

1799



1999

# Bürgerschützenverein Appelhülsen e.V.

The shooting club Appelhülsen is a traditional club the members of which celebrate since 1799 every year their shooting matches.

Until 1974 Appelhülsen was a little independent municipality, around 17 km to the south of the provincial capital Münster in Westphalia.

Due to a local government reform Appelhülsen belongs since 1975 to the then newly founded municipality of Nottuln.

As far as it is known today, the mentioned series of shooting matches has been interrupted only twice in the course of the club's history. First during World War I between 1914 and 1918 and second during World War II between 1939 and 1947.

According to the club's rules, the kings who are determined from the shooting matches on Whit Monday of every year, have to donate a sort of commemorative coin with the engraving of the names of the king and the queen of that year as well as the year. These coins are to give evidence of the club's history and bear a high spiritual and historical value. The coins are fastened to a chain which is called the king's chain and which is presented from every next king on the occasion of the shooting matches.

During World War II two of these chains have been lost and we would like to try to find them with the help of the worldwide web. It can be proved that these 2 king chains are missing since the occupation time in the year 1945. As far as we know there must have been coins on these chains which date from 1937 back to the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The following names and years must be among the missing coins:

1. 1937 Hubert Winnemöller
2. 1935 Eberhard Weiß
3. 1934 Heinrich Kötter
4. 1933 Richard Klosterkamp
5. 1932 Rudolf Aupers
6. 1930 Ferdinand Uhlenbrock
7. 1928 Bernhard Hüls
8. 1927 Heinrich Börsting
9. 1924 unknown
10. 1923 August Niehaus
11. 1921 Bernhard Aupers jun.
12. 1920 Anton Wessendorf
13. 1919 unknown
14. 1913 Heinrich Kempe
15. 1912 Josef Wetter
16. 1911 Wilhelm Damme
17. 1909 Heinrich Waterkamp

18. 1907 Heinrich Wallkötter
19. 1905 unknown
20. 1904 Anton Castelle
21. 1903 J. Wiesmann
22. 1902 unknown
23. 1901 H. Alferts
24. 1900 Fr. Holthaus

Further names can be given upon request.

As we know today from reliable statements of still living contemporary witnesses, these for us so valuable king chains have disappeared on April 3, 1945 (Good Friday, religious holiday) after 3.00 p.m. out of the safe in the house of Hubert Scharlau on the Bahnhofstrasse (station street). This is supported by the fact that the back wall of the safe was broken and beside our chains other valuables were missing. We assume that soldiers of the then occupation troops considered, consciously or unwittingly, these objects as spoils of war and took them home, particularly as there was also a certain material value (silver).

It is known that there have been American forces, together with a British unit. As a result of investigations in another context of our member Johannes Gellenbeck in 1981 we have documents of the „Department of the Army“, The Chief Of Military History and the Center of Military History Washington, D.C. 20314 DAMH-HSF which show which troops had been deployed in this area.

As in this turbulent time whole Germany was occupied by diverse forces, we have reason to believe that not only our community was concerned by such incidents but there might be similar cases in other municipalities. We therefore assume that a relatively big circle of persons have known and still know about such kind of „souvenirs of enemy country“.

We therefore would like to make a request to those who read these lines. Please support us in the search for the missing objects. We especially would like to ask members of the armed forces who deal with such incidents out of historical or other reasons and who therefore are well informed.

It would be a very great pleasure for us if we could get some new information which will help us to find the missing king chains. In the age of the internet it should be no problem to contact us.

In the case that we get the names of owners of the chains (or perhaps only single coins) we would immediately try to get in contact with these persons in order to learn if there is a possibility to get the objects back. If a return can be agreed we can promise an appropriate reimbursement.

In order to emphasize our efforts we would like to list below further names and details about the mentioned troops which might be helpful for the search.

In addition, please find some pictures at our website which give an insight into our shooting matches.

For any information please e-mail to [henke.ernst@t-online.de](mailto:henke.ernst@t-online.de).

The webpage of the rifle club is [www.appelhuelsen.info/schuetzenverein](http://www.appelhuelsen.info/schuetzenverein).

We thank you already very much in advance for any efforts which help us to achieve our aim.

Please find below the information about the history, names and other details of the armed forces which are also mentioned in the US Military Almanac „The Army Almanac“, A Book of Facts Concerning the Army of the United States, United States Government Printing Office 1950, as well as the mentioned pictures:

## **The 17th Airborne Division**

Activated: 15 April 1943

Oversea: 17 August 1944

Campaigns: Ardennes, Alsace, Rhineland, central Europe

Battle days: 45

Special honours: 4 awards

Commander: Major General William M. Miley who commanded this division throughout the World War II

Return to the USA: 15 September 1945

Released: 16 September 1945

Conscripted again: 03 July 1948

### **Overview of Campaigns**

The 17th Airborne Division was stationed in Great Britain from 25 August to 23 December 1944. From 23 to 25 December, elements of the Division were flown to the Reims area in France in spectacular night flights. These elements closed in at Mourmelon. After taking over the defense of the Meuse River sector from Givet to Verdun, 25 December, the 17th moved to Neufchateau in Belgium, then marched through the snow to Morhet, relieving the 28th Infantry Division, 3 January 1945.

The Division then entered the Ardennes campaign, 4 to 9 January, at the Battle of Dead Man's Ridge. It captured several small Belgian towns and entered Flamierge, 7 January, but enemy counterattacks necessitated a withdrawal. However, constant pressure and aggressive patrolling caused the enemy to retreat. On 18 January, the Division relieved the 11th Armored Division at Houffalize, pushed enemy remnants from the Bulge, and seized Wattermal and Espeler, 26 January. Coming under the III Corps, the 17th turned toward Luxembourg, taking Eschweiler and Clervaux and clearing the enemy from the west bank of the Our River. Aggressive patrols crossed the river to probe the Siegfried Line defenses and established a limited bridgehead near Dasburg before being relieved by the 6th Armored Division, 10 February.

At this time began a time of rearming. From the French areas the 17th went to Westphalia, in the vicinity of Wesel, 24 March. Operation Varsity was the first airborne invasion over the Rhine into Germany itself. On 25 March, the Division had secured bridges over the Jssel River and had entrenched itself firmly along the Jssel Canal. Moving eastward, it captured Haltern, 29 March, and Münster, 2 April. The 17th entered the battle of Ruhr Pocket, relieving the 79th Infantry Division. It crossed the Rhine-Herne Canal, 6 April, and set up a secure bridgehead for the attack on Essen. The „Pittsburgh of the Ruhr“ fell, 10 April, and the industrial cities of Mülheim and Duisburg were cleared in the continuing attack.

Military government duties began, 12 April, and active contact with the enemy ceased, 18 April. The Division came under XXII Corps 24 April. It continued its occupation duties until 15 June 1945 when it returned to France.

### **General:**

Nickname: Thunder from Heaven

Epulette: Round spot in black with an extended claw in gold and an arch with the word „Airborne“ above.

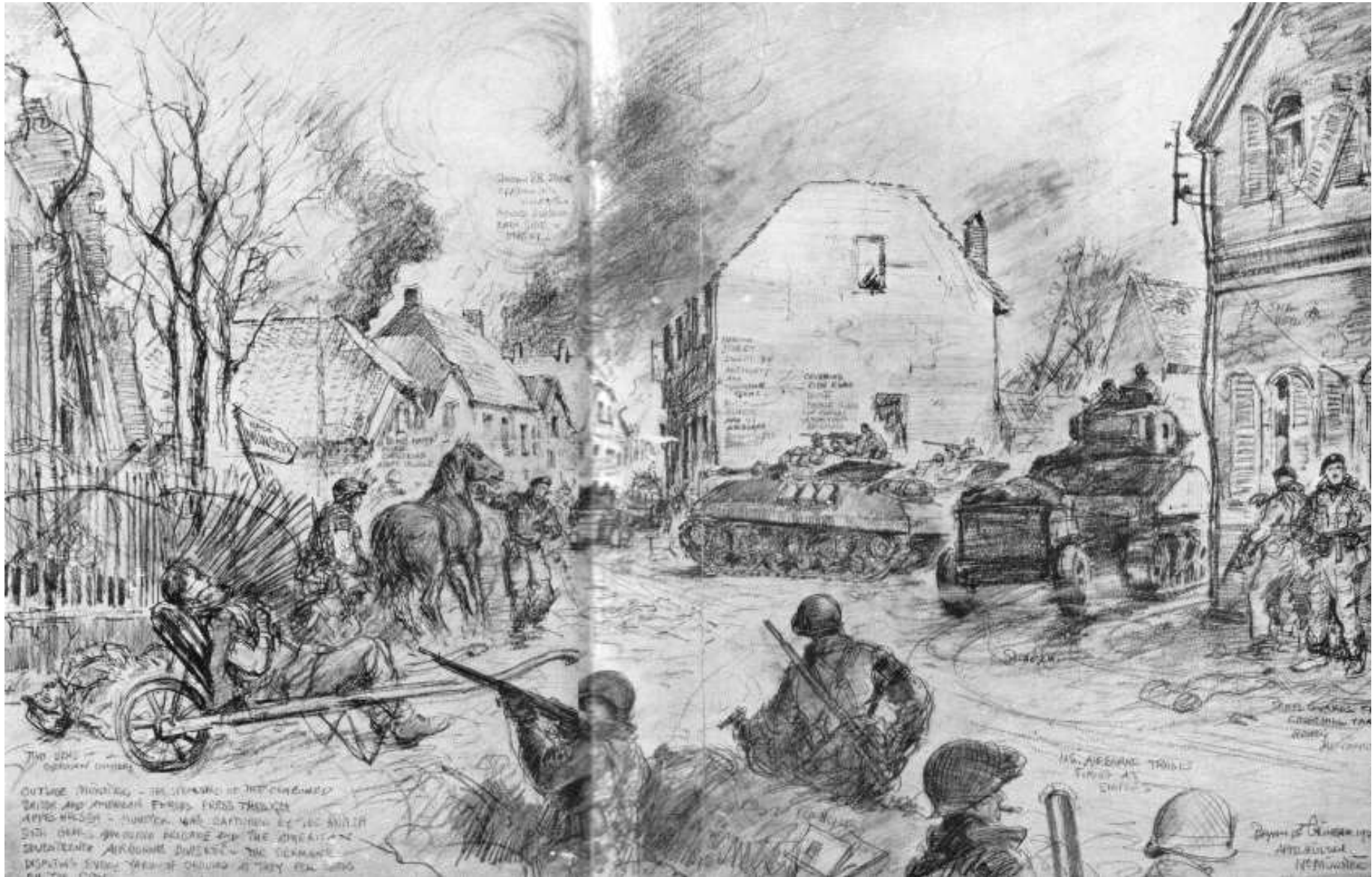
Publications: History of the 17th Airborne Division from members of the unit, pictorial report also from members of the unit Published by Albert Love Enterprises in Atlanta 2, ca. 1944



Vom Heuboden einer Scheune aus haben Soldaten der 17. US-Airborne-Division Feuer erhalten - wenige Minuten später schießen Sie die Scheune in Brand.



In Schützenreihe marschieren Fallschirmjäger der 17. US-Airborne Division über die vom Rauch brennender Häuser überzogene B 51 in Appelhülsen - noch 17 Kilometer bis Münster!



Zwei Tote deutsche Soldaten (links). Scharfschützen der „Sixth Guards Tank Brigade“, brennende Häuser - von deutscher 8,8-Flak aus Richtung Baumberge in Brand geschossen - und die Panzerkolonnen der 17. US-Airborne-Division, die aus Richtung Senden einbiegen - so sah der britische Krieg Zeichner Bryan de Grineau die Eroberung Appelhülsens.