

VOL. 13

NUMBER 1

1 FEB 2026

INCOMING

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE 3D BATTALION
15TH FIELD ARTILLERY REGIMENT TOWED
FT MCCLELLAN AND ANNISTON AL



HHB & SVC BTRY
FT. MCCLELLAN

“B” BTRY
TALLADEGA

“A” BTRY
CULLMAN

“C” BTRY
GADSDEN

Commander's Corner

Here we are 2026. I hope that everyone had an enjoyable holiday season. What does the New Year bring? Our very own website: www.3-15far.org which we own and control and officially being recognized as a 501(c)3 by the IRS as the 3rd Battalion 15th Field Artillery Regiment Association. This news was announced officially at the Reunion.

This issue covers some important items that you will find in the Reunion Section along with other good reads as well, so the whole Incoming Issue should grab your attention.

The Alabama Adjutant General MG David Pritchett came to our Reunion and spoke to everyone about the effects that the Army downsizing had on all of the FA. We are extremely grateful that he was able to attend, knowing how busy he is.

For me personally Reunions are all about seeing and greeting our 3/15 Family who come. This time, in addition to seeing many familiar and welcome faces, I had the pleasure of talking with SP4 Charles Ellis who attended his first Reunion with his wife. The last time I saw Charles was August 1984 when I changed command of Service Battery with Keith Burgess.

So looking forward to planning and executing our 5th Reunion....32 years since Inactivation and 50 years since the Battalion Activated on Ft McClellan. Much to celebrate.

Allons

John Hoehne

LTC (R) FA

Last Commander

The CSM's Corner

A great big Howdy to every Red Leg and let's celebrate the coming of Spring and shaking off all this cold weather and snow! Looking back, it's hard to believe how far we've come in five years: The fourth annual Reunion was great. About 200 people came and the Alabama TAG, MG Pritchett gave great remarks - interesting, humorous and best of all short! We keep finding new members of the Battalion and are up to 189 active members now. The BC's Incoming keeps us up with artillery news and happenings. Now we're even a 501c3, which is a fancy way of saying that now your donations to keep all our activities running can be a tax deduction.

Becoming an official organization is part of the BC's goal of preserving our history. While we have the official records of our accomplishments, we need your memories, your war stories and your lessons learned to help bring those records alive for future generations. We'll work on collecting those in the months to come you'll see more on this soon.

Time to fix the bare spots in the yard and look for those outdoor projects we all have been putting off. Keep in touch and I look forward to seeing you all at the next reunion.

Donald Peak CSM (R)

3d BN 15th FAR



Certificate Of Proficiency

THE

JANUARY 14, 1979

3d BN, 15th FIELD ARTILLERY

VOL. I No. 5

3d Battalion 15th Field Artillery



ALLONS

Certificate Of Proficiency

awarded to
PFC JOSEPH W. BREECHBLOCK

In Recognition of Outstanding Performance of Duty

ANNUAL PT TEST, HIGH SCORE FOR BN

Who has, by his Loyalty, Devotion to Duty and Diligent Application of Effort, rendered service in keeping with the standards of proficiency established in this Command.

[Signature]
Adjutant

[Signature]
Battalion Commander

THIS IS AN UNOFFICIAL PUBLICATION AUTHORIZED UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF AR 360-91. PUBLISHED MONTHLY. THE VIEWS AND OPINIONS EXPRESSED ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE

RECRUITING AND RETENTION ARE ITEMS WHICH MUST RECEIVE THE VERY HIGHEST PRIORITY FROM EACH MEMBER OF THIS BN. I HAVE IMPLEMENTED A POLICY EFFECTIVE 15 DEC 78 WHICH REQUIRES EACH OFFICER, WARRANT OFFICER AND SENIOR NCO WITHIN THIS BN TO TURN INTO ME THE NAME OF ONE PROSPECTIVE RECRUIT EACH MONTH. HOWEVER IN ORDER FOR OUR RECRUITING EFFORTS TO BE SUCCESSFUL I NEED THE HELP OF EVERY PERSON ASSIGNED TO THE BN. I URGE EACH OF YOU TO GET ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN TURNING IN THE NAMES OF PROSPECTIVE RESERVIST TO YOUR UNIT EACH MONTH. DUE TO A RECENT CHANGE IN RECRUITING PROCEDURES THE RECRUITERS THAT WE HAVE LOOKED ON IN THE PAST AS BEING PART OF OUR UNIT WILL BE ASSIGNED TO THE US ARMY RECRUITING COMMAND. UNDER THAT ARRANGEMENT WE PROBABLY WON'T HAVE THE CLOSE DAY TO DAY CONTACT WITH RECRUITERS THAT WE ENJOYED IN THE PAST. FOR THAT REASON IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE FURNISH REFERRALS TO THE RECRUITING COMMAND IN ORDER TO MAKE RECRUITING MORE PRODUCTIVE. YOUR PARTICIPATION IN AND EMPHASIS ON THE REFERRAL PROGRAM WILL BE GREATLY APPRECIATED.

PHILIP E. HOLLADAY, LTC, BN CDR

AS TRAINING 79 UNFOLDS WE BEGIN TO TAKE A COMPREHENSIVE LOOK AT OURSELVES. HAVE WE PROGRESSED SINCE 1 OCT 78 , WHEN WE BEGAN THIS TRAINING YEAR? HAVE WE ATTAINED ANY OF OUR INTERMEDIATE GOALS THAT WILL HELP US ACCOMPLISH OUR OVERALL GOAL? HAVE I AS AN INDIVIDUAL DONE MY PART TO HELP MY BATTERY ACCOMPLISH ITS GOALS AND MISSION? AS WE LOOK BACK ON PREVIOUS FTX, SOME OF YOU MAY FEEL THAT WE AREN'T ACCOMPLISHING ANYTHING BUT I ASSURE YOU WE ARE. A FTX IS AN EVALUATION TOLL FOR COMMANDERS TO DETERMINE THE UNITS CURRENT STATUS AND PROJECT THE TRAINING TO BE CONDUCTED TO OVERCOME FAULTS THAT MIGHT HINDER THE UNIT MISSION. OUR NEXT FTX WILL BE CONDUCTED ON 10-11 MAR 79, AND WILL INCLUDE LIVE FIRE, AND NIGHT OCCUPATION OF POSITION. LET ME URGE EACH MEMBER TO DO HIS JOB WITH THE PROFESSIONALISM THAT THE ARTILLERY MAN TAKES PRIDE IN. YOUR JOB, EVER HOW MENIAL IT MAY SEEM, IS AN INTERGRAL PART OF THE UNITS MISSION. " PUT STELL ON THE TARGET" AND YOUR PERFORMANCE AFFECTS THE OUTCOME OF YOUR CO's EVALUATION OF HIS CAPABILITIES. STRIVE TO ACCOMPLISH YOUR SOLDIERS MANUEL TASKS, DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK QUESTIONS, ALWAYS TAKE ASVANTAGE OF THE TRAINING YOUR UNIT PROVIDES IN YOUR MOS. IF YOU NEED ADDITIONAL HELP OR INSTRUCTION , CO-ORDINATE THROUGH YOUR UNIT TRAINING NCO AND CO. HOW WELL YOU ARE TRAINED IN YOU JOB NOT ONLY WILL HELP YOU IN FUTURE ADVANCEMENT, BUT SOME DAY MAY MAKE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SPECIALTY OR CASUALTY. ANNUAL TRAINING IS TENATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR 16-30 JUN 79 AT FT SILL , OK, TRAINING WILL BE MOS ORIENTED THE FIRST WEEK AT AT-79 WITH FTX AND LIVE FIRE TO CONDUCTED THE 2ND WEEK. MORE INFORMATION WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO YOU AFTER PRE=CAMP CONFERENCE.

DONALD D. JOHNSON,CPT, BN S-3

SPORTS NOTE: SUPERBOWL XIII DALLAS COWBOYS vs PITTSBURG STEELERS
SUNDAY JAN 21 ON TV: NUFF SAID, AND NO DRILL :::::

NAME US _____ CONTEST.....**&c%\$\$c**()(*&@##.....

THE UNIT NO LONGER CAN USE THE WORD "CANNONEER"FOR ITS NEWSPAPER SINCE " THE CANNONEER IS THE OFFICIAL NAME OF THE FT SILL POST NEWSPAPER. ALL YOU CANNON COCKERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO SUBMIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A NEW NAME FOR OUR PAPER . ALL RECOMMENDATIONS WILL RECEIVE CONSIDERATION. THE BEST 5 RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE VOTED ON IN A BATTALION FORMATION DURING NEXT DRILL. SUBMIT ALL RECOMMENDATIONS IN WRITING TO YOUR UNIT CO. SO GET YOUR THINKING CAPS ON AND LETS COME UP WITH A GOOD OLE NAME FOR OUR NEWSPAPER.

JOSEPH W. ROGERS,CPT,BN S1

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

THE NEW BATTALION CERTIFICATE OF PROFICIENCY IS ILLUSTRATED ON THIS ISSUE OF THE PAPER. THIS AWARD IS PRIMARILY USED TO RECOGNIZE THE JUNIOR ENLISTED MEMBERS ASSIGNED TO THE UNIT. RECOGNITION SHOULD BE AWARDED TO THOSE SOLDIERS" FOR NOTEWORTHY ACCOMPLISHMENTS OR ACHIEVEMENTS. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT MUST BE FORWARDED TO BATTALION FOR APPROVAL AND AWARD.

JOSEPH W. ROGERS,CPT BN S1

PROMOTIONS OF BATTALION MEMBERS

TO SFC- ROBERT SANFORD, HHB	TO SP5- Clarence Davis- Btry B
TO SGT- LOUIS FORD, HHB	TO SP5- JAMES LITTE, HHB
TO SGT- WENDELL GIBSON, SVC	TO SSG- OLLIS FORMAN- HHB
TO SSG- JERRY COBB, SVC	TO SSG -COY BUCHANAN-BTRY A
TO SSG- FRANK ELKINS, BTRY C	TO SSG-KENT COOPER, BTRY A
TO SSG- SHEVY GLENN, BTRY B	TO SSG GARY FORTENBERRY, BTRY C
TO SGT- MIKE MULLINS, SVC	TO SGT-DANNY KILPATRICK-BTRY A
TO SGT- JAMES WAITES, Btry B	TO SP5- TOMMIE WHITSON-BTRY B

THE BATTALION WELCOMES 2LT HENRY BURGESS AND CLOIS E. BOOZER, AND 2LT EDDIE WHEELER TO THE UNIT. LT BURGESS IS MARRIED, WIFES NAME IS KATHY. HE IS A SR AT JSU EXPECTS TO GRADUATE IN APR 79. HE IS EMPLOYED AS THE ASST WRESTLING COACH AT JACKSONVILLE HS. LT BOOZER IS MARRIED , WIFES NAME IS DIANNE, HE ALSO ATTENDS JSU AND IS EMPLOYED BY JSU AS A STUDENT WORKER AT PETE MATHEWS COLISEUM. LT WHEELER ASSIGNED TO BTRY C 3/15 IS SINGLE AND WORKS AS THE ASST COUNTY AGENT, FOR DEKALB COUNTY, HE LIVES IN FT PAYNE.

IG DATES: BATTERY A- JAN 26, 1979	BATTERY C- Feb 21, 1979
BATTERY B FEB 14, 1979	HHB Feb 22, 1979
SVC BTRY FEB 16, 1979	

The Proximity Fuse: The Gunner's Dream Finally Became Realized

The use of proximity fuses in the Battle of the Bulge was a milestone for Allied scientists seeking to develop an efficient artillery shell.

This article appears in: Winter 2011

By Kevin Allen

Early on the morning of December 16, 1944, the commander of the U.S. 406th Artillery Group, Colonel George Axelson, had a difficult decision to make. The Germans had just launched the offensive that would become known as the Battle of the Bulge, and one of their first targets was the 38th Cavalry Squadron, dug in around Monschau, Germany. The lightly armed cavalry troopers needed help, and the commander quickly called for artillery support from the 406th. Axelson had just the thing: a new, secret artillery shell that had just been issued. The problem was that Allied commander Dwight Eisenhower had not yet given permission to use the weapon. Colonel Axelson decided that the emergency trumped the restrictions and ordered his gunners to use the new shell. Minutes later, rounds equipped with a new radio proximity fuse started exploding right over the heads of the attacking Germans. The attack collapsed.

Use of the proximity fuse in the Battle of the Bulge marked a final milestone in one of the most extraordinary scientific efforts of the war, rivaling that of the atomic bomb. Like the Manhattan Project, it involved teams of scientists struggling to overcome technical and physical obstacles in absolute secrecy. An estimated 3 percent of all the physicists in the United States were working on the project at one point.

Ushering in a New Age of “Wizard War”

The proximity fuse—a fuse that would explode just before reaching its target—had long been a dream of gunners. The two existing types of fuses, contact and timed, left much to be desired. A contact fuse literally had to hit its target to work, and a timed fuse depended on the judgment of whoever set the timer. In the Napoleonic and American civil wars, soldiers sometimes disabled timed shells by putting out the fuses after the shell landed.

Neither fuse was well suited to dealing with airplanes. An antiaircraft shell had to go off within 100 feet of a plane to be sure of damaging it. Antiaircraft shells with contact fuses had to actually hit a moving aircraft, while timed fuses that were even a fraction of a second off could explode too far away to do any damage. The only practical solution was to fire hundreds of rounds at a target to increase the chance that one of them might hit it.

Getting a more sensitive and technically advanced fuse into antiaircraft ammunition

was far from easy. For one thing, the shells were not very big, and the components of the time were not very small. The acceleration generated when the guns fired could shatter things like glass tubes. When World War II began, the technical challenge quickly became a high priority. German efforts never went very far, and the Japanese did not develop and deploy a workable fuse until the end of the war.

British efforts to come up with a proximity detonator were part of what Prime Minister Winston Churchill called the “Wizard War.” The British initially concentrated on photoelectric fuses, which used light-sensitive receptors to determine when a target was close enough to hit. Photoelectric fuses could fit into the larger warheads of antiaircraft rockets and were better known (several inventors had already filed patents on various designs).

Churchill, stressing the enormous importance of getting a proximity detonator in production as soon as possible, was among those pushing the photoelectric fuses. While British scientists also worked on a radio transmitter, the general feeling was that it would take too long to develop. Photoelectric triggers had their own problems, among them a tendency to go off because of light reflection from other sources, and the fact the fuses were of little use at night. By the time the British worked out a production-ready model, their U.S. allies had come up with their own, more effective radio fuse.

The Origins of the Proximity Fuse

American efforts began in 1940 with the creation of the National Defense Research Council. The group, chaired by Carnegie Institute President Vannevar Bush, was to coordinate and direct research efforts on military-related projects. Immediately upon creation, NDRC asked the various services for their wish lists. At the top of the Navy's list was development of a proximity fuse for its antiaircraft guns.

NDRC turned the problem over to the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism at the Carnegie Institute, and its director, Dr. Merle Tuve. Dr. Tuve's group later became Section T of NDRC's successor, the Office of Scientific Research and Development. Researchers explored a number of different approaches, including photoelectric, radio wave reflection, acoustic, and ground-controlled fuses.

NDRC pulled in researchers from the National Bureau of Standards to work on proximity fuses for Army ordnance, primarily bombs and rockets. An informal division was set up, with the Navy and Section T working on fuses for rotating projectiles such as shells, and the Army group (later separated into its own division, Section E) developing non-rotating projectiles such as bombs, mortars, and rockets.

Section E's Army ties meant those researchers had to cope more with internal opposition, specifically from the Army Air Forces. AAF brass, including General

Henry “Hap” Arnold, were concerned that development of the fuses would inevitably lead to the enemy getting its hands on them and turning them against Allied planes and pilots. In addition to tight security, this led to an unusual edict from the Combined Chiefs of Staff: there would be no use of a proximity fused weapon anywhere that it could be recovered and reverse-engineered.

Sailors practice loading proximity-fused shells aboard the USS Wilkes-Barre. By the end of 1942, 5,000 rounds of new ammunition had been shipped to crews in the Southwest Pacific.



Testing the Components: a Collaboration with the British

Research started to take off after British scientists visited the United States in September 1940 as part of an information exchange program. The British group, led by Sir Henry Tizard, brought a number of developments, among them a circuit design for a fuse utilizing a radio oscillator. Dr. Tuve’s group realized that if the components could be made strong enough to withstand the shock of firing, they could be fitted into a shell for a 5-inch anti-aircraft gun. That would allow sending a radio signal from the shell and using the signal’s reflection from the target to trigger the fuse—in essence, a sort of mini radar.

Developing rugged components was a critical obstacle to making a radio fuse. Section T researchers started testing various means to make sure the glass tubes and circuits could survive the shocks. They mounted tubes in metal blocks and fired .22-caliber bullets at them, put them in lead tubes and dropped them off buildings, and fired them from homemade cannons. At one point, Section T even explored the idea of metal vacuum tubes. However, researchers found that mounting the tubes (which were about the size of a pencil eraser) in blocks of plastic and coating them with wax enabled them to withstand acceleration forces of up to 22,000 gs.

Researchers also had to tackle finding a battery small enough to generate the power for the radio. While cutting down dry-cell batteries (like those in hearing aids) worked, they proved to have a very short shelf life. Realizing that a battery was basically zinc plates immersed in acid, the developers came up with a battery made of a glass ampule filled with acid surrounded by small metal plates. When the shell was

fired, the glass broke and the acid covered the plates. While it did not generate power for long (less than two minutes), it was more than enough for the shell’s flight.

Scientists still had to make sure the shell would not go off too soon. If the radio transmitter started too quickly, the gun could reflect the radio wave and the round would go off in the gun barrel, with obviously unfortunate results for the crew. Developers designed fittings that would short-circuit the power to the transmitter for a half second.

New Technology in Action

Work on the shells moved more quickly than the non-rotating projectiles, in part because of the Navy’s intense interest—a senior officer on the project said every month’s delay in developing a proximity fuse was equivalent to losing a cruiser. Section T had a successful test of a 5-inch shell with a transmitting fuse by June 1941. By the first half of 1942, they had progressed to test-firing over water and at model versions of Japanese airplanes to determine damage patterns.

The first practical test came on August 13, 1942. The cruiser USS Cleveland, equipped with proximity-fused 5-inch anti-aircraft shells, destroyed two drones in rapid succession. The results stunned Navy officers, particularly those in charge of the drones. They had never seen any of them totally annihilated before and had no more to send against the Cleveland. They did find a third drone the next day, but the shells brought it down almost immediately.

That was enough for the Navy. By the end of the year, 5,000 rounds of the new ammunition were shipped to the Southwest Pacific, where they were distributed to the carriers Enterprise and Saratoga, and the light cruiser Helena. The proximity fuse entered the war on January 5, 1943. A cruiser and destroyer task force was returning to Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands after a raid against enemy airfields when Japanese dive-bombers struck. On board Helena, Lieutenant “Red” Cochrane, in charge of the 5-inch anti-aircraft guns, opened up on one of the bombers and brought it down with his second salvo.

It would be the first of many. By the end of the year, about half of the hits on Japanese planes had been credited to the new ammunition. With the Navy’s needs met for the moment, Section T turned its attention to creating versions of the fuse for other weapons, particularly the British Navy’s anti-aircraft guns. It would not be as simple as just taking the same fuse and putting it in a different shell. British shells were smaller, which meant smaller components. Scientists also had to take into account the different characteristics in each gun, from the force of the acceleration to the rate of spin. Eventually, the Allies developed fuses for 28 different gun types. By September 1943, proximity fuses had been issued to British cruisers in the Mediterranean.

Proximity Fuses of the U.S. Army

Cutaway view of the radio proximal fuse designed by the National Bureau of Standards for the U.S. Army. The fuse screwed into the nose of the bomb and exploded when radio contact was made with the target.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Army had developed enough interest in the fuses to start looking for its own versions. In May 1942, it called on Section E to develop a fuse that could be used in a 4.5-inch rocket. The idea was to use the rocket against German bomber formations. Section E head Harry Diamond managed to come up with a fuse design in two days. By the time the fuse got into mass production, however, the German bomber threat had all but disappeared.

In some ways, development of proximity fuses for bombs was an easier task since there was more room for the fuses and no concern about the stresses caused by shooting them out of a gun. But Section E had its own challenges. One of the biggest was temperature. The fuse had to work in the freezing temperatures caused by high altitudes. That was a particular obstacle for a battery, and finding a suitable one proved especially difficult. Researchers solved the problem by attaching a fan to the fuse. When it was dropped, the revolving fan drove a turbine, which in turn powered the radio transmitter in the fuse.

By mid-1943, progress on the shells had advanced to the point where a proximity fuse for an artillery shell was practical. Again, the gun characteristics proved a challenge, in particular the lower acceleration that howitzers generated. An additional complication was changing characteristics in each amount of powder, or charge, used for a particular shot. Researchers had to cope with 29 different velocities and rates of spin in their calculations.

No one had much idea what the best height was for an air-bursting shell. By exploding shells above boards placed on the ground and then examining the shrapnel patterns, researchers found that the optimum damage height varied based on the gun caliber. The more common guns (105mm and 155mm) averaged around 30 feet, while the 240mm howitzer effective burst height was more than 70 feet up.

By 1944, the Army had effective shells for most of its guns but still could not use most of them. The secrecy edict was still in place at the insistence of the AAF, which effectively limited use of the proximity fuse to over water. When a ship fired a dud shell that landed on Sicily in 1943, headquarters quickly dispatched a special patrol to find and retrieve the fuse.



Over 2,000 V-1 “Buzz Bomb” Kills

That started to change in June, as the Germans’ V-1 rocket began to make itself felt. British and American generals quickly realized the proximity fuse would prove, in Churchill’s words, “potent” against the buzz bombs. At first, they restricted the ammunition to the Army’s 90mm antiaircraft guns and British 3.7-inch guns located along the English coast. Even so, the fuse helped increase the proportion of destroyed V-1s from 24 percent to almost 80 percent in about a month.

The effectiveness of the Americans’ 90mm guns in particular amazed British air raid officials who were not privy to the secret. One member of a British Home Guard antiaircraft battery, which was used to firing thousands of rounds at the V-1s with minimal effect, told how they watched an American 90mm gun and crew set up and shoot down four buzz bombs with eight shells. When they asked the U.S. battery commander how they had managed it, he replied facetiously that his crew was made up of Tennessee natives who were crack shots.

After the Allies captured Antwerp, V-1 attacks shifted to that port, forcing the Combined Chiefs of Staff to realize the time for total secrecy was over. On October 25, 1944, the CCS approved the use of the proximity fuse over land. The most immediate use of the special shells on the European continent was by antiaircraft guns set up along the V-1 approaches to Antwerp. By the end of the war, they had accounted for more than 2,000 V-1 kills.

Demoralizing for the Germans, but far more Impactful in the Pacific Theater

The release of the artillery shells took a little longer. The Ardennes Offensive provided the final incentive, and on December 19, three days after the 406th Artillery Group broke the embargo, Eisenhower formally asked for clearance. Two days later, all restrictions were removed. Unfortunately for the troops commanded by SS Colonel Otto Skorzeny, it was just in time for their attack on the town of Malmedy. American artillery battalions supporting the town fired the proximity fuse to great effect, so unnerving the attackers that some charged directly into the artillery fire, yelling, “Kamerad!” As early as December 23, estimates had as many as 2,000 German soldiers being killed by proximity-fused rounds.

The German Army quickly learned respect for the fuses. An American intelligence report noted German commanders offered a reward for soldiers who found a surviving fuse. Prisoners of war repeatedly spoke of the demoralizing effect of artillery airbursts, particularly at night. The airbursts had the added effect of cutting enemy communication wires more easily.

While the proximity fuse left an impression on both friend and foe (General George Patton later claimed that “the funny fuse won the Battle of the Bulge”), the effect was limited in Europe because it was not introduced until late 1944 (a mortar-round version under development just missed completion before the war ended). Its impact in the Pacific was more noticeable. One of the developers in Section T later estimated that 278 planes were destroyed by the fuse, and the older timed fuses would have accounted for only 46. A Navy study found that for every plane destroyed, 5-inch guns had to fire 1,000 time-fused shells, while the proximity-fused rounds required only about one-fourth as many shots. One naval historian even suggested that the fuse forced the Japanese to change their tactics, eventually resulting in kamikaze attacks.

The creation of the proximity fuse has never drawn as much attention as the development of the atomic bomb or radar, in part because of the secrecy surrounding its development. But its effect on combat was as great as any other invention on the technological front of World War II. (Read all about the weapons and technology that would come to define the Second World War inside the pages of WWII History magazine.)

★ Changes and Important Updates!!!

Over the past five years there have been members who receive the Reunion invitations yet consistently do not respond. For this group, their failure to RSVP will result in their names being removed from the mailing list effective immediately. This affects receiving the Incoming as well. We are not offended if you are not interested in attending; this will allow us to reallocate resources to other projects. Those who, so far have not been able to attend a Reunion but who have been sending an RSVP do not need to worry - you will continue to receive invitations.

If you do not wish to be removed from the mailing list just send an email to johnhoehnesr@gmail.com with your name and it will be restored with the expectation that you will use the stamped and addressed RSVPs in the future.



SFC Wendell Gibson, Platoon Sergeant, 3rd Battalion 15th Field Artillery Regiment, Service Battery, Fort McClellan, AL.

Thanks to LTC Hoehne and CSM Peak and all of my Comrades for giving me the opportunity and support that I have received while writing and participating for the Incoming Newsletter again “Thank You For Your Service.”

I would like to acknowledge at this time all of our “Red Leg Brother’s” who have passed, and to the families. We are sorry for your loss. I would like to acknowledge the loss of SGT Charles J. Freeman (CJ), HHB; he was a Small Arms Weapons Technician and Vietnam Veteran. SGT Freeman also assisted the Ammo Section during weapons qualification firing range (FTX). Let us all remember the times and memories we shared with our Comrades.

I really enjoyed the Reunion this year for numerous reasons, especially when I received “The Bomb/D544” 73,600 rounds delivered. It was also very compelling to stand with my “Red Leg Brothers” receiving the King of Battle Award which was a very gratifying moment. I looked around and I saw the support/energy from our families, friends and comrades. That was an experience we shared together; very grateful and appreciated HOOAH!!!

I enjoyed the time with LTC Hoehne as he made his rounds to everyone in the building. I appreciate that personal contact he made with each individual. He deserves all the credit for putting this reunion together again, Thank You Sir!!!

I would like to give honorable mention some of the Red Legs at the reunion: CPT Nathaniel Owens, HHB-Judge (Camp Shelby, MS) famous quote: “The Mess Hall is on Fire”

MSG Julius Campbell, HHB. I met him 1977 at Ft. McClellan, MP School 10th BN, as an E-3

SFC Earnest Woods, SVC. We were next door neighbors growing up. He is the best Mess Sergeant in the Army, Deacon, and fun loving

SSG Eddyer Brown, HHB. Friend, church member and school buddy. Very professional

SSG Gregory McMath, HHB. Friend, co-worker (ANAD) and Deacon

SPC Rickey McClellan, SVC. Friend, church member, mentor, inspirational and he will WORK 24/7

We all are getting a little long in the tooth nowadays. Does anyone remember around 1978/79 (during the holidays), Captain Harvey, the Service Battery Commander's uniform inspection when the Battalion was preparing for the 3rd Battalion 15th Field Artillery Regimental Ball (Formal Attire and Class A's)? The Ball was held at Remington Hall Officer's Club Ft. McClellan, AL. I know someone out there remember this Great Time. Red Legs Brothers forever. HOOAH!!!

Having fun and sharing my experiences with the 3rd Herd; let's continue enjoying our time together. An old phrase "A hunting dog does not notice the fleas." I like that because it means we must stay focused and disciplined. We need to focus on being positive and accountable to each other. March Order!!!



Donations

The 3rd Battalion 15th Field Artillery Regiment Association is now an official IRS approved 501(c)3 charity. We created this so as to better support you the members of the Battalion. As with any recognized charity donations are tax deductible per IRS guidelines.

If you wish to donate or if you know someone who like to donate there several different ways to do it:

- Checks or Money Orders payable to 3rd Battalion 15th FAR Association
- Cash Donations can be made at the Reunion. They can be anonymous or we can provide a receipt.

* We have a **zefly.com** account listed as 3rd Battalion 15th FAR Legacy Fund. We established this fund-raising account for businesses and individuals who wish to contribute who are not Battalion members. We receive 100% of the amount donated and the person or business who donates pays a fee to Zeffy. This how Zeffy insures we receive 100% of the donation.

3rd Battalion Website

As briefed at the Reunion, the 3rd Battalion 15th Field Artillery Regiment Association webpage can be found by typing **www.3-15far.org**. This has everything that pertains to us plus a section that covers the 15th FAR as well.

3rd Battalion 15th Field Artillery Regiment Association

Board of Directors

John Hoehne President
Ray Zimmerman Vice President
Sam Pearson Treasurer
Bobby Heaton Secretary
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Shevy Glenn Director
Jerry Montgomery Director
Charlie Bunch Director

From Mike Ashley

Being in the active Army Reserve offers so many possibilities in life. The experience can add character not acquired by any other platform of training. If only more citizens of our great country would reach out to participate in the opportunity. With all said, there are some things for which one can be dutifully grateful.

The annual two week training was always anticipated. Only equivalent to that experience would be that of a child waiting for Christmas day to arrive. Aw! How I cherish those days at Ft. Stewart. The feeling of sweat rolling down one's back as the convoy approached the welcoming gates. The anticipation and the excitement of the unknown that loomed ahead. The sweat now rolling off the brow of one's face and an unaltered darkened expectation of certain doom. No need to hide it at this point. The acceptance that we are here and about to embark on one the greatest survival tests ever experienced by soldiers or beasts in modern times.

The training mission is simply written, and with a few of Murphy's laws, about to be executed as a proven science. The battalion begins its entry into an arena few other individuals will experience in their lives. What a privilege our Defense Department has bestowed upon us. And we are getting paid to do it. For such a priceless experience I was always ready to give the money back! Then I thought; I pay my taxes and others can volunteer for the same rewards.

Now, to address the more dominant problems we face, while trying to perfect our talents and tactics as exceptional artillery men.

The problems, for which the Army offers no Training Manuals or Technical Manuals, are best listed under the category of "Field Expedience".

Gnats. Pronounced "Nats". Who decided to place a useless "G" on Nats? Is that an Army thing? GNATS has to be an Army acronym: "Go Nuts at Training Safely". Probably straight from the Pentagon. If I remember correctly, the little b%+&@ drove the Spanish to a state of insanity when they explored the Americas. That's why the Portuguese gave up the continent to the Spanish. They knew about the "Nats". The Pope, deciding who should have exploration rights to our continent decided the Spanish explorers needed to participate in a self-punishment event and pay in pain, in the effort to rid their bodies of the little b#@&*'s. So small, yet so overwhelming that the soldiers returned to a strong belief in the power of Satan and that they were right at the gates of hell.

You know the famous expression given to the Germans after their demand for surrender at the town of Bastogne. BG McAuliffe sent his answer to the surrender terms offered the Germans. "Nuts." Well, the German commander was so confused because the interpreter repeated the reply as "Nats". Gosh! He didn't know if the Americans were going to release a horde of gnats, maybe as lethal as Moses did to

the Egyptians. In the confusion and indecisiveness of the Germans. They waited. Probably for Gnat spray. As said; history does repeat itself. Who was "Kilroy" anyway?

Back to the Nats (Gnats). All of us know the annoyance. Nothing more satisfying than to smush the little @\$*#'s with one's hand or hands. To be noted; the required speed of hand movement to beat the evasive flight of the little &#@\$ may result in skin bruising or bodily harm. This caution was always a topic at the pre-annual training conference. Accidental damage of government property is not acceptable. Though seen as a necessary means of survival, excessive force in the attempts to kill or rid one's self of their annoyance, was discouraged. Knowing the aggressive nature of artillery men, this cautionary discussion of self defense is merited and a requirement for all artillery men. One must acknowledge that this type of persistence can overwhelm massive armies.

The resulting effects to survive the two weeks of training at Ft. Stewart was "Gnatisism"; which is a state of having an uncontrollable and unconscious response to the ghost of the critters who are no longer there. This is a form of PTSD, but at Fort Stewart it has been diagnosed as PEASD (Past Experiences At Stewart Disorders). To any bystander witnessing such behavior, of a post Ft. Stewart veteran, will obviously be drawn into a state of confusion. What's wrong with that soldier? His hands move in such an uncontrollable and indistinguishable manner trying to rid himself of the gnats that are no longer there. The observer would certainly relate it to such behavior only seen as displayed by Peter Sellers in the movie, "Dr. Strangelove"(the Doctor in the wheelchair). In my opinion, the VA should have endorsed that movie. In review of the total picture these encounters had a biblical connection.

Maybe a test of the limits of artillery men, by God, to determine our mental durability in the face of a persistent and determined enemy. Can one move his emotions to the edge of insanity and remain sane? Well, we like the sound of powder igniting in the breach of a 155mm howitzer and the muzzle blast that follows. At that moment the concern and discomfort of the pesky little b%&#@ is removed from any consciousness. The benefits of being an artillery man are enormous and without reproach. I am finding it difficult to continue with one or the other hand slashing about my face. Wonderful memories about wonderful guys who were soldiers once. Keep swatting. It keeps them guessing, just as BG McAuliffe did. You will have the advantage. Special regards, to all artillery men.



Chaplain's Corner with Chaplain Wes Hodgins

January-February-March 2026

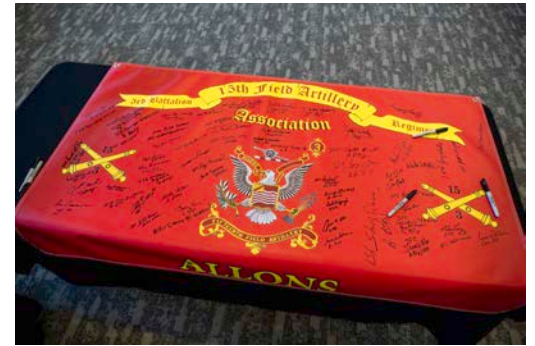
After the death of Moses, the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, saying: "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all the people, to the land which I am giving them ... I will never leave you nor forsake you ... this book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night ... for then you make your way prosperous and then you shall have good success." Notice here that our God is a 'God of order', not 'chaos'! With the passing of Moses, God appointed Joshua as his successor to lead the people into the 'land of promise'. The promise of God did not end with the life of a leader. The promise of God continued because it was based on the character of God Himself. He is sovereign in the expanse of eternity and He is sovereign in the 'time-space' of our lives on this earth. We will never encounter anything bigger than He can handle; and we have the same promise given to Joshua on the plains of Jericho: "I will never leave you nor forsake you." While He never leaves us, our perception of His 'presence' may diminish as we focus on things of this world. He gives us 'His-law' to remind us of His presence, His power, and His promises to His children. Truly, there is no substitute for the daily meditation on His law. As we look forward to the new year before us may our hearts be daily reminded of His presence with us; guiding us into the place of His greatest blessing on our lives. HALLELUJAH! (Praise, ye men Jehovah!)

Chaplain Hodgins
3d BN Chaplain





2025 Reunion Gadsden, AL





**2025 Reunion
Gadsden, AL**





**2025 Reunion
Gadsden, AL**





**2025 Reunion
Gadsden, AL**





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Gadsden, AL**





2025 Reunion Gadsden, AL



Reunion News and Updates

The 2026 Reunion is scheduled for 12 December from 1100-1600 hrs at the Venue @ Coosa Landing in Gadsden, AL.

The Downtown Chief will cater the meal again and the menu will be posted once we have it finalized.

There will be two cakes again to celebrate our 5th Reunion.

Reunion invitations will be mailed NLT 1 September to everyone on the BN Mailing List RSVP's are due back NLT 1 November with payment either Check, Money Order or by Zelle to 210-249-1818.

Rickey Moore Photography will be there taking all the Reunion photos.

This date does not conflict with the Auburn - Alabama game but it does conflict with the Army - Navy Game.

Reunion Cost per person will remain the same \$30.00.

3rd Battalion 15th Field Artillery Regiment Association Expenses 2025

4th Annual Reunion Cost Breakdown

Venue Rental and Tablecloths	\$1522.00
Downtown Chief Catering	\$3564.00
Ricky L Moore Photography	\$600.00
Cakes by Lee	\$200.00
Mercersburg Printing	
Place Mats	\$148.40
Name Tags	\$471.17
Certificate/Presentation Folders	\$742.00
Programs	\$364.64
Invitations/Mailing and Return Postage	\$657.76
Honorary Certificates	\$79.50
Reserved Table Placards	\$7.69
Reprint Additional Incomings	\$191.96

King of Battle Awards

Aladdin Awards	
200 KofB Medal	\$1520.00
Engraving 39 Medals	\$268.71

Crown Awards

Ribbons for KofB Total 200	\$400.00
Total Cost Reunion 2025	\$8357.16

Miller Florist Funeral Wreath Total 2 \$704.00

Costs not Included in Reunion Total \$2188.71
(Paid by Personal Donation)

Incoming Cost by Quarter Printing and Mailing

1st Quarter	\$759.39
2nd Quarter	\$786.53
3rd Quarter	\$740.32
4th Quarter	\$713.92
Total Cost for 2025	\$3192.12

Paid by Personal Donation

3rd Battalion 15th FAR Association WebPage

Cost \$3500 Paid by Personal Donation, Cost \$2500 Paid by the Battalion Fund

Instant Nonprofit 501(c)3, Total Cost \$1360.00 Personal Donation

Donations Dec 2025 \$315.00, \$250.00, \$100.00, \$500.00, \$100.00, \$500.00

Donations 2026 \$200.00

Current Bank Balance \$3302.55

Helpful Phone Numbers

Veterans Administration

Appointment line	800-872-0328
Audiology	877-894-2600 ext 4704
Birmingham VA Medical Center	205-933-8101
Community Based Outreach Clinic (CBOC) Huntsville	256 -533-8477
Emergency Room Birmingham	844-724-7842
Employment Specialist	256-3100 x 7441
Madison County Veterans Service Office	256-532-1662
Mental Health	256-533-8477 option 3
Optometry	866-487-4243
Pharmacy refills	888-250-3510
Suicide Hot Line	800-273-8255 option 1
The Vet Center	256-539-5775
Triage Nurse Line	866-487-4243
Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist Rachel Parker, LICSW, PIP	205-440-7930 (cell) 205-933-3797 (fax)
Veteran Experience Manager	205-933-8101 x 7909

Other resources

Still Serving Veterans 256-883-7035, 866-778-4645

LTC John A Hoehne Sr
9773 Blue Spring Rd
Mercersburg PA 17236

