



# THE SIGHTSEER



ALSACE • MEUSE • ARGONNE  
NEW GUINEA • LUZON  
KOREA • ALASKA

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE 6TH INFANTRY DIVISION, INC.

Featured in:

## **Two 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Board Members Stories of their Connection to the National Association**

PAGE 3



**Photo: The largest tank battle in the Pacific during WW II**

**Was on the Island of Luzon in a town called Munoz**

**Photo Above is of 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Soldiers atop a Destroyed Tank 1945**

# “THE SIGHTSEER”

National Association  
of the 6th Infantry  
Division

Vol. #42-1, Spring 2017

Editor: Thomas Price

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## MESSAGES

**From the President:** Dear Members—I am willing to continue to serve as President for another year unless someone would be interested in the position. It has been a sad day since we have not gathered together as I miss

all the members talking and telling stories that we may have not participated in. I am sure there are many who have the same feelings. I know we are attaining the age of no return but we will survive. Trust all had a wonderful Holiday season and looking forward to another good year. Bless you all.

**Clifford Kessen, President (Cannon & K Co, 1<sup>st</sup> Inf**

**From Thomas Price-Editor/ Website Historian:** The National Association will hold its annual meeting on September 16, 2017 by way of Skype or phone. I anticipate that the existing board is willing to serve for another year. I will assume so and will offer a motion to ratify the current slate of Board Members as continuing. Other Members willing to serve and participate are welcome!

Our primary tool for historic preservation and education is our website which I hope that all of you have the opportunity to visit frequently.

It is important that you tell us your stories so that we can preserve them. Our funds are now limited to a little over \$6,000. In this Sightseer issue I want to bring your attention to the fact that the 1941 Pictorial Review of the Division, along with other scanned documents and photos are being added with the assistance of Leslie Baird Design.

Many of you have stories to tell I encourage you to get in touch with us and get involved helping to preserve and expand our resources for doing so.

Your support continues to be vital and your contributions including your time, and your irreplaceable stories of service or those of your family members continues inspire us all. The 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division's Sightseers will not fade away.

You can contact me at: [admin@6thinfantry.com](mailto:admin@6thinfantry.com), or me or Danny at: [info@6thinfantry.com](mailto:info@6thinfantry.com).

**Thomas Price, Editor Website Historian,(son of Robert E. Price, 63<sup>rd</sup> Inf Co D, L & Hq)**

## NATIONAL OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES

### NATIONAL OFFICERS

Sept. 2016 to Sept. 2017

#### PRESIDENT

Kessen, Clifford (Cannon & K Co, 1<sup>st</sup> Inf)

#### VICE PRESIDENT

Copinger, Jr., Roger (Co.F, 63rd Inf.),

#### JR, VICE PRESIDENT

#### [VACANT]

#### SECRETARY

Wilson, Catherine S.,  
(Daughter of Andrew Sharpe,  
Co H 20<sup>th</sup> Inf)

#### TREASURER

Danny Thomas (Son of Vane W. Thomas Med Det. 20<sup>th</sup> Inf. Reg.)

#### CHIEF OF STAFF & HISTORIAN

#### [VACANT]

#### EDITOR AND WEBSITE HISTORIAN

Price, Thomas E., (Son of Robert E. Co L, D, Hq. 63rd Inf.),

#### CHAPLAIN

McLogan, Russell (Co.K, 63rd. Inf),

#### SURGEON GENERAL

Groff, Robin (Son of Robert Groff, Co L. 63rd Inf),

#### SGT.-AT-ARMS

Groff, Kelly (Son of Robert Groff, Co L 63rd Inf.),

#### TRUSTEE COMMITTEE

##### TWO-YEAR (2014-16)

Halberg, Virgil E. (HQ/HQ Btry, 80th.FA Bn.),

#### ONE-YEAR (2014-2015)

DuPriest, Wm. Lee (Co.E, 20th.Inf.),

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

An advisory function to the current president, consisting of active past presidents:

**Wessely, Joseph L** (Co.K, 63rd Inf.), [deceased] (DOD May 14, 2015).



**View of 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry at Sansapor, New Guinea, in December 1944  
before the Invasion of Luzon**

Board  
Members  
Connections  
with the 6<sup>th</sup>  
Infantry  
Division--in  
their own  
words

From Danny Thomas,  
National Association of the

the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry, Inc.  
Treasurer and son of Vane  
W. Thomas., SSgt and  
medic with the 20<sup>th</sup> Infantry  
Medical Detachment.

**Tom,**

First of all, I consider it an  
honor and a privilege to  
serve on the board. At this  
time, it is my desire to stay  
on as long as the board will  
have me.

As for my connection;

I will soon be 67 years of  
age. That qualifies me for  
senior status in my  
citizenship. I reflect back

over the years and  
remember as a child of 7 or  
8, playing war with the  
neighborhood kids. I had  
seen my Dad's medals and  
pinned them on my chest,  
thinking I would look more  
authentic playing the role of  
a soldier. I remember my  
dad coming home from work  
and seeing me all decked  
out with a chest full of  
medals and thinking I was in  
big trouble. All he did was  
give me an approving smile,  
never saying a word.

One day I asked him if he  
ever got shot. He replied,  
"Yes, twice". I followed up  
with a "where"? He showed

me his bullet wounds and of course I had to ask what it felt like to be shot. "It's like getting hit with a sledge hammer", he answered. I remember Mom being in the kitchen, carefully listening to our conversation. I continued with another question asking him if he was a hero and got a quick reply of a stern no as he walked away.

I had a favorite TV show as a young boy. Combat, with Vic Morrow. One night while watching it, Dad came in the living room and sat down on the couch next to me. There was a scene where they were walking through the woods at night very close together. Dad abruptly got up from the couch and left the room yelling, "That's not the way it was! That's not the way it was! One grenade and they'd all be dead!"

Puzzled, I followed after him, asking questions and wanting to know "how it was". Mom stopped me and said, "Never ask him about the war. However, if he ever talks, just listen. Remembering and talking about it gives him terrible nightmares."

I never asked again but I kept my ears perked for anything that might be said. One day, he showed me the P-38 that he made from spent shells of various calibers and aluminum cut from aircraft parts. His war souvenirs were a Japanese rifle that he had rebored to a 30-06 and a Japanese

bayonet. The P-38 and the bayonet are now on my fireplace mantle, just below his picture.

My Dad died September 24, 2007 and took almost all of his war stories with him. I don't begrudge him for not talking or sharing them. I truly understand and loved him deeply for being the great Dad that he was. He taught me how to throw a curve ball, how to drive a car, tractor and a boat. I was taught to respect my elders and to be polite.

I even remember as a teen, my car broke down and I had a big date. He said, "Here son, take mine." When I got home, my car was fixed. He worked hard, sometimes at two jobs, as did my Mom so we could have a little extra. I was very blessed to have them as my parents.

When Dad passed away, I inherited the few things Mom had saved from his time in the army. In my opinion, it was a treasure chest. The newspaper clippings, a few photos, a Cockatoo News along with his discharge started a new thirst for knowledge. I had to know more.

I searched online for a few years (remember, the internet was still developing) eventually requesting his records from the National Archives. I also had the medals replaced because playing with them as a young

boy; they either became damaged or lost.

I wasn't satisfied with my search and eventually hired a researcher. That result was more complete, along with some morning reports.

During my search, I became a frequent visitor of the 6th Infantry Division website, constantly looking for anything new. I had correspondence with Tom Price. His father was a medic like mine. Tom, along with another member, a WWII Veteran of the 6th Infantry Division answered most of my questions and gave me a good idea of what Dad's role and experience would have been like.

Medics saw it all. From the front line to aid stations to the rear area, they were the "Doc". From something as simple as administering aspirin to morphine and plasma to surgical technicians, they were always in demand. When wounded in battle with bullets flying and mortars exploding the medic was the one you called for; your best friend. Code words were often used instead of screaming for "medic" because the Japanese knew that word and would fire at them when they exposed themselves. I read everything I could find trying to fill in the blanks of what Dad didn't want to talk about.

I have developed such a passion that I feel for and

understand the quest for knowledge that others have, wanting to know all there is to know about their loved ones that served. I feel compelled to help in any way I can.

I cannot tell you how deep the ache is in my chest when I engage about the 6th ID. When I learn of someone wanting to fulfill this same desire for knowledge, it makes my heart swell with pride, proud to be an American and the son of;

Vane W Thomas  
SSgt 20th Medical  
Detachment, 6th Infantry  
Division

Danny Thomas  
Treasurer 6th Infantry  
Division Organization

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### From Thomas Price



Dear Members and Board:  
Here is a photo of my father at the end of the War in the Philippines. The photo speaks louder than words.

This was taken after 219 days of continuous combat. Dad never allowed us to place his medals on his old uniform...saying that other fellows who never came home deserved them more than him. We were only allowed to do it after his death...as he actually said..."you can do it when I'm gone." The medals were kept in a dusty old box in the closet. Sometimes I would sneak in and look at them and the fragile old documents like Gandalf looking through documents from Gondor.

During the War, he was awarded two Bronze Stars Medals, one with oak leaf cluster and the other with "V" for valor for saving fellow soldiers in battle under direct mortar fire, with mortar burst "all around him," (no kidding), and the Silver Star Medal for doing the same under direct machine-gun fire and making numerous trips 20 yards from a machine gun nest to rescue more soldiers even after nearly being killed.

After the War, he came home, earned a college degree, and became a psychiatric social worker, working with the mentally ill, eventually becoming a supervisor and administrator

of a clinic. The only member of his family to earn an advance degree, let alone a bachelor's degree as well, he did his best to live up to the brothers who died for him.

Though I struggle to live up to it, he taught me that the main purpose in life was to treat people the way you want to be treated, and more, to object and resist injustice for the weak and oppressed. To him, that was the greatest thing anyone could do in this life. He once came to watch me try a heart wrenching attempted murder case.

After the trial, he wrote a note to me about how proud he was that I was his son. But I was the lucky and humbled one ... I am still in awe of the man.

True to the creed of his Division, as a child we were always traveling around the Country to see the sights, visit National Parks, go hiking and fishing and exploring.

My memories of those trips are filled with images, experiences and the fragrance of the outdoors, the crunch of gravel under my boots, and thunderstorms on the great plains and in Canada.

After my father died I went to the National WW II Reunion in Washington DC. While there, I met one my father's old war buddies, Hilmer Zimbleman and Bob Beutlich, who knew of the

death of Robert Proud, my father's friend who was killed on Luzon.

To me, my father will always be the man at the helm of our family car, traveling to parts unknown. He is the man who taught me to hike, to fish, hunt, sail, garden, and to use a map and compass. He is the one who managed to carry all of our gear and supplies up over Horsetail Falls to Pyramid Lake in the Central Sierra Nevada Mountains. I was only 6. At first I had a pack with a can of beans and my

raincoat. That became too heavy and my father carried it. Then I was too tired so he carried me as well. He even had a one-man rubber raft and there was no trail. It did not stop him for a second. He was stronger than I could have imagined. That night we slept under the stars and ate trout, pork and beans and potatoes (baked beneath the coals of our camp fire). I do what I do for the National Association as a tribute to my father and the recognition that so many boomers out there (like me) have a vague awareness of

our own fathers' histories, but a longing to know and understand them. All the old soldiers of the Division are like my long lost Uncles. But this history, is in a very real sense, the history of our own family...mine yours, ours.

Sincerely,

Thomas Price  
Website Historian

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## TAPS, REST IN PEACE, DEDICATED TO ALL THOSE WHO SERVED IN WAR AND PEACE.



• To all our fallen comrades and supporters over the last 83 plus years of the Sightseer and the last

100 year of the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division of the United States Army

## DONATIONS



Thanks to all those who have donated to our organization over the many decades of our existence.

## JEEP TRACKS



List of members who have paid their dues since the last issue of the Sightseer. If you wish contact info on other members, contact Secretary Cathy Wilson @. [Bigsys1@yahoo.com](mailto:Bigsys1@yahoo.com)

To offer your story, or that of a relative, including old photographs (scanned to jpg please) contact Thomas Price at [admin@6thinfantry.com](mailto:admin@6thinfantry.com)

**63<sup>rd</sup> Infantry**

**MAIL CALL!**

Thank you all for you service  
to this organization and to  
the United States



**6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Soldiers atop a Destroyed Japanese Tank**

**Town of Munoz, Luzon, the Philippines--1945**

**Message from the Website Historian and Editor, Thomas Price:**

**To All Members of the National Association:**

**We need your input. The National Association of the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, Inc. continues with its primary purpose of education and historic preservation intact. Please consider getting involved.**

**The Board Unanimously ratified continuing the organization and its purpose via maintenance of the Website. Members are encouraged to participate and get involved. The current slate of Board Members is encouraged to continue serving for another year. Our Next Meeting via Skype or by Telephone Conference is moved to be held at 10 a.m. Pacific Standard Time on Saturday September 16, 2017 at 10 a.m.**

**If you wish to participate, please send me an email message at:**

**[Admin@6thinfantry.com](mailto:Admin@6thinfantry.com)**

**Sincerely,**

**Thomas Price, Website Historian.**

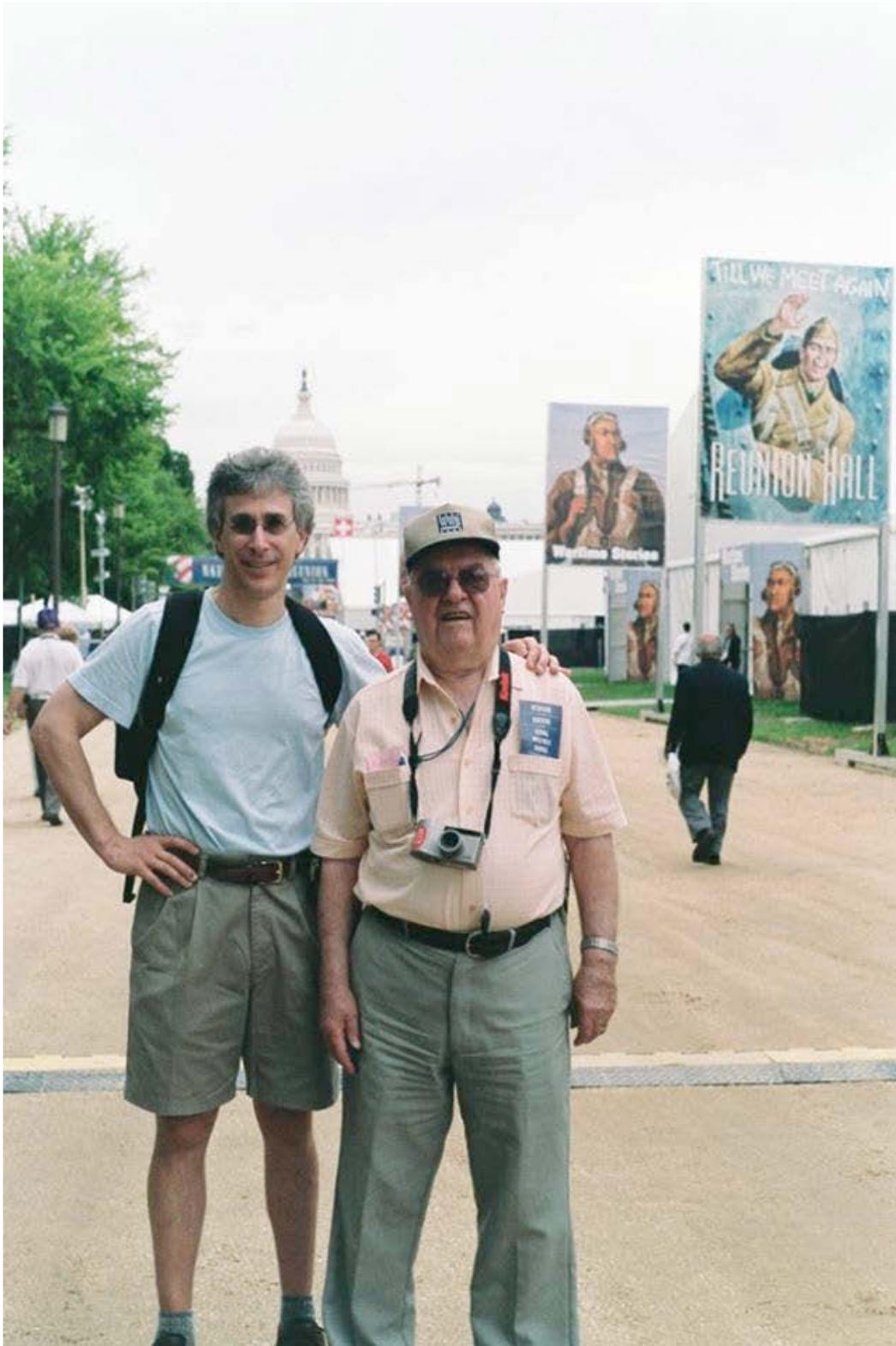


NOTICE TO ALL CURRENT MEMBERS AND ALL PROSPECTIVE NEW MEMBERS:

YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS A DONATION TO OUR NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION AND ENTITLES YOU TO A VOTE ON MATTERS SPECIFIC TO THE RIGHTS OF MEMBERSHIP INCLUDING ELECTING THE BOARD. IN THE EVENT OF DISSOLUTION, THE SIGHTSEER WOULD BE DISCONTINUED. KEEP THIS IN MIND IN CONSIDERING RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP. Membership is entitlement to a vote, not entitlement to a newsletter.



**6<sup>th</sup> Army Soldiers and  
Liberators of the Philippines**

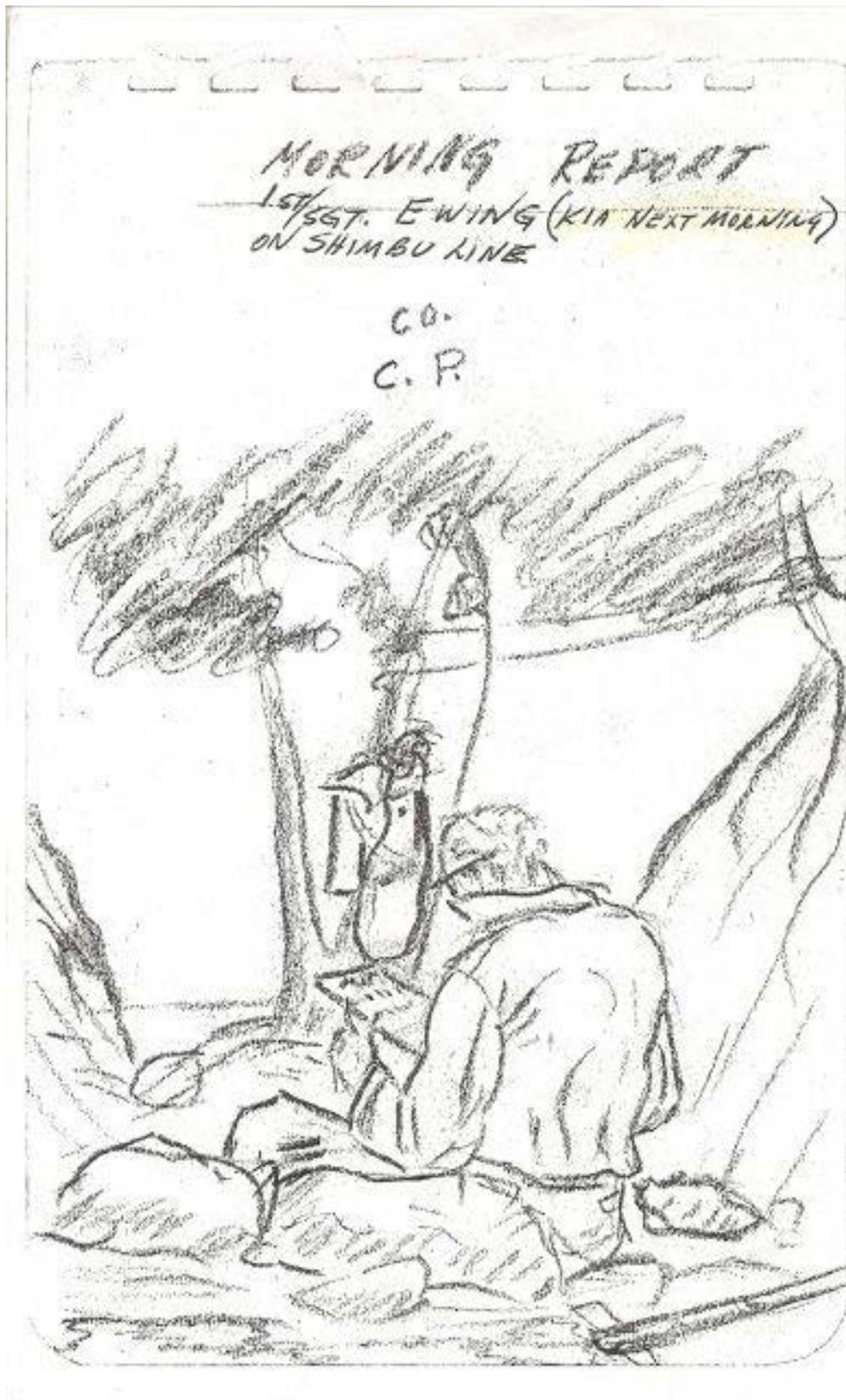


**Me with Hilmer Zimblemen at the National WW II Reunion in 2004**



**Bob Beutlich, Hilmer Zimbleman, Hilmer's sister and me**

**In 2004 at Hilmer's son's house in Maryland**



**Bob Beutlich's Sketch of 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Ewing who was killed**

**In Action the next Day 1945**



**Ft. Leonard Wood in Spring of 1941**

**Left to Right: Mesite, Gerald Wilhemy, "Shorty Hass,"**

**Hilmer Zimbleman and Robert Price**

**of**

**HQ Detachment, & Co L, 63<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment, 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division**

**Not really WW I---Soldiers, like these, early in the War build-up, would not receive new uniforms and helmets until after Pearl Harbor.**