

# MOSELLE RIVER 1944 - 60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

## HOW IT ALL CAME ABOUT...

The following is excerpted & used with permission from Reporter Bruce Lindsay's story that was reported on Salt Lake City TV. Sixty years ago, a bullet almost ended the life of Joseph Stobbe [358th G CO] when, as a platoon Sgt. he entered the village of Metzervisse, France to drive out occupying Nazi forces. As his platoon was sweeping a house for Nazi soldiers, a bullet struck him in the elbow, sending fragments of lead through his arm. The wounds meant he would not fight again. He returned home to Utah in 1945, married his sweetheart, and became a doctor. Then in Sept., 2001, Dr. Joseph Stobbe, a now retired Salt Lake City Physician, decided to re-trace his war time path across France. He took with him Bill Naylor [also a 90th Veteran] & a cousin. They rented a car for their tour. When they arrived on the edge of Metzervisse where he nearly lost his life in 1944, they decided to stop & take a picture of the sign. He states, "I was busy thinking of that time so long

ago & was not paying attention to the road, & wham, this car hit us on the side & totaled the car & broke my leg." Shattered his leg. The ambulance took him to the hospital for surgery. It was Nov. 12, just 2 months after the World Trade Center Attacks. When Police Chief, **Pascal Moretti** learned Stobbe was an American Liberator of his village, he rounded up a few other patriots to go & cheer him up. He says, "We visited him in the hospital. We took some pictures that we sent to his family to reassure them." Those well wishers were followed by reports in the newspaper & on TV, telling the story of the liberator's double misfortune. Pascal goes on to say, "Later, Mayors of the villages said to me, 'It's too bad. We would have liked to have told him THANK YOU.' I looked at them & said, 'Why not?' So Moretti formed a committee, 'Moselle River 1944', enlisted 30 towns & raised over \$200,000.00 to give Stobbe & the region's other liberators who were still living, a hearty Last Hurrah. Through British author, Tony Kemp, Pascal contacted the 90th Division Association; pictures of Joseph Stobbe in the hospital were printed in the February, 2003 Newsletter; Pascal, his wife, Jose, and Committee Member, Jean Pascal Speck [owner of Hotel L'Horizon in Thionville] came to our 2004 Alexandria Reunion; & in November, 2004, more than 50 WW II soldiers from the 90th, 95th, 5th Divisions & the 3rd Cavalry, along with many family members, crossed the Atlantic again to return to the Moselle & be welcomed back as heroes. For most of the week of Nov. 9 - 16, the veterans and their families were honored with parades, banquets, speeches, receptions, religious services, and the unveiling of new monuments and statues. Every stop produced its local fireman's band to play "The Star Spangled Banner" & the French National Anthem, "The Marseilles". Throngs of children waving American & French flags greeted the aging veterans at each appearance. But the most heartfelt greetings came from senior citizens who remembered the first time these soldiers arrived in a November 60 years ago. Marie-Jeanne Chablin, of Terville, remembered: "Truly, we knew they were our liberators. That was sure. We couldn't think of anything else. It was wonderful." In Thionville, a woman who might have been Joseph Stobbe's contemporary, pulled him toward her to bestow an enthusiastic kiss. Claude Thuiller was a boy in the village of Luttange the first time he saw such a kiss. "An enormous cry of joy went up when we saw the Americans coming", he said. "Everybody ran out to greet them. And the young women & the not-so-young women climbed up on their vehicles & kissed the Americans". ...Thuiller suppressed a tear as he said, "The memory of the Americans is something extraordinary." Moretti chooses to emphasize a more lasting gift. "Our children must understand the price of liberty; the bloodshed. What they did for us is wonderful. None of these people knew us. They came from America. What did they have to do with the Lorraine, with France? However, they gave us the most beautiful gift in the world: freedom." For the veterans & family members who attended this week of events, there are no words to adequately describe the love that was showered on them in every village visited. The next few pages will attempt to portray a little of what was experienced. All who were there came home with a new attitude of love and respect for the people

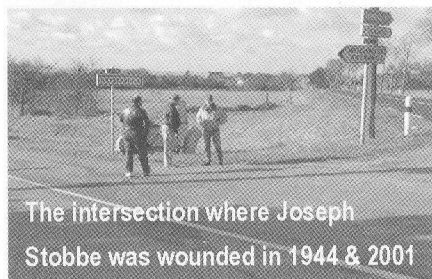


The Stobbe family: Front L: Granddaughter Stacie Tew; husband Paul; Daughter, Lisa Harris; son, Joseph Stobbe, Jr.; Joseph Stobbe; son-in-law, Dave Harris; daughter, Catherine Hardy

# "Moselle River 1944" Honored Joseph Stobbe...



Police Chief Pascal Moretti & Joseph Stobbe



The intersection where Joseph Stobbe was wounded in 1944 & 2001



The building nearby where Joseph Stobbe was again wounded



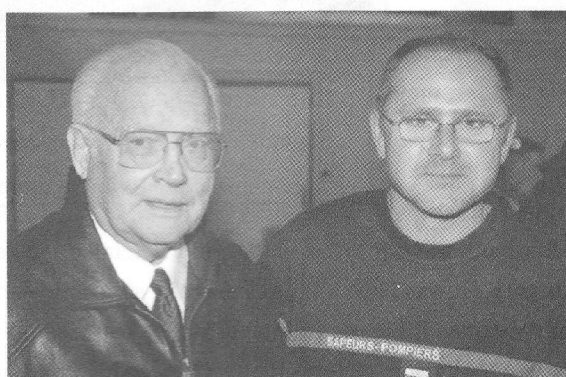
French & American Flags at one of the many receptions on the trip



At the unveiling of the new sign, "Square Joseph Stobbe" - Joseph Stobbe is at right



Joseph Stobbe's daughter, Catherine Hardy; Joseph Stobbe; Joe Stobbe, Jr.; Joe Weitel; Dave & Lisa Harris [son-in-law & daughter]



One of the Firemen that was present for all the many village commemorations with Dr. Stobbe



Sunday night, November 14 in Metzervisse for the ceremonies & the naming of "Joseph Stobbe Square" - L to R: Pascal Moretti; MG Ron Sholar, CO of the 90th RRC; Jim Reid; Mayor of Metzervisse - The soldier with back to camera is Brian Raley of the 90th RRC Color Guard

Photos on Pg. 9-10 courtesy of Joseph Stobbe's daughter, Lisa Harris

WW II re-enactor, Joe Weitel, with his WW II restored Jeep, named the "Joseph Stobbe" poses with some of the family. He was with the group the entire time.

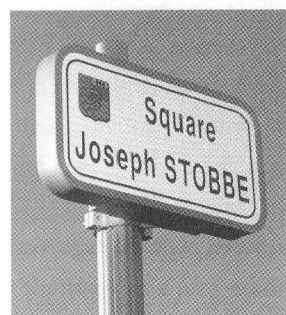


A crowd that greeted the veterans as they dis-embarked from the Moselle River Boat lunch cruise in Thionville Nov. 10. The lady waving the Flag had tears in her eyes. -

Below: This lady greeted & kissed many veterans & was present at many of the villages visited. Here, she greets Joseph Stobbe with joy and gratitude.



The new sign, in honor of Joseph Stobbe





Adcock, Carolyn - RRC  
 Barnes, Harry - 358 D CO  
 Bell, Raymond - 359 C CO - Veteran & Veteran's son  
 Bell, Jim - brother  
 Pickett, Deborah - daughter  
 Dale, CSM Roger - RRC  
 Greene, George & Bernice - 344th  
 Hogg, Merv & Lorraine - 359 AT CO  
 Ingram, John - 359 F CO  
 Kaine, Irv - 358 F CO  
 Thaler, Lynda - daughter  
 Thaler, Don - son-in-law  
 Lifschultz, Martin & Nancy - 358 G CO  
 Meier, Art & Gertrude - 343rd  
 Meier, Art, II - son  
 Meier, Amy - daughter-in-law  
 Miller, John F. - 345th  
 Miller, Steve - son  
 Pauk, Kristen - 359 L CO - Veteran's daughter  
 Phelps, Clyde - 358 C CO  
 Reid, Jim & Rhoda - 344th  
 Rice, Darold - 359 D CO  
 Richards, Norm - 358 D CO - Veteran's son  
 Seidle, Ed & Maria - 315 Cmbt Eng.  
 Shellabarger, Ray - 344th  
 Chamberlin, Connie - daughter  
 Sholat, MG Ron & Linda - Commanding General, RRC  
 Sisk, Herbert [Bill] - 915th  
 Stobbe, Dr. Joseph - 358 G CO  
 Stobbe, Joseph, Jr - son  
 Hardy, Catherine - daughter  
 Harris, Lisa & Dave - daughter & son-in-law  
 Tew, Paul & Stacie - grandson & wife  
 Thomascik, Duane - 315 Cmbt Eng. - Veteran's nephew  
 Unger, Gilbert - 537 AAA  
 Unger, Phil - son  
 Unger - daughter  
 Unger, Paul - grandson  
 90th RRC Color Guard

# Moselle Memories...1

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS BEGINS

November 10

Evening Reception at L'Horizon Hotel

Outdoor patio area at the L'Horizon Hotel - monument marker & French & Am. Flags

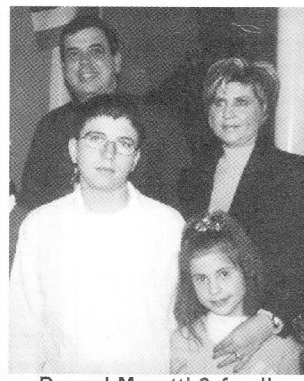
View from 2nd floor room overlooks Thionville



Front entrance - L'Horizon Hotel



Jean Pascal Speck  
L'Horizon Owner



Pascal Moretti & family  
Bernice & George Greene



Gertrude & Art Meier



Servers at buffet table



Jim Reid talks to group  
Nancy & Marty Lifschultz

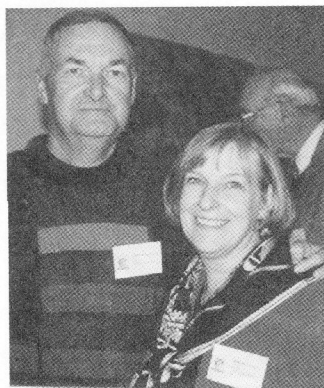


Some of the veterans at the reception Wednesday, November, 10 - some of the WW II re-enactors are in this photo



# Moselle Memories...2

## More of the Reception...

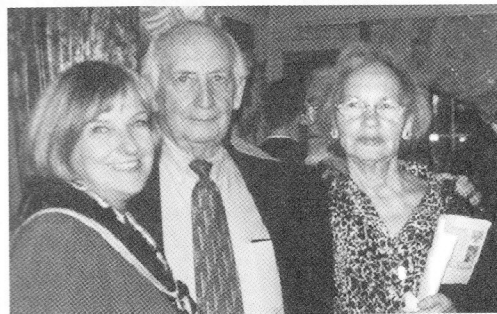


MG Ron & Linda Sholar



The Periers Contingent: Henri & Jeannette Levaufre & family friends of the Reids, Jackie & Jean deMondesir [drove from Periers!]

Linda Sholar, Bill Sisk, & Jeannette Levaufre



Carolyn Adcock, Personal Assistant to MG Ron Sholar, RRC

Thursday, Nov. 11:  
The day began in the  
village square of  
Konigsmacher....

Of her experience, Nancy Lifschultz [wife of veteran Marty] wrote: "I shall never forget the smiling faces of the beautiful children who lined our route. They could have been American children standing on streets in our own country. As they waved their American Flags, I could see their faces filled with delight, love & happiness to see us."



French Color Guard; crowd at town square with the Mayor; male chorus singing at the ceremony

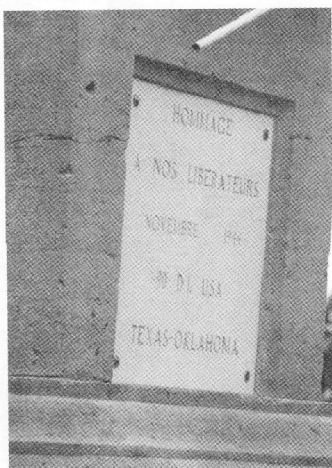


At Right: Norm Richards [hat]; Maria Seidle; Marty Lifschultz; Nancy Lifschultz [with camera]; Gil Unger; Darold Rice

Near Left: John Miller at ceremony  
Far left: Plaque honoring the 90th Tough 'Ombres



Junior Firemen who followed us to each town & participated in ceremonies





# Moselle Memories...3



They lined the entrance to the reception hall...1st of MANY!



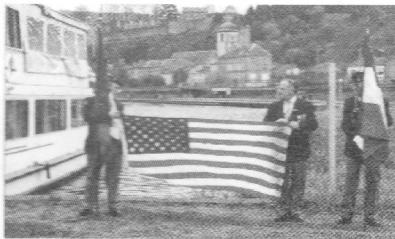
Our veterans and their mementos...MG & Linda Sholar, left



Veteran Gil Unger with his proud grandson [left] & son [right]

Boarding the boat: 90th; 95th; 5th Divisions & 3rd Cavalry ....

## Moselle River Cruise & Lunch...



The boat



Veteran Ed & Maria Seidle & Lynda & Don Thaler [daughter of Irv Kaine]



Amy & Art Meier, II [son of Art, Sr.]



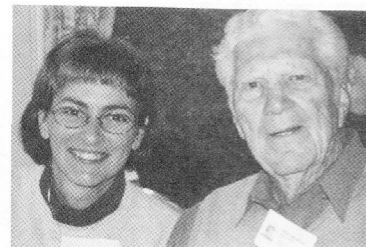
BG  
[Ret.]  
Ray  
Bell



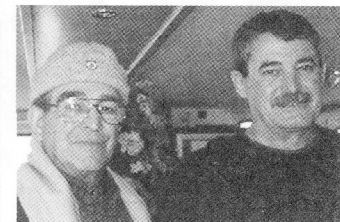
Tony Kemp & good friend, Frank Messina, brother of a 90th Vet.



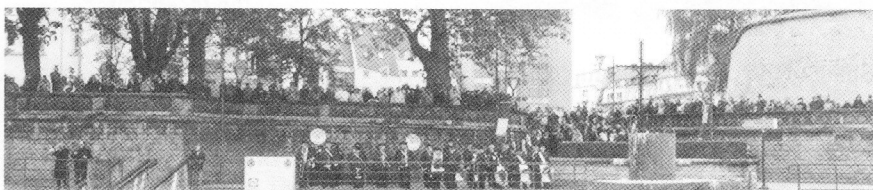
Irv Kaine & Helen Patton Plusczyk, granddaughter of Gen. Patton



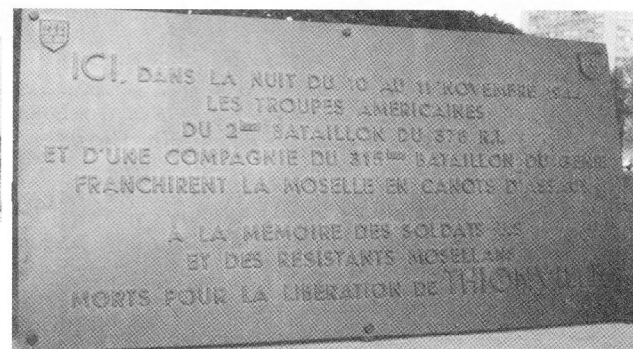
Connie Chamberlain & her father, Vet. Ray Shellabarger



Veteran John Miller & his son, Steve

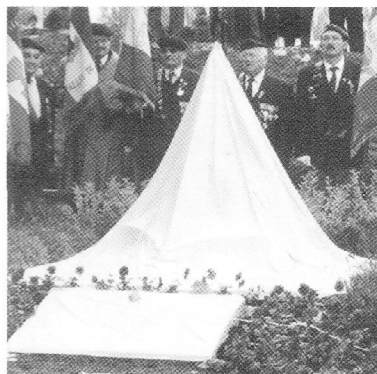


As the Moselle River Cruise & lunch ended, the boat docked at Thionville where a crowd of French citizens waited on shore for the veterans to dis-embark. The cheering & applause of the crowd left most of us in tears. We walked up the walk way to another monument dedication to the 3rd Cavalry - more color guards, bands, speeches, & ceremony - then more presentations... 13



One of the Plaques already in place as we walked up the walk way from the boat to dedicate a new monument

# Moselle Memories ...4



The veiled monument & Plaque - unveiled - Tribute to 3rd Cavalry

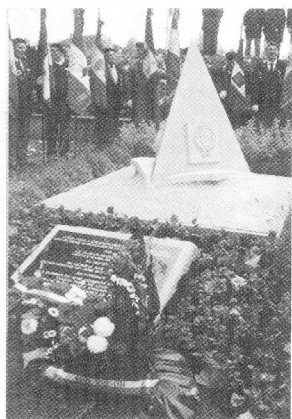
Two of the 90th Color Guard



Above & Below: Plaque & Monument by the Moselle River in Thionville



Three 90th RRC Color Guard



After this ceremony, there were further ceremonies, review of troops & speeches in a large plaza followed by a parade [it was now dark] and then another reception in Thionville City Hall with more speeches, awards to the veterans and a champagne reception! And this was just the first day!



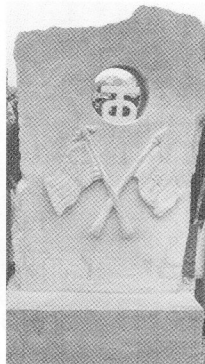
Veterans pose for a picture after receiving their mementos from the Mayor

Friday, November 12, we begin the day with a new monument dedication by the Moselle River in Cattenom where the 90th crossed the Moselle Nov. 9, 1944 - speeches, music, a parade..



The Band played

Front & back of the new monument



A ride in a WW II jeep for the parade  
Jim & Rhoda Reid & George Greene



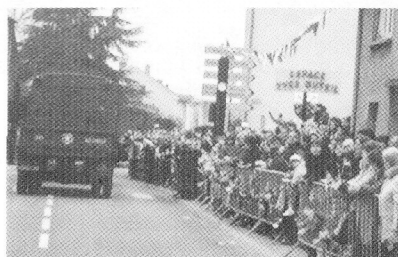
The Junior Firemen

At the reception

Some of the crowd along the parade route to the reception



The Crowd



CSM Roger Dale, 90th RRC with the Mayor of Cattenom & his wife



# Moselle Memories...5

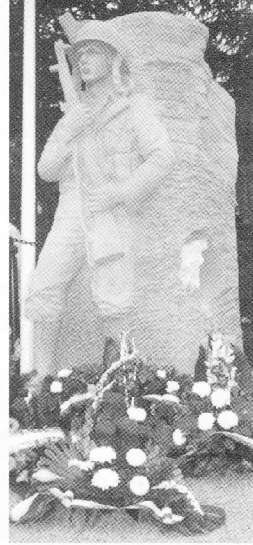
After Cattenom - Fort Hackenberg...



Inside Fort Hackenberg, posters & reception



The ceremony at Fort Hackenberg was one of the more emotional. Upper left: Mayors from various towns line up with Jim Reid, Frank Messina [whose brother is the like- ness of the new monument], Pascal Moretti, Linda & MG Sholar. At right, the sculptor with the sculpture - he also created the one at Cattenom - these are the ones you have been seeing in the newsletters - WOW!



The wreath layings were always solemn, with beautiful wreaths

It was dark when the buses pulled into BASSE HAM where another crowd waited; children sang, there was a ceremony at the monument for the war dead, and then another reception at the Town Hall of BASS HAM - more speeches, mementos, food and beverage!



Clyde Phelps, Bill Sisk, Darold Rice, Tom Ingram with 3 WW II re-enactors who were with us the whole time



School children made this for the veterans!

Tom Ingram reflects: "I was esp. touched by the friendly welcome we received from the people of the towns we visited. I had heard a lot about how the French were very unhappy with Americans, but the welcome we received from the citizens, especially the school children with their American and French Flags waving, made us feel welcome & appreciated. We were honored with parades, speeches from dignitaries, banquets, & warm handshakes. We rode through towns in WW II vehicles with people cheering. This was quite different from 1944 when we walked through & dodged bullets from Germans. I was surprised at the number & size of the many monuments that have been built at great expense over the years to honor the Americans who came to help liberate them from the Germans. I met many friendly people, some of whom have become personal friends. We are keeping in touch through cards, letters, and email. The visit to France and Luxembourg was an emotional experience for me. I'll never forget this visit or the one we made in 1944. John [Tom] Ingram, 359th F CO."

