

Dear veterans, dear associates members, dear friends,

Here is a letter I feel the need to write after more than 20 years of researches about the Battle of the Bulge and especially about the 84th ID and other. This letter was write for the last reunion of the Railsplitters Society in last August

Day after day, my researches were focused on the human side of the Battle and of me war. My only objective was and still is to keep me memory of your sacrifice. During years. I have meet a lot of veterans by letters, pictures, messages but also in a real meeting here in Belgium and also in USA. I have had the chance to go two times in USA in a 84th veteran house. His daughter were even at our wedding with her husband here, in Belgium. In a word, friendship was and still is our onlyone precious common word. Please, dear friend, read the letter follow. I have no change one word but You can take all this letter for yourself even You were in another division or branch of the army. The words should be the same, just the number 84 changed...

"Dear friends, dear proud Railsplitters,

I'm just a simple belgian citizen and I know too well that this reunion is the last one for You... But I want say to You some words in my very poor english.

I'm now 42 years old. I'm teacher in a free country. I'm married with a fabulous wife, Benedicte, that I have freely met. I have adopted a little girl, Efia who live in a free country. I can thing, talk, walk, move freely. I can say what I want. I can do what I want This freedom, You are the men who have build for us.

Of course, those words are for a great Thank You. But also in the way to reassure You. Yes, the Railsplitters society is almost over... but just on the paper and official way. But in your heart, and in ours, the Railsplitters will be never NEVER, NEVER forget When I was 16 years old, I was for the first time in Verdenne. There, in a farm I had found a wood cross of a 2nd Armoured Division soldier who had lost his life me day Christmas 1944: And the same day I have found by a old man of me village, me name and the address of a medic of 333, Richard Roush, who lived in Indiana. It was my first contact with the 84ft. This day, each day of my life was focused about Your division and the men who fought with the red and white badge on the sleeve. I have looking for Your history. When I was 21 I have take the flight to Indiana. I don't knowed any word in english at this time, and Richard don't knowed any trench words. But I stay at his home during three weeks, and we understood each other.

After that, I have carry on my researches about the human side of me war and I have had the marvelous chance to meet some veterans and have a contact with a lot of You. Now, some contacts are lost because time or lack of understanding. But I'm far to be at the end of my researches. The discovery of the Richard address have change my life. The great tactic and strategic lines can be read in the books... but the human side of me war. You have learn to me. Personnaly, I have lost my father when I was 9. He fought in another battle against the cancer... and lost But You, You fought... and win. For me. You are the fathers I dont have when I was more young. You have learn to me why to stay alive

across the difficulties of the life. Without You, I should be never became an adult

Last Saturday, I was again in Verdennes with my wife and my little girl 3 1/2 Years old. One moment, I feel like a call and enter in me forest just below me village. There, I found a lot of foxholes again in place. I closed my eyes, and in the silence of me nature, I have heard Your voices, me sound of the schovel, of the guns, the flames, me rifles and me voices of the men who fought... for us and also lost their lives.

Yes, me society will be soon over. I was associate member since just one year because before, I thought mat it was impossible to be member because I was not a veteran. I will be never a Railsplitter, I will never worn the railsplitter badge on my sleeve, but I promis You that You all will be for ever in my mind and my task, for now, is to keep intact your memory.

Now, I want thank You, in my name, the name of my family and in the name of my people. I want thank You personnaly if I know You but also if I dont know You. I allow myself to write me list of my friends. I hope that some are here today:

Wendell E Albert
Forrest Lothrop
Robert Foster
Guy Mac Wreath
Robert Martin
Edward CP Stewart
Robert Thompson
Foster G Guiles
Dan Me Cullen
Robert M Miller
Don Watt
Lon Wright
Doug Harvey
Charles Hageman
Arthur P Mahler
Walter Wright
Jack O Leary
Georges W Lock
John Rackley
Rodney W Bond
James H Harris
Richard Roush

At me end of my letter, I can also assume You that we are a lot of people who keep your memory and me memory of whom who lost their life here, in our country. We take care of me grave and adopt them... Here, I can say the names of the soldiers we have adopted, myself, my mother, my pupils and also my little Efia who have adoped the grave of Eugene Janicki. The other 84th graves are the graves of:

William A Boldt
Joseph T Lippi

David Keuhn
Mike Gallus
Joseph J Cattone

I join here the picture of my daughter put flowers on the grave of William Boldt last week. She's 3 1/2 but know very well what's happen in the cemetery. When she have put down the flowers, spontaneous she have say "Merci" and give a little kiss on the cross. It's a sign... a great sign that even the society is at the end and the veterans at the autumn of the life, I can say one thing:

"Dear friends, dear proud Railsplitters, don't worry. You can stay calm and serene... your task is over. You have do it far more than your best; You can now take the rest You can have. We are present... We take me torch... We work for a better world and a more durable freedom.

Good bye, dear friends, dear proud Railsplitters... Stay calm and serene... We keep watch."

Best wishes to You... The Railsplitters will never dead. Michel Lorquet.

Here is the end of the letter to 84thveterans. But it's not all, During those years, I have also establish the contacts with other veterans, other friends. Also with a lot of family like Delores Stemot, Bob and Beverly Pangborn, Diane Pollard, Joe and Mary Lippi, the sons of Art Mahler, Don valentine, Connie Baesman, Audrey Stewart, Gary and Rhonda Roush-Bell, Elaine Martin and I hope don't forget anybody... The other veterans are:

Donald Hahn 28°ID
Calvin CWright 35° ID
Stuart Brandow 78°ID
Paul Benton 101° AB
Jerry Baszner 82° AB and 130° Gal Hosp
Harry Mac Cracken 99°ID
JosephDallman 106°ID
FloydRagsdale106°ID
Richard B Emstine ORD 9° A
Charles Ed Collettc 595° Ambulance
GastonAlford8°AF

And also, we, with my family and pupils, have adopted other graves in the Belgian US cemetery. Maybe some name should be common to You:

Edmund Stemot 101° AB
Robert Vaden 99° ID
Donald OSnavely 101° AB
Donald Shultz 106° ID
James H Hardy 106° ID

For conclusion of my words, I want to send a call to all my old friends, but also to all

who wish take contact for new friendship adventure. My door is open, my energy is free to be used for new discoveries...

Together, We will keep intact the memory of your entire sacrifices. Thank You to You, dear american friends.

Michel Lorquet Associate member