saturday night banquet in his name and where he had become a larger-than-life legend in his and our time — one whom we had to come and honor and love as our own "Pinky."

With Arch's encouragement, I joined him and his family on trips to Virginia Military Institute in the spring to represent the Association by joining with General Burress in the presentation of a Marksmanship Trophy that we sponsored in the General's name. General Burress was pleased and proud when the 100th Division Association endowed the award.

As proud as VMI was of the General, so was he of his Alma Mater. After one of the ceremonies we were invited to the Commandant's office. On the walls were portraits of Generals Marshall, Handy (an aide to Gen. Marshall — *and no relation to Arch*), and Burress — three of VMI's distinguished graduates of World War Two fame.

I remember on my first excursion to VMI visiting the VMI Museum that had many displays of many mementos of its illustrious graduates, including a whole-glass-topped table display of items of General Burress. (I didn't see an S.O.B. card so I gave the museum mine, which they added to the display.)

We both remember the General's brother, Jack, who often brought the General to VMI as well as flying him, on occasion, to Association reunions.

We also remember the ever-present Walter Lester, who had become the General's aide. Walter lived near the General and, at the request of the Association, accompanied him on his visits to VMI and to reunions. Walter was always at his elbow to assist in any way needed. A wonderful friendship grew between them through this "labor of love."

Arch and I both especially remember kind, warm personal letters of congratulation and encouragement from General Burress on each of our elections to the office of President of the 100th Division Association.

Memories of a Remarkable General and Gentleman

Arch recalled that when he was planning his reunion, he informed the General that he planned to invite then Chief of Staff General Wheeler. General Burress encouraged Arch to do so and told a story about General Wheeler — At the end of the war, General Burress was named commander of the Constabulary in Germany and Gen. (then Colonel) Wheeler, formerly of the 63rd Infantry Division, served as his aide. When General Burress came to write the colonel's efficiency report, he stated that Wheeler could not miss becoming Army Chief of Staff. How prophetic!

There are two other memories that Arch and I have of General Burress. First, when we would ask him for suggestions on how to improve the Association, he would always say, "No, no, you men are doing a great job!" Second, he was inordinately proud of "his" division and "his" men and no matter how busy he was, he would always find time to give us his attention and counsel.

He was truly a wonderful man. Our relationship with him is one we all miss.

— *Lou Witt*

— *Arch Handy*

Making One of His "Sons" Feel at Home

Ray Denman, Jr.
L Company
397th Infantry Regiment

My recollection of meeting General Burress goes back to the spring of 1971, when I represented the Century Association at Virginia Military Institute for the presentation of the General Burress Rifleman Award given each year to the top-scoring cadet on the rifle team of the school.

Due to the General's health, he could not attend the VMI Awards Ceremony for the graduates, during which the Burress Award is presented. I had previously inquired if I could visit at his home and was told most certainly. We spoke of many interesting flashbacks and scenes during our combat and stateside service, and he was most interested in my memories and thoughts.

I noticed a large framed coat of arms of the many provinces he fought in during World War One and World War Two hanging over his fireplace mantel. I asked if I may take a photo of the framed heirloom and he insisted I do so, and made sure I had a few back-up exposures.

At his insistence he gave me instructions and names to contact at the Awards Ceremony, so as to make me feel at home on the VMI campus during the afternoon and evening activities.

One such name was his brother, Jack Burress, who took me in tow and guided me to every function and, in addition, introduced me to many of Pinky's friends at VMI. It was truly a privilege but I also viewed it as the General's way of making one of his "sons" feel at home. I received many vibes of VMI's love and affection for him.

During our visit he found that I was from the same town as his niece (Jack's daughter) and he asked me to contact her. From this we have been exchanging 100th news for years.

In later years we met the General and his brother, Jack, and Jack's pilot at various airports near reunion sites and he was always humorous and soft-spoken, even after a tiring and sometimes bumpy flight due to the weather, with no complaint, but eagerly awaiting the arrival to visit "his" boys for a few days.

Another incident, related to me by Pete Gorynski of A Company, 325th Engineers, occurred on 22 February 1945 in Montbrons, France at the L-5 spotter plane (artillery) airfield, the General having just flown in.

Six engineers and medics working in the muddy field had a camera and one dared the other to ask "Pinky" for a photo. He did and the General came over, through the deep mud, and grabbed a shovel and stood for a number of candid photos. Pete Gorynski gave me one a number of years ago, which I have to share with you.

I was indeed happy to have been one of his "boys" in the 397th Infantry Regiment throughout our 100th Division history in World War Two.

— Ray Denman, Jr.

The “Old Man” I Remember

Colonel Robert M. Stegmaier

G-4

100th Infantry Division

The “Old Man” I remember was unmistakably a military leader of superior caliber and highly regarded by the soldiers who served with him in the 100th Infantry Division. One had to be impressed with his personal bearing, which made him stand out in any gathering of his peers. Of greater and lasting importance was his commitment to his men and their welfare.

General Burress was not a glory-seeker who took high-risk assignments with an eye cocked toward the notoriety or press it might bring him. Instead, in his quiet and deliberate fashion, he saw to it that complete preparations for the attack or defense were made, after a careful analysis of all possible risks.

It was this type of preparation that earned the 100th its successful combat record, including the first-ever capture of Forts Schiesseck and Freudenberg on the Maginot Line, employing massive artillery barrages and air power in the successful assault.

This brilliant work was capped shortly thereafter by the steadfast and memorable defense of the 100th's positions in the face of a renewed German offense launched on New Year's Eve.

Many of us surely owe our survival to General Burress's personal philosophy, which rejected the premise that only by accepting higher casualties as a given could one attain success in battle. When ever Centurymen gather to recall their success in battle they should be ever cognizant of their debt to their great leader, General Withers A. Burress.

— *Col. Robert M. Stegmaier (Ret.)*

The General's Junior Aide

Charles E. Moore, Jr.

Junior Aide de Camp
and
Assistant G-2
to General Withers A. Burrell

My relationship with the General goes back to Virginia Military Institute, when my father and General Burrell became friends and members of the football team in 1912-1914.

They served together in World War One in the Second Infantry Division, and after the war their friendship endured, even after my father was retired for disability.

I was born in 1920, grew up in Richmond, Virginia, and graduated Virginia Military Institute in 1941. General Burrell was the commandant there for 1936 to 1940.

I entered the army in 1941 and was called to be his junior aide de camp when he was assigned to activate the 100th Infantry Division at Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

I went all the way through with the General in the European Theater of Operations, serving as his Assistant G-2, returning to Richmond in 1946.

It was a marvelous experience serving with such an outstanding combat leader and I often thought of writing about it. Unfortunately, my intentions were never carried out. I did, however, keep up with him and was at his funeral in Arlington.

— *Charles E. Moore, Jr.*

After the War

Ralph A. Yates

Centuryman
100th Infantry Division

While at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, in the beginning days of the 100th Infantry Division, I had served as secretary to the adjutant general.

In July 1952 I graduated from Northeastern University. Shortly thereafter I saw in army regulations that I might be eligible for a commission. At the time I was a Master Sergeant in the 456th Quartermaster Base Depot, an active reserve unit.

I asked my Commanding Officer if he would recommend me for a commission and he did.

I thought it might be helpful if General Burress knew a little about me so I asked Fred Lyons if he would recommend me to the General, who was at that time Commanding General of First Army.

Fred, after some contemplation, agreed to drop the General a note. A short time after, because of my age, I became a captain. The General had helped a former member of the 100th Infantry Division.

— LTC Ralph A. Yates (Ret.)

W.A.B, RED MOORE, THE 100TH AND ME
BY CHARLES E. MOORE, JR.

The relationship of my family and General Burress goes back to 1910 when he entered the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia.

He became acquainted with an upperclassman named Moore, who also had red hair, and at that point began a lifetime of friendship between "Pinky" Burress and "Red" Moore and their families. They both played on the V.M.I football team, of which my father was "Captain."

They both entered the regular Army and when World War I began, they were assigned to the same unit, the Second Infantry Division. My father was badly wounded and took early retirement for disability in 1921. The two continued their friendship over the years, and I remember many visits he made to our home in Richmond. I considered the General almost a member of our family.

General Burress, who by this time had reached the rank of Major, was sent back to V.M.I. as Commandant of Cadets and Professor of Military Science and Tactics. In this role he was responsible for discipline in the Corps of Cadets and their military training. His immediate superior at V.M.I. was a retired Marine Corp officer, Major General John A. LeJeune, who reported to General George Marshall, that "Major Burress has been very successful as a leader of young men."

V.M.I. provided my platform to serve under Major Burress as a V.M.I. cadet for four years. He was a stern disciplinarian but very fair, which could be a tough assignment in dealing with a group of high-spirited college men, but he treated them as "men" and not "boys".

I lost touch with him for several years, graduating from V.M.I. in 1941 and joining the U.S. Sixth Cavalry that fall just before Pearl Harbor. Less than a year later, in 1942, he wrote me offering an assignment of serving as his Aide de Camp in his new position as Commanding General of the new 100th Infantry Division, which he was to activate and train for combat.

Being a very young 1st Lieutenant, I was most impressed by the God-like treatment afforded general officers, however the relationships in his headquarters could not have been more pleasant at all levels.

As the untrained recruits came pouring into Fort Jackson, I felt almost as if I was back at V.M.I. The cadre was conducting close-order drill, a great military band played frequently. General Burress was constantly inspecting the troops, talking to them, and through his commanders encouraging them to take pride in their units, and most importantly, to learn as much as possible very quickly, so as to prepare to survive in combat. One could see the difference in the men almost daily.

We moved to maneuvers in the field in North Carolina, Tennessee in the winter, and then Fort Bragg. Unfortunately the 100th Division was tapped for combat replacements because of losses in Sicily and Italy. General Burress took his impatience with this situation to General Marshall in Washington. He was told that the best trained men were badly needed, and they came from the 100th Infantry Division. General Marshall indicated he would, in turn, assign us "high type trainees or fully trained replacements."

In August 1944, the Division was sent to the staging area at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. We were loaded aboard a former German liner, the GEORGE WASHINGTON, and set sail for Europe once the convoy was assembled and protective Navy ships were available. The entire

division was put aboard, and we set sail for Gibraltar (unbeknownst to us) to prevent enemy submarines from learning our true destination. Once in the Atlantic, training continued, plus heavy doses of calisthenics.

I recall our first night aboard the transport. There were six of us in a small cabin, three bunks high. A knock on the door turned out to be the General's aide, who said the General needed two bridge players. Captain Bill Zimmerman and I responded by changing into clean, fresh uniforms, complete with tie, and reported post haste. We joined General Burress and his— Artillery Commander, General Murphy, waiting for us in their skivvies, which did much to relax us in the presence of such Brass. We played every night for two weeks; a great experience!

Our first land sighting turned out to be Gibraltar and the Mediterranean Sea, on which we sailed to the French port of Marseille. Its unloading facilities had been virtually destroyed by the fleeing Germans, and we had to disembark with landing nets over the side into L.C.I.'s and other craft. We then moved north promptly, entering combat at St. Remy in the Vosges Mountains.

This was the first combat contact and the General seemed cool and unflappable in what to me was a very bad experience. When one of his regimental commanders performed badly and lost contact with his unit, General Burress directed the Colonel to locate his troops; whereupon he drove off toward the front, got lost and was killed. Needless to say, since he was a longtime friend of General Burress, one must assume that it was a grievous personal loss, plus being the first major high-ranking casualty of the Division.

Observing the General functioning during a full combat situation was fascinating. Regardless of the stress and tension, he never seemed to lose his "cool." You could almost "see" his brain functioning as he asked questions of his staff and developed his plan. Always evident was his concern for the troops as his strategy became evident. His success in combat bore out the abilities of this military leader who had forged a real fighting force with rare talent, the 100th Infantry Division.

The General's transportation in the field consisted of a jeep and a truck van. As the day ended and assuming action or lack of it, his aide would invite a small group of senior commanders and staff to assemble in the van to go over the day's action, discuss plans and to share refreshments. Being included was a great learning experience for this relatively junior staff officer.

I consider my association with Lt. General Withers A. Burress one of the greatest experiences of my life.

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