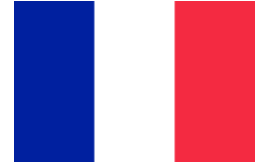




USA



USAREUR 7th US Army



France



3rd Inf. Div.



36th Inf.Div.



45th Inf. Div.



442nd RCT



USAAF

French-American Commemorations **From Besançon to St-Dié**

On the trail of the Soldiers of the 7th US Army and the USAAF

September 2011

Part II : Besançon area

- Besançon :
 - The Liberation
 - Medal of Honor Technician 5th Grade Robert D. Maxwell
- Saint-Juan, Temporary U.S. Military Cemetery
- Fontain, the last mission of « My Gal II », a B-26 Marauder
- Saint-Vit, in Memory of the crew of a destroyed M4 Sherman
- Sauvagny, in Memory of Pfc Edwin Morgan and Pvt John Kreiner
- Geneuille, in Memory of Private Albert Tamburine

Eric Vandroux

BESANÇON

September 8th, 1944 The Liberation



3rd Inf. Div.

On September 8th, 1944, Besançon was liberated by the 3rd Infantry Division. 88 American Soldiers, 29 civilians and 28 Resistance fighters were killed during the fights... They were not forgotten...

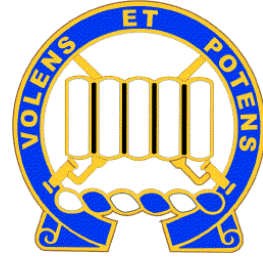




7 September 1944



3rd Inf. Division



7th Inf. Regiment

**Technician Fifth Grade
Robert D. MAXWELL**



Medal of Honor

“Rank and organization: Technician Fifth Grade, U.S. Army, 7th Infantry, 3d Infantry Division. Place and date: Near Besancon, France, 7 September 1944. Entered service at: Larimer County, Colo. Birth: Boise, Idaho. G.O. No.: 24, 6 April 1945.

Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty on 7 September 1944, near Besancon, France. Technician 5th Grade Maxwell and 3 other soldiers, armed only with .45 caliber automatic pistols, defended the battalion observation post against an overwhelming onslaught by enemy infantrymen in approximately platoon strength, supported by 20mm. flak and machinegun fire, who had infiltrated through the battalion's forward companies and were attacking the observation post with machinegun, machine pistol, and grenade fire at ranges as close as 10 yards. Despite a hail of fire from automatic weapons and grenade launchers, Technician 5th Grade Maxwell aggressively fought off advancing enemy elements and, by his calmness, tenacity, and fortitude, inspired his fellows to continue the unequal struggle. When an enemy hand grenade was thrown in the midst of his squad, Technician 5th Grade Maxwell unhesitatingly hurled himself squarely upon it, using his blanket and his unprotected body to absorb the full force of the explosion. This act of instantaneous heroism permanently maimed Technician 5th Grade Maxwell, but saved the lives of his comrades in arms and facilitated maintenance of vital military communications during the temporary withdrawal of the battalion's forward headquarters.”

From “U.S. ARMY CENTER OF MILITARY” HISTORY”

SAINT-JUAN

Temporary U.S. Military Cemetery



A temporary U.S. Military Cemeteries in France during WWII

Saint-Juan US Military Cemetery was established in September 1944 by the 46th Quartermaster Graves Registration Company of the U.S. Seventh Army as it drove northward from southern France through the Rhone Valley into Germany.



Dedication of a plaque for the Soldiers of the Cemetery

“During World War II, the U.S. Government called to service approximately 15,000,000 men and women. The number of American war dead totaled around 359,000, of which 281,000 were recovered and given burial in more than 250 temporary military cemeteries around the globe. The Quartermaster Corps had primary responsibility for search and recovery, establishment of collection points on the battlefield, initial identification of the deceased, the laying out of cemeteries, and overseeing proper interment.

It took almost another six years after the war (until the close of 1951) for final disposition to be accomplished. In all, some 171,000 casketed remains were delivered to next of kin in the United States. At the same time, approximately 97,000 dead were, according to wishes of the next of kin, buried abroad in permanent U.S. military cemeteries. Another 10,000 "unknowns" likewise found their final resting place on foreign soil.”



From Dr. Steven Anders, "Quartermaster Professional Bulletin - Autumn/Winter 1994"

FONTAIN

January 19th, 1945
**The last mission of
 “My Gal II”**



320th Bomber Group



441st Bomber Squadron



« My Gal II » at Fontain (near Besançon)



The weather was snow-covered on Friday, January 19th, 1945, but it did not prevent the takeoff at 1:03 am since the air base of Dijon-Lonvic of 27 American bombers B-26 Martin Marauder ... The target was Achern in Germany. They were escorted by fighters P-47 Thunderbolt.

At 2:10 pm, "My Gal II" (08 yellow) left the formation further to technical problems, and crashed a little later to Fontain, near Besançon, killing all six crew members.

The villagers have held a memorial service every year since 1945.

Name	Rank	Function	Serial no	From	Buried at Epinal		
McCurdy Arthur L.	Second Lieutenant	Pilot	1683414	Wisconsin	B	2	57
Cudworth Elmer L. Jr.	First Lieutenant	Co-Pilot	O-819760	New York	B	26	4
Hill John C.	Staff Sergeant	Bombardier	18071305	Colorado	A	9	21
Bentas Nicholas	Staff Sergeant	Eng / Gun	36554340	Michigan	Buried in the U.S.A.		
Rahl Lloyd	Staff Sergeant	radio / Gun	36570208	Michigan			
Gothammer Henry	Staff Sergeant	Nav / Gun	39838514	Californie			

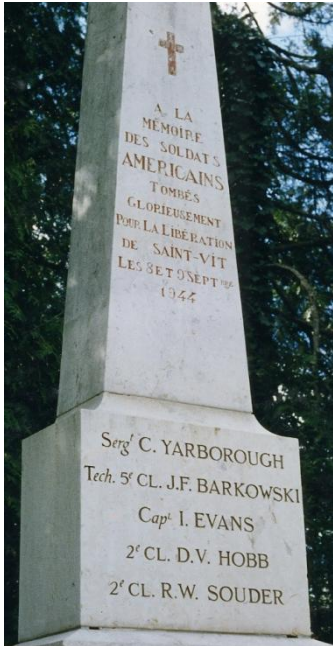
SAINT-VIT

September 8th, 1944

In Memory of the crew of a destroyed M4 Sherman



36th Inf. Div.



The 753rd Tank Battalion was a unit of Medium Tanks M4 Sherman who fought in the side of the US 36th Infantry Division since the landing of Provence on August 15th, 1944. After the battles in Provence and in the Rhone valley, this unit reached finally the Doubs'area from the beginning of September.

One of these tanks was destroyed on September 8th to Saint Vit, near Besançon. The inside was completely carbonized. There were practically nothing of the bodies of these soldiers. It is the reason for which they are not buried in the Epinal American Cemetery, but their names are nevertheless registered on the wall of the reported missing ...

Name	Rank	Serial no	From	Awards
YARBOROUGH CLYDE B	Sergeant	38132865	Texas	Bronze Star, Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster
BORKOWSKI JOHN E	Technician Fifth Class	32717613	New York	Purple Heart
EVANS IRA	Corporal	34131174	Mississippi	Purple Heart
HOBBS DELBERT V	Private	37512608	Missouri	Purple Heart
SOUDER RICHARD W	Private	17078860	Nebraska	Purple Heart

SAUVAGNEY

“In France, they remember Baltimore's Private Kreiner”



September 9th, 1944

“Baltimore Sun”, September 09, 1998
by DAN RODRICKS

36th Inf. Div.



“SOMEWHERE today they're remembering Private Kreiner. It's a distant somewhere, a speck of a place in a valley in France. You could speak the name Kreiner there and an old man named Henri Ducret would break into the long story of the Germans and the war, the years of occupation and the day of liberation, and he'll describe the body of Private Kreiner being carried to the churchyard. In the little town of Sauvagny, they remember Private Kreiner.

Here in Baltimore, however, we come to the story late, 54 years to the day late. For some reason - maybe it was the mass of information coming out of Europe and Asia at the time, the mounting casualties - his hometown newspaper never reported the death of Pvt. John H. Kreiner Jr. We never reported much on his life, for that matter. All we have is the photograph of the meekly smiling private in the overseas cap, a black-and-white glossy retrieved from the Sun archives after its one use 54 years ago. And there's one story about him - actually, just one paragraph in a roundup of war news:

"Private John H. Kreiner Jr. was sent overseas to take part in the battle for Anzio beachhead, and continued to serve with the Fifth Army until he was stricken with malaria fever. In his last letter to his wife, Mrs. Margaret Burke Kreiner of 912 Homestead Street, he wrote that he now is fully recovered and has rejoined his outfit for combat service."

That notice appeared in The Evening Sun, next to a supermarket advertisement, on Aug. 21, 1944.

Just 18 days later, Kreiner advanced with Company E, 141st Infantry Regiment, toward Sauvagny in eastern France, between

the city of Dijon and the Swiss border. Kreiner's regiment, part of the 36th Division, had been involved in the invasion of Salerno, Italy, a year earlier. It also had taken part in Operation Anvil, invading southern France in August 1944 and moving north rapidly through lands that had been occupied by German troops for four years.

On Sept. 9, 1944, east of Dijon, on the road to Belfort, Kreiner's company engaged German occupiers around little Sauvagny, a farming village with a population today (and probably then) of fewer than 200. German soldiers entrenched in woods fired their machine guns across a meadow at the advancing Americans. Those who remember the day tell of screams across the meadow and medics running to assist the wounded with morphine and bandages. When the fighting ended, two privates of Company E were dead, one of them John Kreiner.”

In the 1998 Battlefield Tour report, Ray Wells, Company H, 141st Infantry Regiment wrote :
“For those who haven't read the story of Sauvagny, two men from "E Company, 141st Infantry Regiment were killed while fighting for the liberation of the Village. With the permission of the Commanding Office of the Regiment the residents of the village built coffins for the "T Patchers" and buried them with Christian Ceremony in the Church cemetery. As far as I know these two men were the only bodies recovered by the Graves Registration whose bodies had been buried in coffins. We met some of the people who actually recovered the bodies, built the coffins, the man who dug the graves and Henri's two sisters who at the time of the battle were little girls took flowers to the place where these young soldiers laid and put flowers on their bodies. The two soldiers were Edwin J. Morgan and John Kreiner.”

September 9th, 1944

GENEUILLE

In Memory of Pvt Albert Tamburine



3rd Inf. Div.



2004 August 17th, dedication of the plaque in Memory of Pvt Albert Tamburine

“September 9th, 1944, the villagers of Geneuille, which had just led to the Cemetery a French Resistant, saw arriving in the end of the morning an army of liberators. The American soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Division which had just liberated the City of Besançon.

Everything in its enjoyment, the villagers ignored that at the end of morning, in the limit of the Doubs and the Haute-Saône areas, at the level of the exploitation of a sand pit, a young American soldier had just been wounded lethally. He fell in plain glory, weapons in the hand, in front of the enemy...”

From « L'Est Républicain », August 19th, 2004