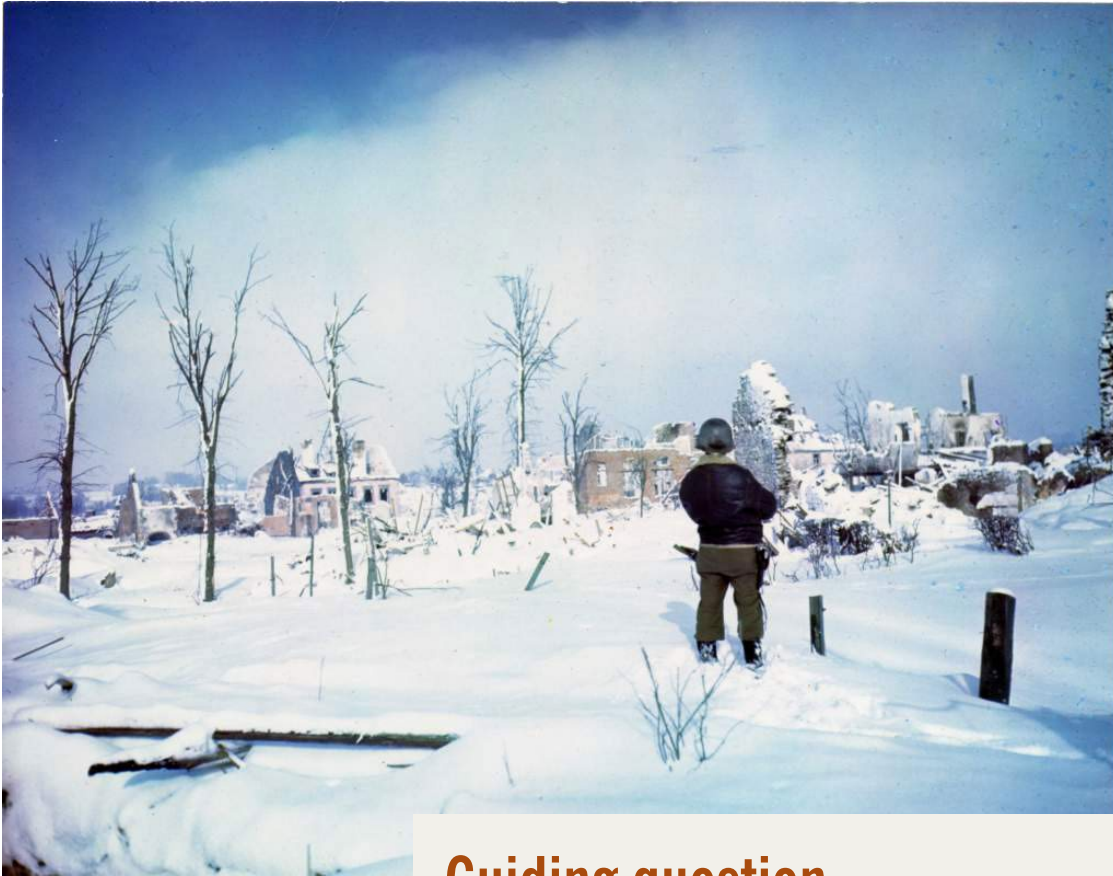




UNDERSTANDING
SACRIFICE

Activity: A Blitz Through the Ardennes: Using the Battle of the Bulge to Practice Reading and Analytical Skills



Guiding question:

What decisions and sacrifices did the Battle of the Bulge demand of the soldiers and leaders involved?

DEVELOPED BY BRIAN WEAVER

Grade Level(s): 9-12

Subject(s): Social Studies

Cemetery Connection: Ardennes American Cemetery

Fallen Hero Connection: Staff Sergeant Charles Crossley



NHD
NATIONAL
HISTORY DAY

ROY ROSENZWEIG
Center FOR
History AND
New Media

Overview

This lesson addresses the Battle of the Bulge, one of the largest battles in American history and one of the pivotal battles of World War II. It challenges students to interpret the battle by using a set of primary and secondary sources. Working in groups, students will analyze sources using historical thinking and writing skills.

Historical Context

The Battle of the Bulge: After D-Day, Allied forces recaptured most of France within a matter of months. But in December 1944, Germany launched a counteroffensive that briefly set the Allies back. German forces pushed back part of the Allied line — the “bulge” in the front line that gave the battle its name. After weeks of hard fighting in bitterly cold weather, the German army was pushed back into Germany in January 1945. More than 800,000 Allied soldiers fought in the battle, the great majority of them American. The Americans suffered over 90,000 casualties in what became one of the largest battles in which American forces have ever fought. Many airmen, like Staff Sergeant Charles H. Crossley, were recovered and brought to Ardennes, Belgium, for proper identification after the war. Crossley is buried today at Ardennes American Cemetery, along with more than 5,000 of his comrades in arms.

“We rarely focus on any one battle because we cannot justify spending time on a single campaign in a large war in a sweeping curriculum. However, this lesson allows a teacher to go in-depth on a battle while simultaneously working to improve reading, writing, and historical thinking skills.”
— Brian Weaver

Weaver is a teacher at Central Bucks High School - West in Doylestown, Pennsylvania.

Objectives

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to

- Analyze primary and secondary sources to determine how and why the Battle of the Bulge unfolded;
- Analyze the important decisions that helped to shape the battle;
- Evaluate the cost of war and sacrifice on the part of its participants by studying the Crossley telegrams and letters; and
- Compare newsreel footage from January 1945 to primary and secondary accounts of the battle.

Standards Connections

Connections to Common Core

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.3 Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.6 Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.8 Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

Connections to C3 Framework

D1.5.9-12 Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential uses of the sources.

D2.His.6.9-12 Analyze the ways in which the perspectives of those writing history shaped the history that they produced.

D2.His.8.9-12 Analyze how current interpretations of the past are limited by the extent to which available historical sources represent perspectives of the people at the time.

D2.His.9.9-12 Analyze the relationship between historical sources and the secondary interpretations made from them.

D2.His.12.9-12 Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to pursue further inquiry and investigate additional sources.

D2.His.14.9-12 Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.

Documents Used ★ indicates an ABMC source

Primary Sources

Champagne Bowl Flier, 1944

506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, United States Army, 1945

"Holding the Line at Bastogne," 1945

506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, United States Army

Interview with Gene Grayson, Battle of the Bulge Veteran, 2014

Map, *Limits of German Penetration*, December 1944

The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge, The U.S. Center of Military History

Map of the German Plan, 1944

The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge, The U.S. Center of Military History

Newsreel, *German Drive Rolled Back By Allies*, January 11, 1945

https://archive.org/details/1945-01-11_German_Drive_Rolled_Back_By_Allies

Photographs, *Bastogne, Winter 1944*

The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge, The U.S. Center of Military History

Telegrams and Letters to Charles Crossley's Family, 1944

Individual Deceased Personnel File, Department of the Army

Secondary Sources

World War II Interactive Timeline ★

American Battle Monuments Commission

http://abmc.gov/sites/default/files/interactive/interactive_files/WW2/index.html

Rick Atkinson, National Book Festival, 29:46-33:11

Library of Congress, 2013

http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=6123

Materials

- Battle of the Bulge Reporter's Notebook
- Battle of the Bulge Documents Packet
 - Photographs, *Bastogne, Winter 1944*
 - *Champagne Bowl Flier, 1944*
 - Telegrams and Letters to Charles Crossley's Family, 1944
 - *Map of the German Plan, December 1944*
 - Map, *Limits of German Penetration, December 1944*
 - "Holding the Line at Bastogne," 1945
 - Interview with Gene Grayson, Battle of the Bulge Veteran, 2014
- Rick Atkinson, National Book Festival Speech (excerpt)
- Ardennes News Article Rubric

Lesson Preparation

- Make one copy of the Battle of the Bulge Reporter's Notebook and Ardennes News Article Rubric for each student.
- Have newsreel cued to play for students.
- Create groups of four or five students each.
- Compile (either printed or online) the documents listed in the materials section. If printing copies, print one copy for each group.
- Cue the World War II Timeline in front of the class. To access the map, click on "1944" on the timeline at the bottom, and then click on the "Ardennes-Alsace Campaign."

Procedure

Battle of the Bulge Reporting (90 minutes)

- Show newsreel clip to class. Explain that this is a contemporary depiction of today's topic, the Battle of the Bulge. Have students think-pair-share their observations from watching the newsreel.
- Distribute Battle of the Bulge Reporter's Notebook to students, and divide them into groups of four or five.
- Distribute source documents in paper or electronic form.
- Explain to students that from December 1944 to January 1945, fighting raged in the Ardennes Forest. It is now February 1945. Now that the battle has subsided, it will be their job as reporters to make sense of what has happened and communicate it to the public.
 - They will use a series of sources concerning the battle to make sense of it.
 - For each source, they will answer questions that require them to apply historical thinking skills.
 - They must also complete a series of decision points, at which they reflect on the events or experiences outlined in the sources.
 - *Teacher Tip:* The exact procedure for what the students are looking for and answering about each document is spelled out in detail on the Battle of the Bulge Reporter's Notebook. Please consult that for specific instructions regarding each source.
- Teachers can assign students to divide the sources among group members and to answer the questions that go with each source. As they complete the questions, they should share the answers with their group members.
- Require students to complete Decision Points individually as they complete each source. These critical thinking questions help them identify individually with the battle.
- Instruct students who have completed their Reporter's Notebook to begin writing their news report.

Assessment

- Students will act as news reporters and write as if they were war correspondents in the Battle of the Bulge. The story must reference the sources they studied in the assignment. For example: They could interview Gene Grayson, ask the generals what happened, make reference to places on the maps, or describe the battle based on images in the newsreel or on the photographs of Bastogne.
- Assignments can be assessed using the Ardennes News Article Rubric.

Methods for Extension

- Students can create their own newsreels of the battle using a program like MovieMaker or iMovie.
- Students can focus on one of the major personalities in the battle and further research their role in the events (General Omar Bradley, General George Patton, General Gerd von Rundstedt, and Adolf Hitler are examples.)
- Students can choose another battle and compile similar sources (secondary, primary, written, video, photographs, etc.).
- Students can read a source about air power and its role in the Battle of the Bulge.
- Teachers can turn this into a fuller-length writing assignment (more of an essay than a news story) and instruct students to use longer answers/summaries from their Graphic Organizer as the basis for their arguments. It can be a more personal reflection on the battle (thus including the Decision Points) or it can be more of an overview of the battle that forces them to use a series of the documents.
- The American Battle Monuments Commission maintains U.S. military cemeteries overseas. These cemeteries are permanent memorials to the fallen, but it is important that students know the stories of those who rest here. To learn more about the stories of some of the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice, visit www.abmceducation.org/understandingsacrifice/abmc-sites.

Adaptations

- Teachers can show students a sample news report from the front lines during the war, or from any news source today, to help them understand how one is structured.
- Teachers can identify difficult words in advance and make a glossary for the day (some military terminology may not be familiar to the students).
- Teachers can eliminate some of the sources to allow more time. The lesson is designed so that swapping in/out sources will not affect the overall goals of understanding the battle and drilling historical skills.
- Teachers can create mixed-ability groups in advance.
- Teachers can use a document camera to capture good examples and share them with the class. For instance, if a student completes a thoughtful “Decision Point” it may help others who are struggling with that critical thinking piece. If no document camera is available, then teachers can read good answers aloud.
- Teachers can orally record a written document so students can play back and repeat as needed.

Battle of the Bulge Reporter's Notebook

From December 1944 to January 1945, fighting raged in the Ardennes Forest. Now that the battle has subsided, it will be your job as a reporter to create a news dispatch about what happened. You will use a series of sources concerning the battle to make sense of it. For each source, answer the questions that go with the item. At the end, you will write your piece.

PHASE 1: On the Road to Victory

Source: Champagne Bowl Photo

What does this tell you about the mood of the Allies in December 1944?



PHASE 2: One Final Strike

Secondary Source: http://abmc.gov/sites/default/files/interactive/interactive_files/WW2/index.html

> Click on 1944 > Click on Ardennes-Alsace Campaign > At left, a document will appear. Read the document until you get to "3 January 1945."

In one sentence, explain WHY Hitler wanted this strike. _____

In one sentence, explain WHAT the plan was. _____

In two sentences, summarize HOW the German attack unfolded, and how the Americans responded. _____

PHASE 3: Thrust to the North Sea

Source: Map of the German Plan

Use the TARGET method to analyze the map of the German Plan.

Title: _____

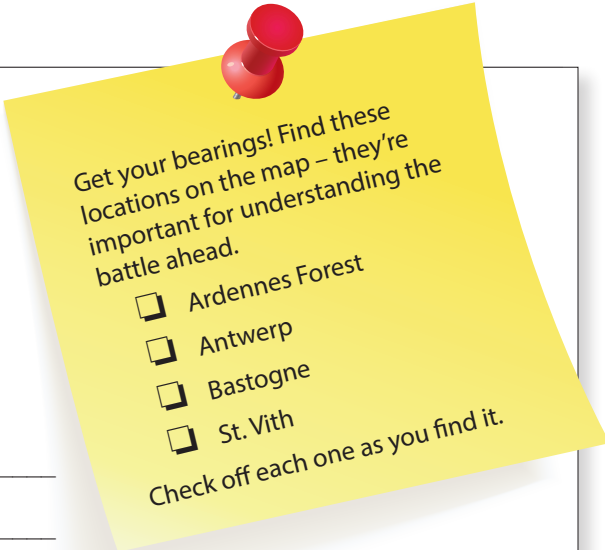
Area (What overall area is the map showing?): _____

Region (What regions are being affected by events/issues on the map?): _____

Group (What groups/people would the action on the map affect?): _____

Economics (Does this map show anything of economic importance? Hint: Where do trade and commerce enter/leave?): _____

Theme (Overall, what does the map tell you?): _____





DECISION POINT!

How would you try to hold/ defend Bastogne? Where should you put troops? Why? Explain your answer in three sentences.

PHASE 4: A Closer Look

Source: Photograph of Bastogne

1. Study the photograph for an overall impression of the photography and examine individual items. _____

2. Divide the photo into quadrants to see what details become visible. Discuss the people, objects, and activities in the photo.

3. Based on what you have observed, discuss three or four things you might infer from the photograph. _____

4. Are there questions left unanswered by the photograph? What would you as the photographer change if you had the chance? _____



PHASE 5: Farthest Extent

Source: Rick Atkinson Book Talk (Library of Congress)*

How does Atkinson describe the surprise? Why was it so dramatic? Why was it so effective? _____

What accounts/sources did Atkinson probably consult to come to this conclusion? _____

Source: Limits of German Penetration Map

Look at the Ardennes Counteroffensive map in the top right corner. In two sentences, explain how the farthest German penetration compared to the original plan and objectives.

*Can read or watch this source.

DECISION POINT!

Source: Limits of German Penetration Map

On the larger map, identify Bastogne.

In two sentences, explain the situation at Bastogne.

What difference is there between the American lines at Bastogne and the American lines elsewhere on the map?



PHASE 6: How Did the Americans Stop the Attack?

Source: Holding the Line at Bastogne

Communication was often an issue at Bastogne. These two articles overlap, cutting out some words. Piecing together information from both, explain in three sentences how the American forces stopped the German advance.

DECISION POINT!

What critical decisions did General MacAuliffe face in Bastogne? Could you have reacted as he did? Why or why not? (You may not just say, "No, because I'm not a general in 1944." Think it through.)

PHASE 7: A Ground Level View

Source: Gene's Interview

You've read a little about the 101st Airborne Division's experience. What about those racing across France to save the embattled troops? Read this description of what it was like for troops on the ground, and summarize it in three sentences.

What would you expect to read in Gene's selection that wasn't mentioned? _____

What was mentioned in Gene's selection that you didn't expect?



DECISION POINT!

What sorts of things do you think soldiers had to do both mentally and physically to push past the hurdles men like Gene faced?

Think of the hardest things you've ever had to do. How did you make yourself keep going? Do you think that would work for something as traumatic as World War II? Why or why not?

PHASE 8: The Ones We Left Behind

Source: Charles Crossley Missing in Action (MIA) and Confirmed Killed in Action (KIA)

During all of the events above soldiers put themselves in harm’s way, and some never made it back. This is an example of what their family could expect to see. Even though this pilot was shot down earlier in the war, this is the kind of communication that commanding officers sent home each time a soldier went missing or was killed.

Read the series of telegrams sent home to the Crossley family when Charles went MIA/KIA and answer the questions that follow.

Page 1

What is the purpose of this communication? _____

What stands out to you about this form? Choose three things. Look at all four quadrants of the telegram closely. _____

If you were the family receiving this, what other information would you want on this telegram? _____

Page 2

What is the purpose of this communication? _____

What stands out to you about this letter? Choose three things. Read carefully. _____

Does this satisfy what you would have wanted to see in the first telegram? _____

PHASE 8: The Ones We Left Behind (continued)

Page 3

What is the purpose of this communication? _____

What stands out to you about this letter? Choose three things. Read carefully. _____

What has changed since the last letter? _____

Page 4

What is the purpose of this communication? _____

What stands out to you about this form? Choose three things. Look at all four quadrants of the telegram closely. _____

How does it compare to the last two letters? _____

OVERALL:

Now that you have read these, if you were a general, do you think the knowledge that you would have to send letters like this home would change any of the decisions you have made so far at your Decision Points? Why or why not? _____

What does this tell you about the sacrifice made by the families of servicemen? _____

PHASE 9: Perspectives

You now have four accounts of the Battle of the Bulge: your textbook, the initial timeline summary, the *Saturday Evening Post* article, and Gene’s story.

Name one other point of view that could help you understand the battle more fully. _____

Why would this source be helpful? _____

In two sentences, explain why this battle was important. What did this mean for the United States? For Germany? _____

What unique sacrifices were asked of the troops and leaders at this battle? _____

PHASE 10: Wrapping up

Source: Newsreel - January 11, 1945.

Now watch the newsreel clip again.
What images and information were in the newsreel that you already knew, or that you expected to see? _____

What images and information were in the newsreel that you did not know, or that you did not expect to see? _____

Does this newsreel describe the battle as you now understand it? If so, give two key points it includes that make it an accurate portrayal. If not, explain two things that would make it a more accurate portrayal. _____



DECISION POINT!

Why might Gene’s story sound different than the story from the newsreel, even though they are talking about the same event?

What was the purpose of making the newsreel? How might that affect what its writers/directors included or left out?

Rick Atkinson

Author of *The Guns At Last Light*

Excerpt from transcript of speech at 2013 National Book Festival

[The German attack] fell almost entirely on the Americans arrayed in the Belgian Ardennes and in the Ardennes that extend down into Luxembourg, took them almost entirely by surprise. It was an enormous intelligence failure. It was an intelligence failure ranking right up there with Pearl Harbor and 9/11. Because there was great surprise, and because the Germans had attacked at a part of the Ardennes where we were particularly lightly defended there was great confusion. And in fact Courtney Hodges, Lieutenant General who was the commander of the U.S. First Army, had what appears to be a nervous breakdown of sorts at a very inopportune moment. He closed the door of his office and spa and put his head down on the desk, and basically for 24 hours his Chief of Staff ran First Army at a time when it appeared as though the Germans might overrun First Army. There was concern that Hodges was obviously not up to.

[British] Field Marshal [Bernard] Montgomery, although this was out of his sector, was given the responsibility of taking over Hodges' First Army and a big portion of the American forces, and Montgomery went and looked Hodges directly in the eye and came to the conclusion that in fact he had righted the ship somehow, that whatever affliction had caused him to put his head down on the desk seemed to have passed. He wrote to Eisenhower who was the Supreme Commander in Europe and said, "He's not the man I would have chosen at all, but I think we're going to be okay. And I'll keep a close eye on him." Hodges actually recovered sufficiently to finish the war out. There were a number of instances where commanders, not just at the Battle of the Bulge, just simply didn't measure up, and they were relieved. First Army in particular, ironically, was very precipitous in relieving commanders and replacing them. In Hodges' case he got a second chance.

Ardennes News Article

Category	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Emerging
Content	Clearly summarizes and analyzes the key points of the battle. Sharp analysis of documents.	Sufficiently summarizes the key points of the battle. Includes some analysis of documents.	Summarizes some points of the battle, but leaves out some key points. Superficial analysis of documents.	Summary has many holes. Little or no analysis of documents.
Use of Sources	Includes useful information from/reference to all or all but one of the sources.	Includes information from/reference to six or seven sources.	Includes information from/reference to four or five sources.	References fewer than four sources. Student uses little information from the sources.
Conventions	Less than three grammatical errors. Sharp writing skills. Good transitions between paragraphs.	Three grammatical errors. Writing style and organization of thoughts are acceptable.	Four or five grammatical errors. Clear struggle with style and organization.	More than five grammatical errors. Poor organization, poor writing style, little grasp of conventions.

Gene Grayson, 87th Infantry Division, Battle of the Bulge Veteran

Once you're in [the war] it's not like when you're looking back on it. There are no great heroic thoughts going through your head. What's inconceivable to me is how short it was. It seems so long when you're day-to-day in the thing. But it really didn't last that long...

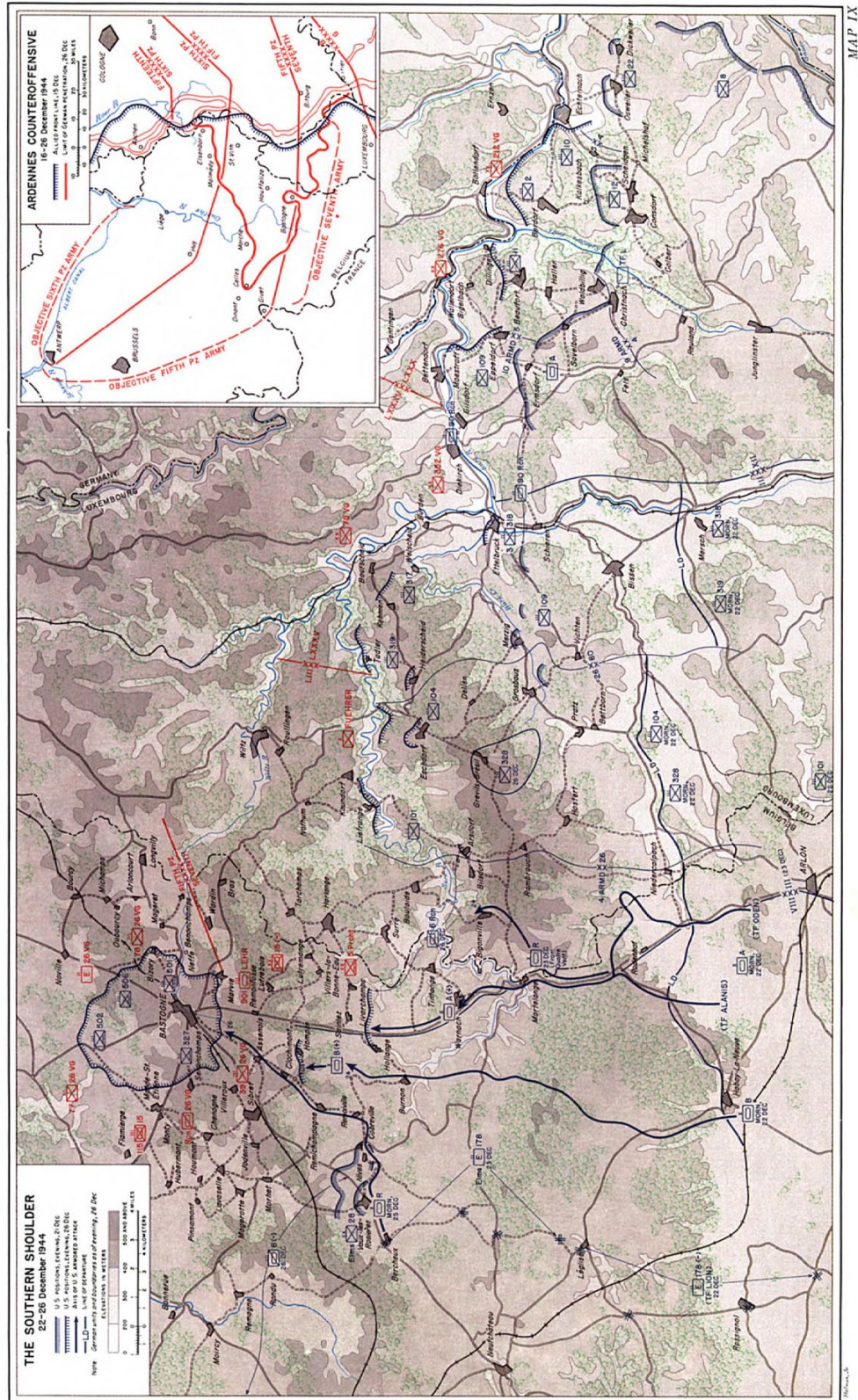
We had to drive two days to get there, in the steel bed of a truck. We entertained ourselves telling jokes, or singing songs...

My only major memory is how cold it was. Early on we got to the Bulge. Moving along, I'd stepped on the hand of a dead German soldier. He was frozen...

You mindlessly do whatever you have to do. It's survival. You wake up, open your bag, get a heat cube for your feet, then go to your lieutenant. He'll tell you what to do. We never saw the maps. He'd say, "We're marching four miles today." So we did. You march until you meet resistance.

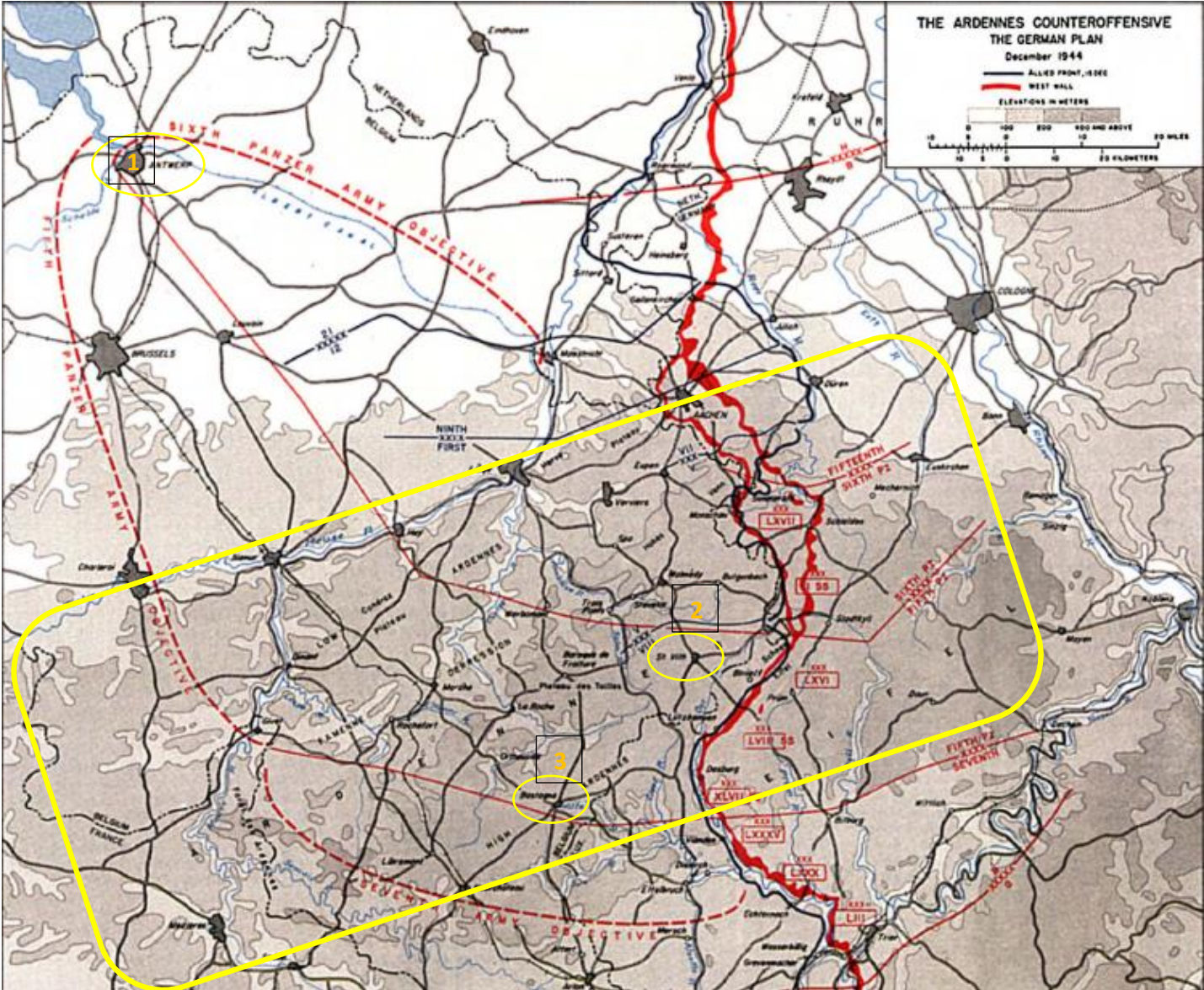
Limits of German Penetration, December 1944

The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge, The U.S. Center of Military History



Map of the German Plan, 1944

The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge, The U.S. Center of Military History



 Ardennes Forest

- 1 Antwerp
- 2 St. Vith
- 3 Bastogne

Photographs, *Bastogne, Winter 1944*

The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge, The U.S. Center of Military History



Photographs, Bastogne, Winter 1944

The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge, The U.S. Center of Military History



Telegrams and Letters to Charles Crossley's Family, 1944

Individual Deceased Personnel File, Department of the Army

Not to be delivered by phone except when authorized by the sender.
Not to be delivered between the hours of 10 PM and 7 AM.

**CASUALTY MESSAGE
TELEGRAM**

OFFICIAL BUSINESS—GOVERNMENT RATES

AG 201 **CROSSLEY, CHARLES H (5 JUL 44)** **SPXPC-N BTO 116** **6 JULY 1944**
ASN 33 462 202 DATE

MRS META P CROSSLEY
RURAL FREE DELIVERY NUMBER 4
DANVILLE PENNSYLVANIA

THE SECRETARY OF WAR DESIRES ME TO EXPRESS HIS DEEP REGRET THAT YOUR

SON **STAFF SERGEANT** **CHARLES H CROSSLEY**
(RELATIONSHIP) (GRADE) (NAME)

HAS BEEN REPORTED MISSING IN ACTION SINCE

TWENTY THREE JUNE **OVER FRANCE**
(DATE) (LOCALITY)

DETAILS OR OTHER INFORMATION ARE RECEIVED YOU WILL BE PROMPTLY NOTIFIED

OFFICIAL: **Charles W. J. Whitcroft**
1st Lt., A. G. D.
 ADJUTANT GENERAL

ULIC
 THE ADJUTANT GENERAL CASUALTY BRANCH, AGO

BATTLE
 (Initials & Date)

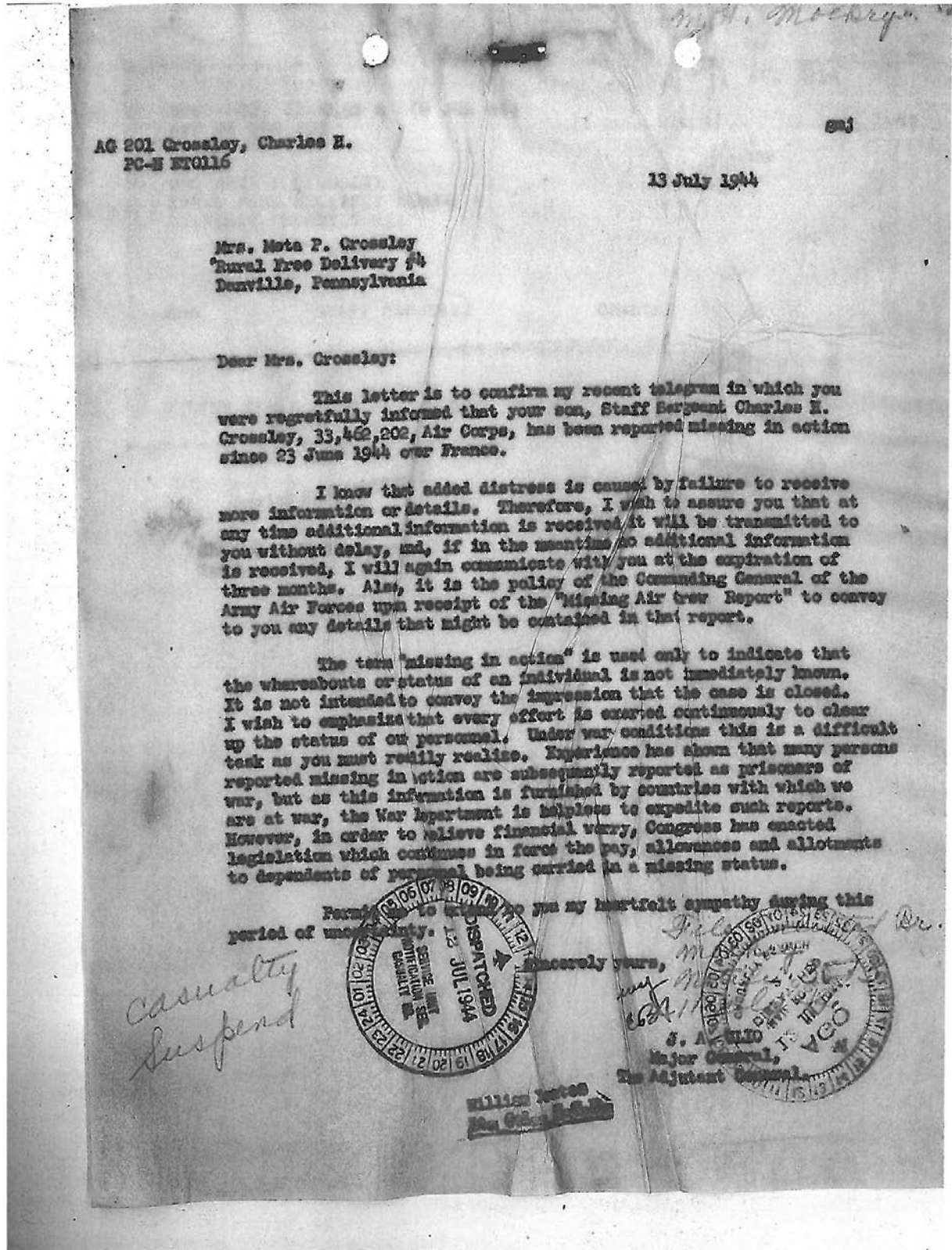
FROM WAR DEPARTMENT
 BUREAU A G O.
 CHG. APPROPRIATION
KVD 3814

DISPATCHED
 JUL 1944
 CASUALTY BRANCH

GILMAN FANFOLD CORP. 48176

Telegrams and Letters to Charles Crossley's Family, 1944

Individual Deceased Personnel File, Department of the Army



Telegrams and Letters to Charles Crossley's Family, 1944

Individual Deceased Personnel File, Department of the Army

AFPPA, MDC/kmg/76365
Rm. 4311, 8/4/44

AFPPA - 8

AAF 20a - (6263) Crossley, Charles H.
33462202

August 5, 1944

Mrs. Meta P. Crossley,
Rural Free Delivery Number 4,
Danville, Pennsylvania.

Dear Mrs. Crossley:

I am writing you with reference to your son, Staff Sergeant Charles H. Crossley, who was reported by The Adjutant General as missing in action over France since June 23rd.

Further information dated June 26th has just been received which indicates that Sergeant Crossley was a crew member of a B-24 (Liberator) bomber which departed from England on a bombardment mission to Juvincourt, France on June 23rd. Full details are not available, but the report indicates that while returning from this mission your son's bomber sustained damage from enemy antiaircraft fire and was last seen Southwest of Brussels, Belgium at about 8:40 p.m. These facts constitute all the information presently available in this headquarters.

Due to necessity for military security it is regretted that the names of those who were in the plane and the names and addresses of their next of kin may not be furnished at the present time.

Please be assured that a continuing search by land, sea, and air is being made to discover the whereabouts of our missing personnel. As our armies advance over enemy occupied territory, special troops are assigned to this task, and all agencies of the government in every country are constantly sending in details which aid us in bringing additional information to you.

Very sincerely,

BRADUNAS,
A. G. D.,
Chief, Notification Branch,
Personal Affairs Division,
Assistant Chief of Staff, Personnel.



DISTRIBUTION:
A. G. O. 201 Files
A. G. O. Casualty Branch
Comeback Copy Room 4A280

Telegrams and Letters to Charles Crossley's Family, 1944

Individual Deceased Personnel File, Department of the Army

STANDARD FORM No. 14A
APPROVED BY THE PRESIDENT
MARCH 10, 1926

TELEGRAM

OFFICIAL BUSINESS—GOVERNMENT RATES

FROM **WAR DEPARTMENT**

BUREAU

FRG 3814

AG 201 CROSSLEY, CHARLES H 17 AUG 44 SPXPC-N 231136-1-14 28 AUGUST 1944
ASN 33 462 202

MRS META P CROSSLEY
RURAL FREE DELIVERY NUMBER FOUR
DANVILLE PENNSYLVANIA

REPORT NOW RECEIVED FROM THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE INTERNATIONAL
RED CROSS STATES YOUR SON STAFF SERGEANT CHARLES H CROSSLEY WHO WAS
PREVIOUSLY REPORTED MISSING IN ACTION WAS KILLED IN ACTION ON TWENTY
THREE JUNE IN THE EUROPEAN AREA THE SECRETARY OF WAR EXTENDS HIS DEER
SYMPATHY LETTER FOLLOWS

OFFICIAL *Coates*

ADJUTANT GENERAL

J A ULIO
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
BATTLE

DISPATCHED
28 AUGUST
SERVING UNIT
MILITARY
OFFICE

hh/3/44