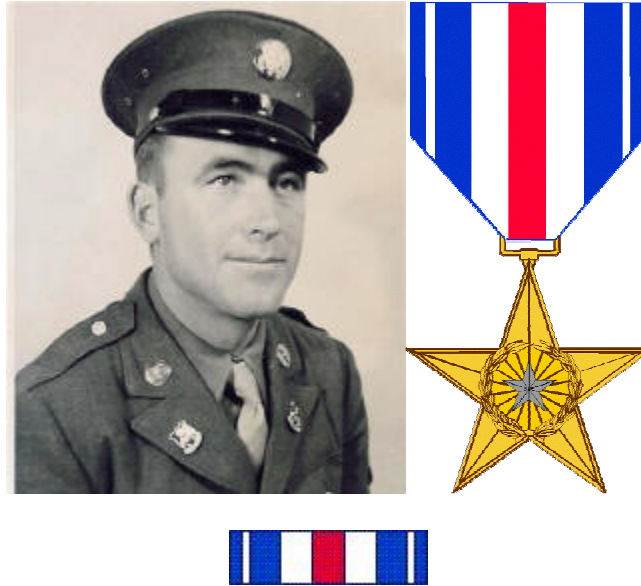




## The Search for the Silver Star

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**SSgt Arthur F. Kueker**

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Brian Keuker is a man who found that his great uncle had been awarded the silver star for action in France, posthumously. The family however, never knew that Arthur F. Kueker had ever earned this important award. This started a quest for information about how and why it was awarded.

His search ended with the formal presentation of the Silver Star to SSgt. Arthur F. Kueker's two sisters and their family at the reunion in Little Rock in August of 2002 \_\_\_\_\_ years after he earned it. Major Generals Doughty and Bockel made the presentation.

Brian tells here and on the following pages, how he acquired copies of the orders of the award to his relative which were issued in 1944.

Reprinted here is the letter he sent to Stephen Ambrose at the D-Day museum, relating the story of how he learned about his relative.

Brian also sends a list of the names of the people who were listed on the General Order that contained the citation of his uncle. He has the texts of each individual's citation.



90<sup>th</sup> Division Association  
Personal Submissions

**90th Division General Orders No 31**

**31-July-1944**

Last Name	First Name	Rank	SN	Grp	Award	ST
<u>Horvatin</u>	John M	Pvt	33683947	Inf	Silver Star (POS)	PA
Kueker	Arthur F	SSgt	18070999	Inf	Silver Star (POS)	CO
Chastain	Hosea	Pfc	34883203	Inf	Silver Star	TN
Ludwig	Herman H	Sgt	37120745	Inf	Silver Star	NB
Lustig	Raymond W	Cpl	36556163	CIC	Silver Star	MI
Merrick	Ralph B	Capt	0391391?	Inf	Silver Star	OH
Miller	Edgar R	2nd Lt	01320473	Inf	Silver Star	TX
Tamaska	Frank J	Pfc	15338363	Med Dept	Silver Star	WV
Vaux	Lloyd P	Pvt	12218456	MI	Silver Star	NY
Allen	Woodrow R	Capt	0365316	Inf	Bronze Star (POS)	TX
Levec	Robert C	Sgt	15322430	Inf	Bronze Star (POS)	OH
Curtis	James E	Tec 5	36864234	Med Dept	Bronze Star	MI
Gowen	George A	Pfc	33442446	FA	Bronze Star	VA
King	Grover C	1st Lt	0449492	Inf	Bronze Star	MS
Spath	George F	1st Lt	01322726	Inf	Bronze Star	OK
Taylor	Paul E	Cpl	31219188	FA	Bronze Star	ME
Dick	Orval E	Pvt	20535839	FA	Bronze Star	KY
Hollandsworth	Clarence	Pvt	35876545	FA	Bronze Star	OH
Ward	Melvin E	Pvt	35116702	Inf	Bronze Star	OH
Doebler	A.C.	Pvt	36879047	Med Dept	Bronze Star	MI
Boerger	Frederick J	Tec 5	35677090	Ord Dept	Soldier's Medal	OH
Bocka	Andrew J. Jr.	Pvt	33309796	MP	Purple Heart	PA



**BRIAN A. KUEKER**  
**4115 Goodfellow Drive**  
**Dallas, Texas 75229-2813**  
**(214) 902-9392**  
**Fax (214) 902-0804**  
**Cell (214) 704-1379**  
**bkueker1@swbell.net**

August 4, 2002

National D-Day Museum  
Mr. Stephen E. Ambrose  
Bay St. Louis, MS 39520

Re: Arthur F. Kueker, SSGT, I Company, 357<sup>th</sup> Inf, 90<sup>th</sup> Div, KIA 6-14-44, Normandy

Dear Mr. Ambrose:

You have told me many stories over the last couple of years. Friends of mine have suggested I tell you one, the outcome of which may have been very different without your inspiration. In July 2001, I was on a plane coming home from yet another business destination. The gentleman sitting next to me was reading *Citizen Soldiers*. I've always been interested in military history. I found myself reading over his shoulder, captivated by the personal stories and photos. I ordered the book over the Internet from Amazon.com that very night. After *Citizen Soldiers*, I also read *D-Day*, *Band of Brothers* and *The Wild Blue*.

About this same time I happened to be looking through a notebook on our family genealogy which I had received from a cousin. My great great great grandfather, Diedrich Kueker (pronounced Keecker) had come into this country from Germany through the port of New Orleans in October of 1844. He came up the Mississippi with his wife and five children and settled in southern Illinois near the town of Ruma. When I fly in and out of New Orleans on Southwest Airlines now, I look down at the river and think of him leaving everything and coming to this country. I have a copy of the document, recorded in the real property records of Randolph County, Illinois, where he disavowed his allegiance to the King of Hanover and pledged his allegiance to the Constitution of the United States. I assume this was tantamount to achieving citizenship, probably a prerequisite condition of land ownership at the time. I also have a copy of a hand written deed where he conveyed one acre to the Church for a new building. One of Diedrich's grandchildren, Heinrich F. Kueker moved from southern Illinois to Colorado in 1915 with his wife Bertha and their four children, one girl and three boys with Arthur, age 2 years at the time. Three more daughters were eventually born, Clara Marie being the youngest in 1925. They lived on a farm near Stratton until 1937 when they moved to Flagler, east of Denver. The family history went on to say that Arthur was killed in the Second World War on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1944. He was laid to rest at the Normandy American Cemetery overlooking Omaha Beach.

Here was a guy who made it through the invasion, only to be killed eight days later. I remembered the cemetery from the opening and closing scenes of *Saving Private Ryan*. I looked to see if there was anything on the Internet about it. What I found was the home page of the American Battle Monuments Commission. The ABMC noted its' database of war dead. Since the family genealogy said he was buried there, I entered his name in the search page and sure enough, a listing for him popped up.



Wow! Look at this! Just like the book said! The ABMC web page went on to say that next-of-kin could order a photograph of the grave of a US serviceman interred overseas. Even though he was my grandfather's cousin, and I wasn't exactly next-of-kin, I figured that since we had the same last name it was worth a shot. I downloaded the Adobe application form, filled it out asking for two photos, and mailed it to Colonel Anthony N. Corea at the ABMC in Arlington Virginia. This all occurred during July of 2001.

7. Kueker

Page



AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION



THE WORLD WAR II HONOR ROLL

## Arthur F. Kueker

Staff Sergeant, U.S. Army

18070999

357th Infantry Regiment, 90th Infantry Division

Entered the Service from: Colorado

Died: June 14, 1944

Buried at: Plot F Row 21 Grave 42

Normandy American Cemetery

St. Laurent-sur-Mer, France

Awards: Silver Star, Purple Heart

I was relating this story to a guy in our office and showed him the ABMC database. He told me that his biological father was 19 when he was killed on June 19, 1944. He was on a ship with the 300<sup>th</sup> Combat Engineers crossing the English Channel in a storm when it struck a mine and went down with all hands. His last name was Foraker. We put his name in the database and his inscription popped up too! He was listed among the Tablets of the Missing at the cemetery.

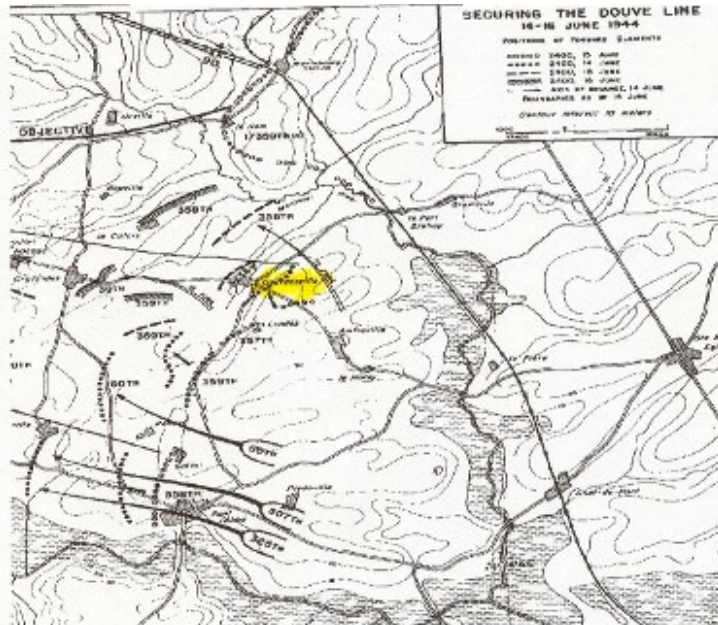
I had no idea how long it might take for the ABMC to respond to a request for photos. Over the months following, I continued to punch around on the Internet looking for information about the 90<sup>th</sup> Division and the 357<sup>th</sup> Regiment now that I had specifics from the ABMC. I found the Center for Military History's text of the 90<sup>th</sup> Division History. In a chapter called *Securing the Douve Line*, the 357<sup>th</sup> Regiment's action on June fourteenth was described:

*"The 357th Infantry, on the right flank of the 359th, also encountered difficulties. On 14 June it prepared to attack Gourbesville again, its objective being the Gourbesville-Beauvais line. An air mission arranged for 1400 was canceled for lack of proper marking smoke, and an artillery preparation was substituted at 1800. Because of poor coordination, a number of shells fell on American troops and the attack became disorganized. The concentration was fired again at 1930 and the 3d Battalion entered the village at 2230. It was unable, however, to clean out enemy resistance that night, and Gourbesville remained in enemy hands."*



## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions

This must be where Arthur was killed. June 14<sup>th</sup>, Gourbesville! The third battalion of the 357<sup>th</sup> was engaged in trying to take the town of Gourbesville from the Germans on the day Art was killed. Gourbesville is the second town west of St. Mere Eglise. The 90<sup>th</sup> Division history included maps which showed the regiment's location every 24 hours so we were able to locate their position on the day Art was killed. We didn't know that he died as a result of action that actually occurred on June 14th. We just knew that was the day he died.



In November, I received a letter from the ABMC stating I would receive my photos in approximately eight to twelve weeks. As mentioned in the letter I finally received my photos during the first week of February 2002. The photos were 3x5 and were mounted in the corner of an 18x24 color lithograph of the Memorial at the cemetery.



Needless to say they were magnificent and more than I ever expected. They were so impressive I felt like there must be someone in Arthur's family in Colorado who would want to have one of these. I went back to the genealogy and looked at the listings for Arthur's siblings. His youngest sister, Clara Marie was born in 1925, two years older than my dad, and had an address listed in Aurora, Colorado. The Internet listed an active phone number and an address that matched the one in the genealogy! I had never met anyone from this branch of the family. I



decided to write them a letter, describe what I had found and ask them if they would like me to send them one, since I had an extra.

I wrote to Clara on February 12, 2002. I explained who I was, how my family was related to hers, and that I had done some research on her brother Arthur, on the Internet. I had read the 90<sup>th</sup> Division history and located the place where I believed he had been killed. I explained that I had two of these magnificent lithographs and that if she, or someone in her family, wanted one I would be happy to forward it in the original packaging. I also included a printout from the ABMC database showing the listing of information on Arthur. I gave her my phone numbers and told her to call if she was interested.

Several days later she called me early in the afternoon. She said she had the same family genealogy notebook that I had and she had looked me up. She may have thought I was some scam artist preying on elderly people before she found me in the family book. She said they would love to have one of the lithographs. She said that her and her sister Esther were the only two siblings left. I told her I would send the lithograph along with the cemetery brochure and the 90<sup>th</sup> Division history regarding the 357<sup>th</sup> Regiment for that day. She said that they knew very little about what had happened to their brother. She was nineteen when he was killed. She had thought he was in "I" Company. In 1998, they had sent \$35 to have a floral wreath put on his grave and were sent a Polaroid photo of the grave with the flowers. Then she said something that was stunning to say the least. She said that she and Esther almost fell off their chair when they saw the ABMC printout showing that Arthur had been awarded the Silver Star! No one in the family had ever said anything about a Silver Star! Was this a mistake? I was understandably intrigued and told them I would do some more digging and try to find out about the Silver Star. Clara received the lithograph and said it was framed and hung up that same day.



AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

Now I was stuck. Where would you ever start to find out about such things? I told my story to a friend, Ira Richardson, who is retired from the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne. We're both adult leaders in our sons Boy Scout troop. I asked him how it was possible that the family never heard about the Silver Star? He said it could have been a bureaucratic mistake, or that since Art was not married, the award would have gone to his parents. One of the stages of grief is anger, and they may have discarded it. Ira said if I got him copies of what I had, he would try to find out something. About a week later he called me and said he was able to confirm that the Silver Star was legitimate. He said I needed to contact the US Locator Service in St. Louis and have them expedite a search for Arthur's records at the National Personnel Records Center. Ira also took the liberty of contacting James Reid at the 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association and found out that the association was having a reunion in Little Rock this coming Labor Day weekend. Maybe we



## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions

could find someone there who knew what happened to Art. I asked Ira how he found out about the Silver Star. He said he had known the general who was in charge of the ABMC.

I wrote to Clara and told her we had been able to confirm that the Silver Star was legitimate, and about the reunion in Little Rock. I also told her that the 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association would be willing to make a presentation of a replacement medal to her and her sister if they were able to come to the reunion in Little Rock. If they could not come to Little Rock, we could arrange for a representative of the 90<sup>th</sup> to make a presentation in the Denver area. Clara and Esther ultimately decided that they would travel to Little Rock in hopes of finding someone who knew their brother. Several weeks later I received a card from Clara with a picture of Art in it along with the picture from the cemetery flower photo of 1998.

*7/4/02*

*Dear Brian,*  
*We have been thinking about sending these to you for some time. I just haven't gotten around to it.*  
*We cannot really express our appreciation for what you have done. We only regret that our parents and siblings could not have known.*  
*We look forward to meeting you in Little Rock, if all goes well.*  
*Sincerely,*  
*Clara*



I contacted Dick Bielen at the US Locator Service and started the process of trying to find the personnel records. There was a fire at the Records Center in 1973 and about 80% of the records were destroyed. In about a week Dick called back and said that unfortunately Arthur's records did not survive the fire. As far as he knew there were only two other places to look for information on Arthur. One was the Individual Deceased Personnel Files at Total Army Personnel Command in Alexandria, Virginia. The other potential place was the National Archives and Records Administration, Modern Military Records in College Park, Maryland. The Modern Military Records keep regimental unit histories. We hoped to find Arthur's name on a Morning Report or an After Action Report from the 357<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment during the period in question.

It was the end of June and we still didn't know anything about what happened to Art or why he was awarded the Silver Star. Time was running out if we were to know before the reunion in August. I wrote to the National Archives, Modern Military Records on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July:



90<sup>th</sup> Division Association  
Personal Submissions

*"We would like to find any additional information that might be available regarding Art's unit and what they were doing at the time of his death. We have determined through the US Locator Service in St. Louis that Art's records were destroyed in the fire at the Personnel Records Center in 1973. Dick Bielen, at the US Locator Service, referred us to you. If there is any information which might help these two ladies to know more about what happened to their brother, I will come, or arrange for someone to come, and review the material so that we might bring them some closure in this most sensitive personal family matter. Time is of the essence as these ladies are getting on in years. Any referral to other possible sources of information would be greatly appreciated as well. We have contacted the 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association and plan to attend their reunion in August to try to locate someone who may have known Art."*

On July 19<sup>th</sup> I received a letter from Lawrence H. McDonald of the National Archives. Attached to the letter was a copy of General Orders, No. 31, dated 31 July 1944 which finally answered our question:

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS 90TH INFANTRY DIVISION  
APO 90, U.S. ARMY

31 JULY 1944

GENERAL ORDERS  
No. 31

I. POSTHUMOUS AWARD OF SILVER STAR. Under the provisions of AR 600-45 and Circular 66, First U.S. Army, cs, the Silver Star is awarded posthumously to the following named enlisted men for gallantry in action in northern France:

S Sgt Arthur F. Kueker, 18070999, Inf, United States Army. On June 14, 1944, Sgt Kueker and one man advanced against a mortar and a machine gun position that were holding up their unit with intense fire. Sgt Kueker and his companion, without thought of personal safety, worked their way to a point from which they knocked out the mortars with hand grenades. Then, having no more hand grenades, they turned upon the machine gun position and assaulted it with their bayonets. In the ensuing action Sgt Kueker was killed. By his gallantry and aggressiveness, Sgt Kueker made possible the continued success of his unit. Entered service from Colorado.

Pvt John M. Horvatin, 33683947, Inf, United States Army. On June 14, 1944, Pvt Horvatin and his Sergeant advanced against a mortar and a machine gun position that were holding up their unit with intense fire. Pvt Horvatin and his companion, without thought of personal safety, worked their way to a point from which they knocked out the mortars with hand grenades. Then, having no more hand grenades, they turned upon the machine gun position and assaulted it with their bayonets. In the ensuing action Pvt Horvatin was killed. By his gallantry and aggressiveness, Pvt Horvatin made possible the continued success of his unit. Entered service from Pennsylvania.

(GO 31 Hq 90th Inf Div 31 July 44, contd)

By command of Brigadier General RAYMOND S. McLAIN:

JOHN C. WHITCOMB,  
Col, Inf,  
Actg CofS.

OFFICIAL:

RAY C. SCOTT  
Lt Col, AGD,  
Adj Gen.

Distribution: "B"  
TAG, Attn: Decorations and  
Awards Br, Munitions Bldg, Wash DC---3  
CG ETOUSA-----2  
CG FUSA, Attn: G-1 Misc Sec, APO 230-1  
Ea Officer concerned-----2  
Ea EM concerned-----2  
Ea Orgn concerned-----2  
G-1 Sec-----1

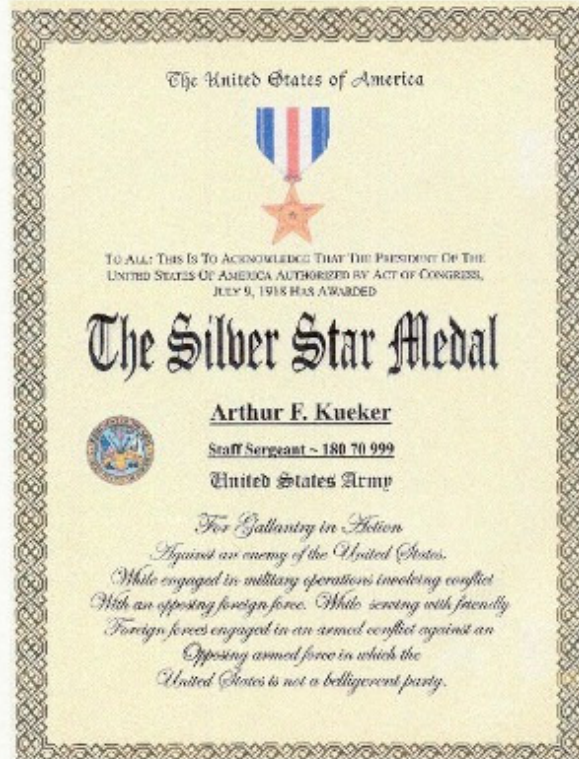




## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions

Now we know... *“having no more hand grenades, they turned upon the machine gun position and assaulted it with their bayonets”*. I had to wonder what makes men do extraordinary things at times like these.

Armed with my new information I started to look for places on the Internet where I could acquire a replacement certificate and medal to have the 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association present to Clara and Esther at the reunion. I had come across a website for The American War Library some months before and noticed that they had order forms for replacement medals. I filled out the form on the website, entered my credit card number and ordered a replacement certificate and medal. The website had a stern FBI warning against falsely acquiring certificates and medals and said that Defense Department document DD-214 needed to be sent in to complete the acquisition. I called the AWL and spoke to a very helpful gentleman. I told him I didn't have any discharge documents because my relative had been killed in action. All I had was the printout from the ABMC and a copy of 90<sup>th</sup> Division General Orders No 31, dated 31 July 1944 from the National Archives. He stopped me and said: “You have what? Read that to me...”. I started reading aloud from the copy and he stopped me about four lines down. “That will be ok”, he said. I asked if I needed to send it in but in the mean time he had found a listing for Arthur on their database and had seen the Silver Star in their information. He said no additional documentation would be necessary. Several days later, the replacement Silver Star Certificate and Medal arrived via express mail. I have also ordered replacements for his Bronze Star, Combat Infantry Badge, and Purple Heart.



I sent in my reunion registration forms to James Reid at the 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association via FedEx and spoke to him on the phone the next evening. I had asked if at some time during the weekend reunion, whenever they thought appropriate, could someone from the Association make a presentation of the Silver Star to Art's sisters. He noted that Clara & Esther were already registered and that the Association had arranged for a major general to make the presentation!

As I sat at my desk admiring the Silver Star Certificate and reading General Orders No 31 over and over, I couldn't help but wonder about the family of Pvt. John M. Horvatin, the guy who was killed with Art. General Orders No 31 had said: *“Entered Service from Pennsylvania”*. A check of the Pennsylvania World War II casualty listings by county on the Internet and his name surfaced on the list for Elk County. My map software showed the county seat of Elk County as Ridgway. It lies in western Pennsylvania, northeast of Pittsburgh. I searched for “Elk County” and “historical society” hoping there might be some connection and sure enough the Elk County Historical Society had a web page and a contact email address. I sent them the following email:



**HELP!**

*I am looking for the closest living relative of a Pvt. John M. Horvatin, US Army, from Elk County, Pennsylvania. He was killed on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1944 in Normandy and is buried at the Normandy American Cemetery. He was killed with a relative of mine and both were awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action which resulted in their deaths. Our family had no record or knowledge of the Silver Star until recently. There is a chance that Horvatin's family may not have known either. I have documentation from the National Archives to share if his family can be found. Thanks!*

At this writing I have not yet heard from the Elk County Historical Society. I would like to send something to his family but I hope the relatives of Pvt. John M. Horvatin didn't have to wait 58 years to find out what happened to their brother.

The most amazing thing about this last year is the way so many people have responded with information, referrals, stories, etc. People would send me little bits of information from websites, bulletin boards, family histories, research they had done. It was like a puzzle. Sometimes the meaning of a particular piece wasn't clear until it was in the context of other pieces. I would go back and reread things that I had been over before and something different would then make sense. I would specially like to thank Lawrence McDonald and the people at the National Archives. Somebody made a special effort to find specific information instead of generic regimental activity.

We anxiously await the reunion at the end of this month. My father and I are attending. He's a Navy man but I'm sure they'll let him in. I'll finally get to meet Clara and Esther, and a lot of guys who did amazing things under impossible conditions 58 years ago. This story will go on. It seems to have taken on a life of its' own. Just yesterday a guy, whose father was in the 357<sup>th</sup>, mailed me a copy of the Morning Report for Company I on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1944. It lists Arthur, among others, as "*Dy to kd in action*", and closes with "*continuous fighting, Northern France.*" Last night I ordered *War From the Ground Up* by John Colby on Amazon.com. Don Foye, from the 90<sup>th</sup> Division, said it had a good recount of the action at the time. Read about Don Foye at [tankbooks.com](http://tankbooks.com) on the Internet sometime if you want a story!

The main thing though, after all is said and done, is that two sisters from Colorado, for whom I am sure their big brother was always a hero, now know that he was a hero to the rest of us too!

Very truly yours,

Brian A. Kuoker



## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions





COMPANY  
MORNING REPORT      ENDING 15 June 4  
2400      (DATE)      (MONTH)      (YEAR)

STATION APO 90 Northern France  
ORGANIZATION Co I 357th Inf Regt Inf  
(CO, BATT, ETC.)      (PROPERTY UNIT)      (ARM OR SERVICE)

SERIAL NUMBER	NAME	GRADE	CODE
0-1322029	Horen, George A.	2 Lt	M
	Dy to seriously wounded in action 14 June 44.		14/46
	Evacuated.		
18070099	Kueker, Arthur F.	S Sgt	M
38098794	Plescher, William A.	Pfc	M
	Above 2 EM Dy to Kd in action 14 June 44.		14/46
34376830	Calhoun, Edward C.	S Sgt	M
	Dy to seriously wounded in action 14 June 44.		14/46
	Evacuated.		
35710402	Clayton, Edward E.	Pvt	M
38094477	Stapleton, A.A.	Sgt	M
	Above 2 EM Dy to slightly injured in action 14 June 44. Evacuated.		14/46

RECORD OF EVENTS

15 June 44 — Northern France.  
Continuous fighting.

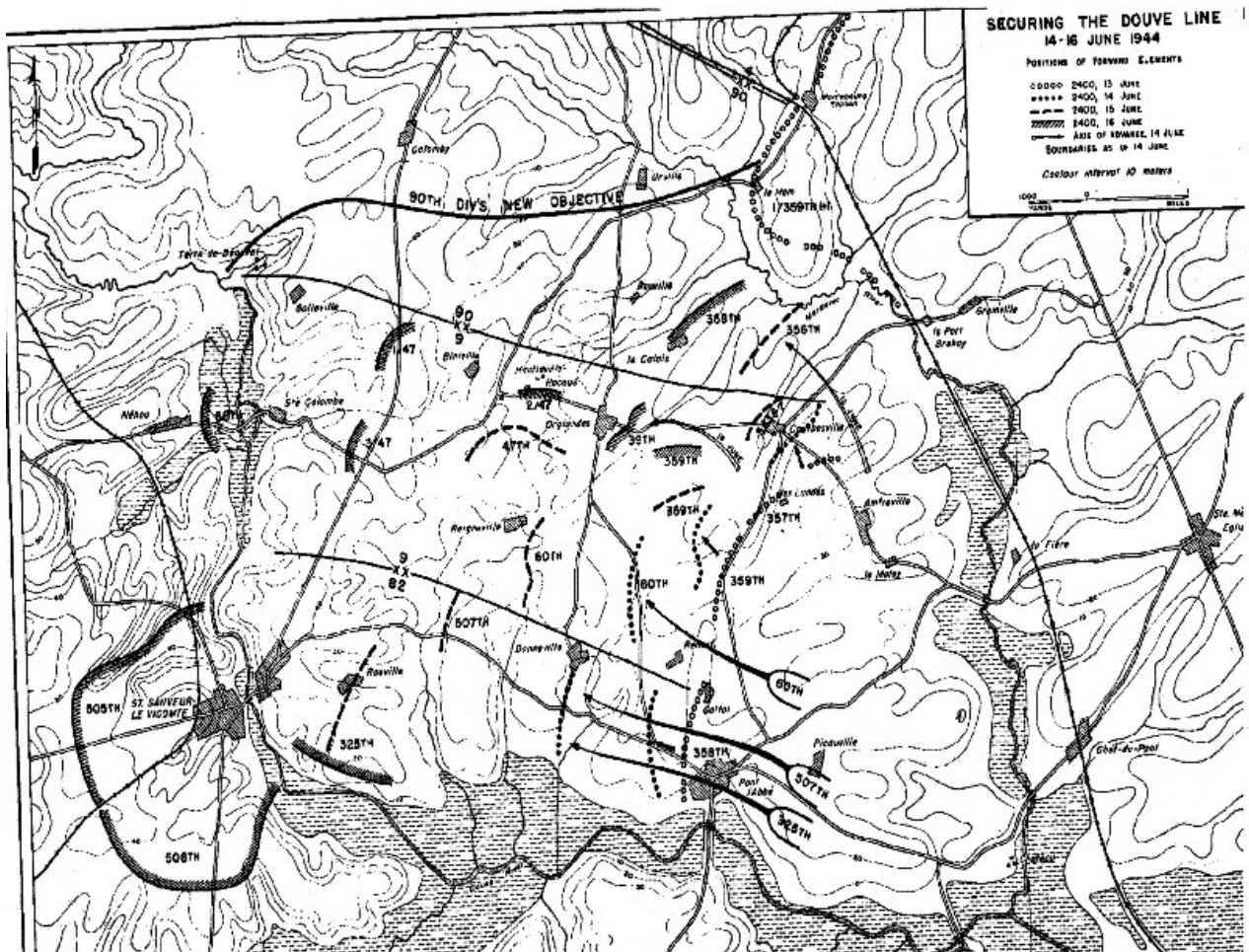
OFFICER STRENGTH	PLD O & CAPT		1ST LT		2D LT		WO		FLT O	
	PRES	ABST	PRES	ABST	PRES	ABST	PRES	ABST	PRES	ABST
ASSIGNED	2		3		5					
ATTACHED UNASSIGNED ATTACHED FR OTHER ORGN										
TOTAL	2		3		5					

AVN CADET & ENLISTED STRENGTH	AVIATION CADETS		UNLISTED MEN			
	PRESENT	ABSENT	PRESENT FOR DUTY	PRESENT NOT FOR DUTY	ABSENT	PRESENT AND ABSENT
ASSIGNED			198	2	2	202
ATTACHED UNASSIGNED ATTACHED FR OTHER ORGN						
TOTAL			198	2	2	202

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF ( DAY OF WEEK )      NUMBER



# 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions





## The Keuker Family at the 2002 Reunion





## The Horvath Connection

By **JOANN SELTZER**  
Courier-Express Staff Writer

ST. MARYS, PA. It didn't matter that PFC John M. Horvatin wasn't fighting in World War II by choice. When duty called, he answered by giving all he had including his life for his comrades. Today, he is recognized by family and friends as one of America's heroes.

Horvatin, a St. Marys resident, and Staff Sgt. Arthur F. Kueker of Colorado, both members of the 357th Infantry Regiment, 90th Infantry division, became heroes during World War II. They sacrificed their own lives trying to disarm a machine gun and a mortar with their bayonets to help their fellow soldiers when they ran out of hand grenades. Both of the men died on the battlefield in France on June 14, 1944.

Last year, Brian Kueker, who had always been interested in military history, was reading about his family history around the same time he was avidly reading books about the personal stories of soldiers. While looking at some family history he had been given, Kueker discovered that his grandfather's cousin, Arthur Kueker, had been killed while serving in World War II.

Little did he know that his search to learn more about his relative would lead him to St. Marys to help another family learn more about their loved one.

While researching Arthur Kueker's death, Brian Kueker learned that Arthur had two surviving sisters, Clara and Esther Kueker. Brian Kueker had written to the American Battle Monuments Commission to get a picture of the grave of a U.S. servicemen buried overseas.



## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions

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Once he received the two copies he requested, Brian Kueker was so impressed with them he thought one of Arthur Kueker's sisters may like the second copy. While corresponding with Clara Kueker, Brian Kueker learned that she had sent money to have a floral wreath placed on her brother's grave.

"Then she said something that was stunning to say the least. She said that she and Esther almost fell off their chairs when they saw the American Battle Monuments Commission print out showing that Arthur had received the Silver Star for gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States while involved in a military operation, 58 years later," Brian Kueker said.

She said no one in her family had ever mentioned a Silver Star. Surprised by the news, Brian Kueker looked further into the event that led to the death of Arthur Kueker and learned he had died with Horvatin, and he began to wonder if the Horvatin family had been left in the dark about their loved one receiving a Silver Star.

"I thought it was so nice that he was concerned about the Horvatin family," Mary Seeyle, Horvatin's sister said. "We had found out right away about the Silver Star."

A half a century later, Seeyle still remembers the day her family found out about her brother's fate as if it was yesterday.

"I was working at the Market Basket when my cousin, who was staying with us at the time, called and said I had to come home right away," Seeyle said. "I wanted to know why, but she wouldn't tell me."

After explaining to her boss that she had to leave, Seeyle walked to the A&P to ask a friend for a ride home.

"Right away, I knew what happened. I could hear them wailing and I knew something had happened to Johnny," she said. "It was quite an experience I'll never forget the cries coming out of the house."

The relatives of those lost may never know if their loved ones had volunteered to for the dangerous mission, but both carried it out with all they had.

"I would think they probably asked for volunteers," Seeyle said. "Although John was never a dare devil or anything like that he was just a nice kid. And I think his friends looked up to him."

"I have to wonder what makes men do extraordinary things at times like these," Brian Kueker said.

Seeyle will always remember her brother, who was just two years older than her, as still being the boy teasing her a few months before the mission while on furlough. She said she'll remember him for his bravery during a time when his country needed him the most and that, although he was young, he had become a man.

Both Horvatin and Kueker also received the Purple Heart. The Silver Star was awarded to the two men for gallantry and aggressiveness and making the continued success of their unit possible.