



Charlie Battery 3rd Missile Battalion 71st Artillery

Stockheim ♥ Haberschlacht ♥ Niederhofen ♥ Kleingartach

WINNING THE PEACE WITH PEACE THROUGH
VIGILANCE - STRENGTH - HONOR - RESOLVE

This document features an article written by Bill Griffin that he submitted to his local newspaper called "The Ocilla Star" discussing the 3rd Missile Battalion - 71st Artillery Reunion in 2008.

When ever possible we endeavor to use original archival materials in order to obtain historical accuracy. Discovering the exact page of the newspaper "The Ocilla Star" of Ocilla, Georgia is a great find and we are pleased to present it for your interest and enjoyment.

After the article appeared in the newspaper Bill discovered an error and has requested that it be amended.

The third paragraph pertaining to the Nike Hercules nuclear warhead capabilities is described as "2 kilotons". However, upon further research, Bill discovered that a more diverse capability was possible. As he states, "The fact of the matter is missiles were armed with different warheads ranging from 3KT, 10KT, 20KT to 30KT, depending what the target, and the tactical/strategic requirements were".

Great article Bill, and thanks for the update...

A free and open forum dedicated to the betterment of our community

Opinion

Our thoughts in columns and editorials, yours in letters

THE OCILLA STAR

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MISSION STATEMENT: *The Ocilla Star* is created proudly for the citizens of Irwin County and adjoining counties by *The Ocilla Star* in Ocilla, Georgia. Our goal is to produce a quality, profitable, community-oriented newspaper of which our readers may be proud. We will reach that goal through hard work, teamwork, loyalty, and a strong dedication toward printing the truth.

Express Your Opinion

WRITE A LETTER
TO THE EDITOR

From Where I Sit

By Bob Tribble

Old soldiers live forever in our hearts

A famous Naval Officer once said when he retired, "Old Soldiers never die, they just fade away." That could be true but in my case Old Soldiers never die, they live forever in the hearts with whom they served.

The year was 1957 and the place was Germany. The unit I served in was the Second Armored Cavalry. We had taken our basic training at Fort Meade, Maryland and our First Sergeant was Sgt. Graham a black man from Mississippi.

For those of you who do not know, the First Sergeant is the top sergeant of a company and the one responsible for the enlisted soldiers and directly supervises and trains every non-commissioned officer in the company. The First Sergeant is also the right hand man to the unit commander who is normally a First Lieutenant. He provides support to the commander, echoes his orders and insures they are carried out without question. In the army a soldier, his squad and possibly his entire company could die if the soldier fails to immediately execute the commander's orders.

In a time of crisis a soldier cannot think about their orders they must execute, and to do that they must have confidence that the orders they are given are legitimate, accurate and keep the success of the mission and their lives in mind. Soldiers respond to honor and integrity

and they must feel their leaders provide that. The most important person in establishing and maintaining that trust is the First Sergeant. The First Sergeant is the face of the commander to the troops echoing his commands and the boot when needed to kick the butt of those who don't respond instantly. As the First Sergeant goes, so goes the unit.

First Sergeant Graham was the essence of a soldier. He was a hard core but kind hearted man who always looked the part. He was intensely loyal and no one questioned his Commander. He was a trainer to his NCOs and accepted nothing less than total commitment to the unit and his troops. He was knowledgeable, feared and most of all respected. He would have given his life without question for his Commander, his unit and all in his command. He was the perfect soldier and was an icon.

We served together for only two years in that company during basic training and in Germany but formed a bond that lasted forever. After leaving the military in 1959 we lost touch which is something we tend to do when we move on to other things. We try to put the past behind us while looking forward to the future. I never saw First Sergeant Graham again but thought of him on occasion.

Sgt. Graham always stood erect like no other with his uniform perfectly prepared,

his boots shined so bright the reflection could blind you. His eyes were always fixed forward watching us to make sure we were safe. We never had to shoot live bullets in combat, but if we had the soldiers in our unit would have followed Sgt. Graham wherever he led us.

Most people have the opinion that soldiers join the army serve and then leave. For me this was true, but real soldiers like Sgt. Graham never leave, they always serve. Yes, Old Soldiers never die, they live forever in the hearts with whom they served.

First Sergeant Graham is most likely in Heaven now. Maybe one day I will be privileged to stand with him once again so he can lead me around the streets of gold. He won't have to watch my back anymore because there will be nothing but peace in that beautiful place God has prepared for us.

Manchester's Veterans' Day Parade is Saturday, November 8 at 11 AM. Your community most likely has a parade or event planned to honor our veterans. Please plan to attend these events if possible.



The Old Soldier

He may live next door or just down the road. You may notice his steps are a little slow.

He doesn't tell where he's been, what he saw or did, where or when.

The gray in his hair helps to tell his age, but not the battles he saw as they raged.

You won't know about the flashbacks, the bad dreams, gunpowder and flack,

The fire fights with flares and racer bullets lighting up the night.

Then, checking to see how many were OK after the fight.

You don't see him in a cold sweat, shivering in a bed that is soaking wet. His eyes wide open and set.

He may not scream or yell, but in his mind,

he's going thru hell.

When he hears the anthem start to play, he stands tall and straight with a lump in his throat that you won't see because it's just his way.

He tries not to think of these things.

Still, he wonders when the Universe Commander calls his name,

Will he have earned a pair of golden wings. It's the old soldier that lives within.

He will always come back, again and again. When you see him walking with a slow stride,

Just remember, you can't see what's going on inside.

Fred R. Ring

U.S. Army First Infantry Division



~ LETTERS TO EDITOR ~

Resurfacing of Frank Road appreciated

On behalf of "we the people" who live on Frank Church Road, the people who travel it to "visit" loved ones buried in Frank Church Cemetery; Frank Primitive Baptist Church; it's members, friends and visitors...I want to personally thank our Irwin County Commissioners and taxpayers for having "our road" resurfaced recently! It was certainly needed, it was certainly well done, and we certainly appreciate it!

O.L. Luke
Ocilla

Reunion 2008 of the 3rd Battalion 71st Air Defense Artillery

The 3rd Battalion 71st Air Defense Artillery had its 2008 reunion October 18-22 in Branson, Missouri. This command was a Nike-Hercules Air Defense Missile System stationed in Germany from 1957 to 1987.

The assignment for this Missile System was to maintain radar surveillance over the skies of Germany 24/7 and guard against enemy attack by high altitude bomber aircraft. If an enemy attack had been attempted, the command would have taken the bombers out before they could have dropped their bombs.

The Hercules missiles had some awesome

capabilities. They were armed with atomic warheads with explosive capabilities up to two kilo tons. They also had the capacity to take out targets at surface to surface, surface to low altitude or surface to high altitude. When fired, the Hercules would go straight up to sixty thousand feet and then take off to its assigned target.

There were four Battalions of the Hercules System, having 72 missiles in each Battalion totaling 288 missiles.

Howard Webb from Fort Smith, AR and Jim Fitzpatrick from Pittston, PA got on their computers and located many of the guys across the country that served in the unit. There were 27 guys who attended the reunion with their wives.

We swapped stories and had lots of laughs. There were sad stories as well. Fifteen of the guys who served in Charlie Battery alone have passed away.

They will not be forgotten by the ones who served with them.

Many of us guys had not seen each other in 48 years. A really great time was enjoyed by all who attended the reunion.

We who served in the 3rd Bn. 71st ADA like to think we had a major role in keeping the Russians on their side of the fence during the cold war.



Bill Griffin
Ocilla

Hearing from a stranger about your age

BY ANNE O'CONNOR



Possibly more awful humiliations await me in the future, but this one will do for now. On the bright side, I have caught up with the offers of the "senior discount" that I started receiving when I was 43.

In Friday's mail was a thick packet from Social Security. I've been receiving my benefit for more than two years, so I wasn't concerned. Then I opened the envelope and found myself staring at...yes...a Medicare card. Oh, the humanity.

I will be eligible for Medicare in February, when I turn 65. Oh, the humiliation of knowing that some faceless bureaucrat is aware, despite my

spry walk and my youthful face, that I will soon turn 65. All I can say is, I better be having a REALLY great party. Children, are you listening?

There must be some compensation for this advanced age. Maybe some hard-won wisdom? Can't think of any. I read not long ago that wisdom doesn't always come with age; sometimes age shows up all by itself. That's what's happening to me.

Maybe finally catching up with the silver hair that descended on me at age 30 can comfort me in my sad estate. Nah, not much. I'm used to the glowingly-white hair that singles me out in many a crowd, so aging into the look is cold comfort, at best.

Let's see: Grandchildren are the reward for old age? Not at my house. A big nest egg, so I can

spend these "golden years" relaxing and traveling to exotic locales? Don't make me laugh. And let's not mention nips and tucks to smoothe out wrinkles and pouches and otherwise bedraggled sections of my face and body. I earned them every one, and I'll go on to my next life with them all intact.

Nope, old age, as a friend of mine once said, is not for sissies. It must be faced head-on, with hope in the heart and a smile on the lips. In my case, today I have neither.

Somebody out there, some unconcerned government employee, has my number, and that number is "almost 65." It's worse than getting my first mailing from AARP before I turned 50, and that was bad enough.

So here's the lesson for this week, boys and

girls: You too, if you live long enough, will one day be blindsided by that evil packet of Medicare information. You will have to make decisions about which portions you want and how much you'll have to pay. It's hard days around here.

One comforting thought does keep floating through my mind, though: Almighty God, who saw fit to bring me to the earth nearly 65 years ago, will see me through the rest of the way. He has not decided that my time is up, and so I'll turn 65 right on time. Meanwhile, I'll keep trying to dig out some gold from this mud I find myself in.

After all, there's only one alternative to getting older. Let's not think about that; I feel bad enough already!

Anne O'Connor is a former staff writer for *The Star* and a syndicated columnist.