

Bollinger Participates In Paratroop Airdrop

SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

STE. MERE- EGLISE, France -- Forty-four years ago, the people of this anonymous sleepy French village woke to the drone of scores of radial airplane engines, while the flash and crack of German anti-aircraft fire blasted a hellish carnival show in the early morning air. Floating down under mushroom canopies and gossamer lines came the long awaited salvation-American airborne soldiers were landing and bringing with them the long promised liberation of the hedgerow packed province of Normandy. It was D-day, June 6, 1944.

To commemorate the historic event, more than 270 soldiers from the Army's 325th Airborne Combat Team recently parachuted into the same hedgerowed fields their airborne forefathers did 44 years earlier. Recreating a piece of history, Sgt. Guy D. Bollinger, 30, son-in-law of Cecil and Alma G. Putnam, 3331 Davis Ave., Charlotte, took part in this operation, which was the largest U.S. paratroop airdrop in France since World War II.

"It was interesting being part of the anniversary of D-day," said Bollinger, a food service specialist with the combat team's Headquarters Company. "I didn't know how much the airborne had to do with the invasion until now. I enjoyed the public support and the way the people treated us. I enjoy the chance to see other countries."

Based in Vicenza, Italy, the 325th Airborne Combat Team's lineage is traced to the airborne armada that dropped

paratroopers and guided gliders into the drop and landing zones behind the beaches of Normandy on D-day. When these present-day paratroopers jumped into Normandy on June 5, they had to deal with many of the same hazards airborne soldiers contended with in 1944. This time, however, there were only friendly French soldiers and Normans to greet them, not occupying Germans.

"We had several difficulties on this jump, from the cows in the fields to water-filled ditches and people standing in the way," said Bollinger.

After the airborne troops jumped from their aircraft and landed, they formed up their platoons and marched between the hedgerows lining the road leading to Ste. Mere-Eglise, one of the same routes used by U.S. paratroopers during the invasion. According to this airborne soldier, the march was a time for reflection and pride in his unit's unique place in America's military.

"I joined the airborne because my father and brother were airborne," said Bollinger. "I feel that until you've jumped from an airplane, you haven't lived. It's great."

Many Frenchmen were on hand to welcome the return of U.S. airborne forces to Normandy's soil. Some of the original soldiers who took part in the invasion and members of the French resistance told stories to the modern-day warriors about the bleak days of the German occupation and the bloody fighting that wreaked havoc, death, and destruction over most of the countryside.

"It's a very big emotion to see some of the old (American and British) soldiers who invaded Normandy to free us," said Claude Huard, a resident of Caen, in eastern Normandy, and a member of the French resistance. "I was caught by the Gestapo in July of 1943 and ended up in the Dauchau work camp. What kept up alive was the hope



In France - Army Sgt. Guy D. Bollinger (right) talks with a fellow paratrooper about a monument dedicated to soldiers killed in the area around Ste. Mere-Eglise, France, during the liberation of Normandy. Bollinger took part in the 325th Airborne Combat Team activities in and around Ste. Mere-Eglise, during events commemorating the 44th anniversary of D-day on June 6, 1944. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Richard D. Glynn)

that we knew the Americans would come and liberate us. And they did come and we remember. For a very long time our young people didn't know what they owed to the Americans and the British but fortunately, that is changing now."

Like their airborne predecessors 44 years ago, the paratroopers of the 325th Airborne Combat Team had their work cut out for them during the

unit's busy three-day operation in Normandy. However, instead of trading gunfire with Germans, the American troops traded toasts and souvenirs with their French hosts during banquets feting the soldiers and at ceremonies paying homage to all Allied soldiers who died during the invasion.

"France is beautiful and the people are very friendly," said Bollinger.

Bollinger and his wife, Cynthia, have two children: Danielle, 13, and Crystal, 8.

Contest To Name Shuttle

Interested parties can obtain an Announcement of Opportunity by contacting the Council of Chief State School Officers in Washington, D.C., which is administering the program for NASA. School faculty members may request Orbiter-Naming Program Entry Packets by calling (202) 783-5109 or (202) 783-5113, or by writing:

NASA Orbiter-Naming Program
Council of Chief State School Officers
400 North Capitol Street, N.W. - Suite 379
Washington, D.C. 20001

Faculty members must provide their name, the name of their school and the address to which they would like the packet sent.

To enter, elementary and secondary school students will form teams and research a name for the orbiter. Each team, under the guidance of a school faculty member who will serve as team coordinator, will prepare a classroom project to support and justify the name selected. The name proposed must be the name of a sea vessel used in research or exploration.

There will be two entry divisions: Division I will include kindergarten through 6th grade and Division II, 7th through 12th grades. Orbiter-naming projects must be completed during the fall semester, and entries must be postmarked by Dec. 31, 1988. Students in public and nonpublic schools are eligible.

It's A Boy

Mr. and Mrs. David H. Lancaster of York, S.C., formerly of Kings Mountain, announce the arrival of a son, Wesley David, June 20, Mercy South Maternity Center in Pineville.

Mrs. Lancaster is the former Deborah G. Hammond, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry T. Hammond of Pelzer, S.C.

Paternal grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Hugh A. Lancaster of Kings Mountain. Great-grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Paul A. Lancaster of Kings Mountain.

Long Creek

From Page 4-B

Bobby and Nancy Wilson and sons, Andy and Mark, went to Mount Mitchell on July 4th and came back telling about the wonderful 48-degree weather they enjoyed while picknicking and walking the nature trails.

Justin and Jacob Wilson, sons of Ben and Jeanette Wilson, visited last week with their grandparents, Bobby and Betty Bates at Mill Spring N.C.

Barbara and Henry Wilson of Chestnut Ridge Church enjoyed a vacation in Hawaii last week. We hope they'll teach some of us the "hula."

Calvin Greene Enlists In U.S. Navy Program

Calvin B. Greene recently enlisted in the United States Navy for guaranteed training at the Navy's Boiler Technician "A" School.

Greene, the son of Targe and Betty F. Wofford of Route 4, Kings Mountain, is a 1981 graduate of Kings Mountain High School. Enlisting under the Delayed Entry Program, Greene will report to Recruit Training Center Great Lakes, Illinois, in November for active duty, where he will undergo eight weeks basic training.

Following basic training, Calvin will begin 12 weeks of schooling at Great Lakes, in the ship propulsion field. Boiler Technicians operate and repair marine boilers and fireroom

machinery, and they transfer, test, and inventory fuels and water. Because the propelling agent of our large naval ships is steam, the navy relies on boiler technicians to keep its ships moving.

Petty Officer Chris Cook, of the Gastonia Recruiting Station, Calvin's recruiter, noted that he may go on to additional schooling, or be assigned to any one of the Navy's duty stations around the world.

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