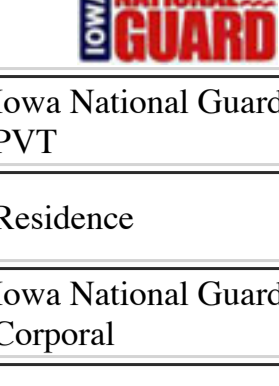


Research done by Claradell Shedd, Class of 1953.

Robert Eric Eckman

Bob graduated in the June, 1927 North High class. He enlisted at the Memorial Armory, East First Street, Des Moines, IA. His service number was 0408449. Bob's next of kin was listed as Mrs. Rhoda Amelia Johnson Davis, street address, Des Moines, IA.

Year	Rank	Status
June, 1927	Graduated	Graduated from North High School, Des Moines, IA.
Summer, 1927	Employed	Worked on a farm
Dec. 1, 1927	 Iowa National Guard	Iowa National Guard (while working at the Rollins Hosiery Mill)
Dec. 1, 1927	Iowa National Guard/ PVT	Enlisted. Removal from State
March 13, 1929	Iowa National Guard/ PVT	Enlisted. Removal from State
1930	Residence	1930 Census shows Robert living with grandmother, Emma C. Sammelson, at 3942 North 1st Street.
August 11, 1931	Iowa National Guard/ Corporal	Enlisted. Appointed Corporal April 20, 1932
1932	Residence	Living at 1268 Stewart Street in Des Moines, IA (machine operator)
August 5, 1932	Iowa National Guard/ Sergeant	Enlisted. Appointed Sergeant through August 1, 1939
1927-1934	Employed	Rollins Hosiery Mill in Des Moines, IA
August 5, 1939	Iowa National Guard/ 1st Sergeant	Appointed First Sergeant through August 10, 1940
December 11, 1940	Iowa National Guard/ 2nd Lt	Appointed 2nd Lt., Infantry, Iowa National Guard 168th Infantry
1934-1941	Employed	Memorial Armory, East First and Des Moines Streets, Des Moines, IA as federal custodian
Feb. 10, 1941	US Army/LT	To Camp Claiborne, LA; 168th Infantry, 34th Division (Red Bull)
May 31, 1941	US Army/LT	Married Lillie Belle Butcher in Alexandria, LA.
Dec. 7, 1941	Pearl Harbor	Military assignment followed
Jan 15, 1942	Training	Fort Dix, NJ
January 26, 1942	US Army	From Fort Dix, NJ to Dufferin Quay, Belfast, Ireland
Nov. 8, 1942	US Army	Ireland to Scotland to North Africa
date	US Army	Captured as Prisoner of War. Taken to Moosburg, Germany, Stalag VII A.
date	US Army	As POW camp available for American officers at Moosburg, so sent to camp for British officers in Rotenberg, Germany on the Fulda River.
June, 1943	US Army	As POW, taken from Rotenberg to Oflag 64 in Sczubin, Poland, remaining there until the Russians came in January, 1945.
January, 1945	US Army/Captain	Taken from Oflag 64 in Sczubin, Poland back to Moosburg, Germany.
April, 29, 1945	US Army/Captain	Liberated from POW camp at Moosburg, Germany (Sunday)
1945	US Army	Promoted to Major
June 12, 1945	US Army/Major	Returned to U.S. Tour of five service schools, ending up at Ft. Lewis, WA
1945	US Army/Major	Utah Depot (Tooele Army Depot) and then to Ft. Riley, KS
October 14, 1949	US Army/Major	Filing for WWII Service Compensation (PB-A-4732), Fort Riley, Geary County, Kansas. Hq. 85th Infantry, 10th Infantry Division
March 3, 1950	US Army/Major	Daughter Marilyn born at Ft. Riley, KS
date	US Army/Major	To Aschaffenburg, Germany and then to Mainz Gonsenheim. Promoted to Lt. Col.
date	US Army/Lt. Colonel	Mainz, Gonsenheim, Germany
1953	US Army/Lt. Colonel	Family returned to U.S. and to Ft. Riley, KS
1953	US Army/Lt. Colonel	Ft. Leonard Wood, MO
October 31, 1954	US Army/Lt. Colonel	Discharged from National Guard. Family moved to farm in Lucas County, IA
1958	Family	Moved to Des Moines, IA. Bob worked briefly at Kurtz Hardware.
1959	Employed	Real estate salesman for Chamberlain, Kirk & Cline.
1960-1965	Employed	Real estate broker. Then accepted position as an assistant to the Iowa Real Estate Commissioner. He later assumed the Commissioner's position and held it until 1965. Living at 2318 40th Street in Des Moines.
December 10, 1963	US Army/Iowa National Guard/Lt. Colonel	Placed on Roll of Retired Officers, Iowa National Guard
1965	Employed	Warehouseman until retirement
date	Volunteer	Ware Star Museum, Camp Dodge, IA. Constructed model of POW Camp Oflag 64 which he donated to the Museum along with other WWII artifacts.
1958-2001	Residing	2318 40th Street, Des Moines, IA
January 18, 2001	Deceased	Des Moines, IA
January 23, 2001	Interred	Glendale Cemetery, Des Moines, IA. Find-A-Grave Memorial #72498912.

34th Infantry Division
The 34th Infantry Division ("Red Bull") is a division in the Army National Guard that participated in World War I and World War II. It was the first U.S. division deployed to Europe in World War II. The division was deactivated in 1945, and the 47th "Viking" Infantry Division later created in the division's former area. In 1991 the 47th Division was redesignated the 34th.

In common with other U.S. Army divisions the 34th was reorganized from a square to a triangular division before seeing combat. The division's three infantry regiments became the 133rd, 135th, and 168th Infantry Regiments.

On 8 January 1942, the 34th was transported by train to Fort Dix, New Jersey to quickly prepare for overseas movement. The first contingent embarked at Brooklyn on 14 January 1942 and sailed from New York the next day. The initial group of 4,508 stepped ashore at 12:15 hrs on 26 January 1942 at Dufferin Quay, Belfast. They were met by a delegation including the Governor (Duke of Abercorn), the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland (John Miller Andrews), the Commander of British Troops Northern Ireland (General G. E. W. Franklin), and the Secretary of State for Air (Sir Archibald Sinclair).

While in Northern Ireland, Hartle was tasked with organizing an American version of the British Commandos, a group of small "fit and run" troops, and promoted his Axis-de-camp artillery Captain William O. Darby to lead the new unit. [15] Major Darby assembled volunteers, and of the first 500 Rangers, 281 came from the 34th Infantry Division. On 20 May 1942, Hartle was designated commanding general of V Corps and Major General Charles Ryder took command of the 34th. The division trained in Northern Ireland until it boarded ships to travel to North Africa for Operation Torch in November 1942.

The 34th Infantry Division saw its first combat in French Algeria on 8 November 1942. As a member of the Eastern Task Force, which included two brigades of the British 78th Infantry Division, and two British Commando units, they landed at Algiers and seized the port and outlying airfields. Elements of the Division took part in numerous subsequent engagements in Tunisia during the Allied build up, notably at Sened Station [16] Sidi Bou Zid and Faid Pass, Sheitla, and Fondouk Gap [17] In April 1943 the division assaulted Hill 609, capturing it on 1 May 1943, and then drove through Chouigui Pass to Tebourba and Ferryville [18] The Battle of Tunisia was won, and the Axis forces surrendered.

The Red Bull in the Winter Line of Pantano, Italy – 29 November to 3 December 1943. The division then trained for the inception of the Allied Invasion of Italy (Operation Avalanche), beginning with the Salerno landing. The 151st Field Artillery Battalion went in on D-day, 9 September 1943, at Salerno, while the rest of the division followed on 25 September. Engaging the enemy at the Calore River, 28 September 1943, the 34th, as part of the U.S. II Corps, relentlessly drove north to take Benevento, crossed the winding Volturno three times in October and November, assaulted Monte Pantano, and took one of its four peaks before being relieved, 9 December 1943. In January 1944, the division was back on the front line battering the Bernhard Line defenses. Persevering through bitter fighting along the Mignano Gap, the 34th used goat herds to clear the minefields. The 34th took Monte Trocchio without resistance as the German defenders withdrew to the main prepared defenses of the Gustav Line. On 24 January 1944, during the First Battle of Monte Cassino they pushed across the Rapido River into the hills behind and attacked Monastery Hill which dominated the town of Cassino. While they nearly captured the objective, in the end their attacks on the monastery and the town failed. The performance of 34th Division in the mountains has been called one of the finest feats of arms carried out by any soldiers during the war. The unit sustained losses of almost 80 per cent in the infantry battalions. They were relieved from their positions 11–13 February 1944. Eventually, it took the combined force of five allied infantry divisions to finish what the 34th nearly accomplished on its own.

Full color shoulder sleeve insignia (SSI) formerly worn on a unit member's dress uniform. After rest and rehabilitation, the 34th landed at the Anzio beachhead 25 March 1944. The division maintained defensive positions until the offensive of 23 May, when it broke out of the beachhead, took Cisterna, and raced to Civitavecchia and Rome. After a short rest, the division drove across the Cecina River to liberate Livorno, 19 July 1944, and continued on to take Monte Belmonte in October during the fighting on the Gothic Line. Digging in south of Bologna for the winter, the 34th jumped off, 15 April 1945, and captured Bologna on 21 April. Pursuit of the routed enemy to the French border was halted on 2 May upon the German surrender in Italy. On 27 June 1944 the 16th SS-Panzer Grenadiers command post in San Vincenzo, Italy was overrun by the 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry, 34th Division. The command post was a town centre apartment which had been commandeered, when the owners returned to their apartment they found a signed large leather bound Stielers Hand Atlas which had been left behind; more on this story here <http://seniorlieutenantchrysoninthehoff.wordpress.com/>.

Subdued shoulder sleeve insignia (SSI) currently worn on a unit member's Army Combat Uniform. The division participated in six major Army campaigns in North Africa and Italy. The division is credited with amassing 517 days of front-line combat, more than any other U.S. division. One or more 34th Division units were engaged in actual combat with the enemy on 611 days. The 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry and the Ironman battalion still holds the record over the rest of the United States Army for days in combat. The division was credited with more combat days than any other division in the war. The 34th Division suffered 3,737 killed in action, 14,165 wounded in action, and 3,460 missing in action, for a total of 21,362 battle casualties. Casualties of the division are considered to be the highest of any division in the theatre when daily per capita fighting strengths are considered. The division's soldiers were awarded ten Medals of Honor, ninety-eight Distinguished Service Crosses, one Distinguished Service Medal, 1,153 Silver Stars, 116 Legion of Merit Medals, one Distinguished Flying Cross, 2,545 Bronze Star Medals, fifty-four Soldiers' Medals, thirty-four Air Medals, with duplicate awards of fifty-two oak leaf clusters, and 15,000 Purple Hearts.

Oflag 64:
Oflag 64 was a World War II German prisoner-of-war camp for officers located at Sczubin a few miles south of Bydgoszcz, in Pomorz, Poland, which at that time was occupied by Nazi Germany. It was probably the only German POW camp set up exclusively for U.S. Army ground component officers. At most other camps there were several nationalities, although they were usually separated into national compounds.

The camp was built around a Polish boys' school by adding barracks. Initially it was Stalag XXI-B for Polish soldiers until December 1940. It then became Oflag XXI-B for French and British Commonwealth officers, subsequently for Soviet officers until June 1943. They were then moved out to other camps, the Commonwealth flying personnel to Stalag Luft III Sagan, others to Oflag XXI-C Ostreszów. It was then re-numbered

On June 6, 1943 the camp was redesignated Oflag 64; it became an American officers-only camp with the arrival of officers captured in the North African Campaign in Tunisia. In late 1943 an escape committee started digging a tunnel which was to pass under the barbed wire fence, but in March 1944, upon receiving news of the disastrous results of the "Great Escape" from Stalag Luft III the escape committee ordered a shut-down of the operation. In June 1944 senior American officers captured in the Battle of Normandy were sent to Oflag 64.

On January 21, 1945, the roll call established a total of 1,471. Because of approaching Soviet troops, all POWs capable of walking were marched out. The senior U.S. officer was Lieutenant Colonel Paul Goode. Two days later, on January 23, 1945, the camp was liberated by the Soviet 61st Army. There were approximately 100 Americans, sick and medical personnel, and a few that had hidden in the old escape tunnel. About 200 escaped from the marching column and returned to the camp.



Enlistment: December 1, 1927



May 31, 1941: Robert & Lillie Butcher Eckman
 1953: Robert and Lillie Eckman with daughter, Marilyn



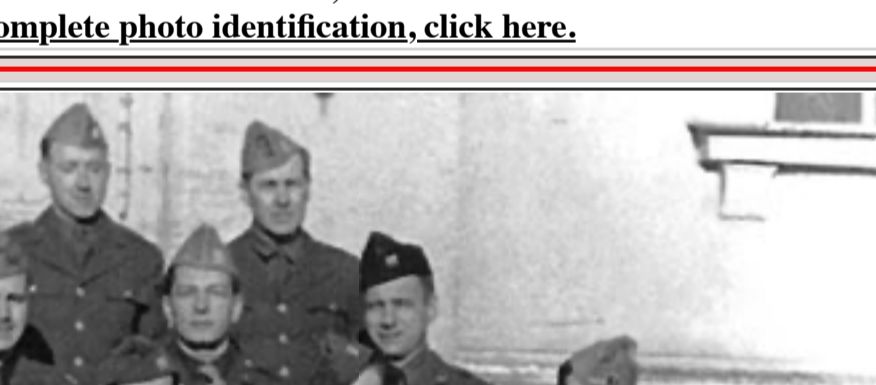
Company D, First Battalion, 158th Infantry, 34th Division
 In Gold Star Museum, Johnston, IA
 Sgt. Robert Eric Eckman is in the front row, far left end.
 For a larger image and complete photo identification, [click here](#).



Oflag 64; November, 1943;
 Sczubin a few miles south of Bydgoszcz, in Pomorz, Poland
 Sgt. Robert Eric Eckman is in the middle row, far left end.
 For a larger image and complete photo identification, [click here](#).



Location of Oflag 64



Model of Oflag 64, Artifacts, by Bob Eckman.
 In Gold Star Museum, Johnston, IA



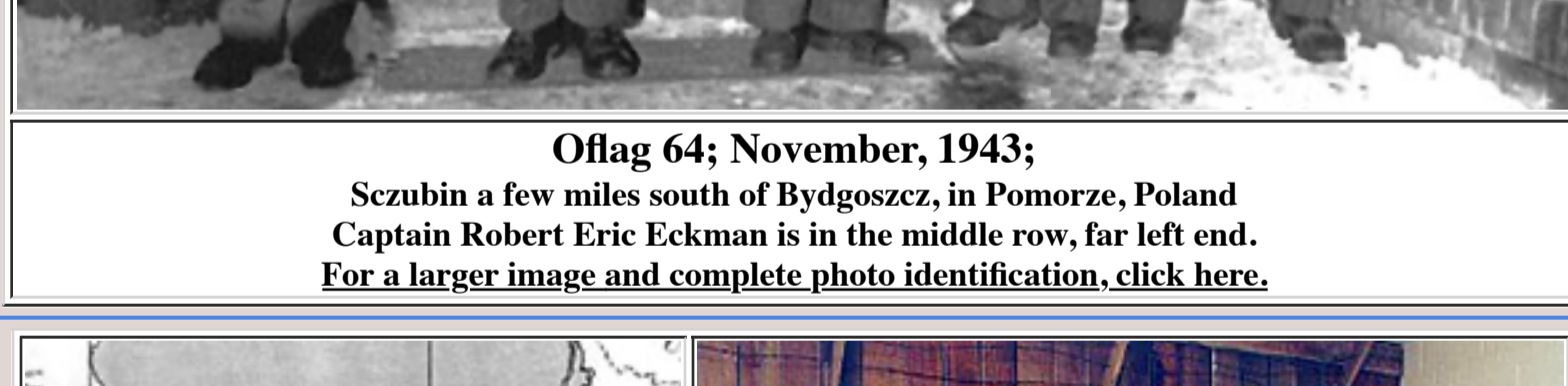
Bob Eckman Model Oflag 64 detail. Photos taken 01/08/15.



Iowa National Guard



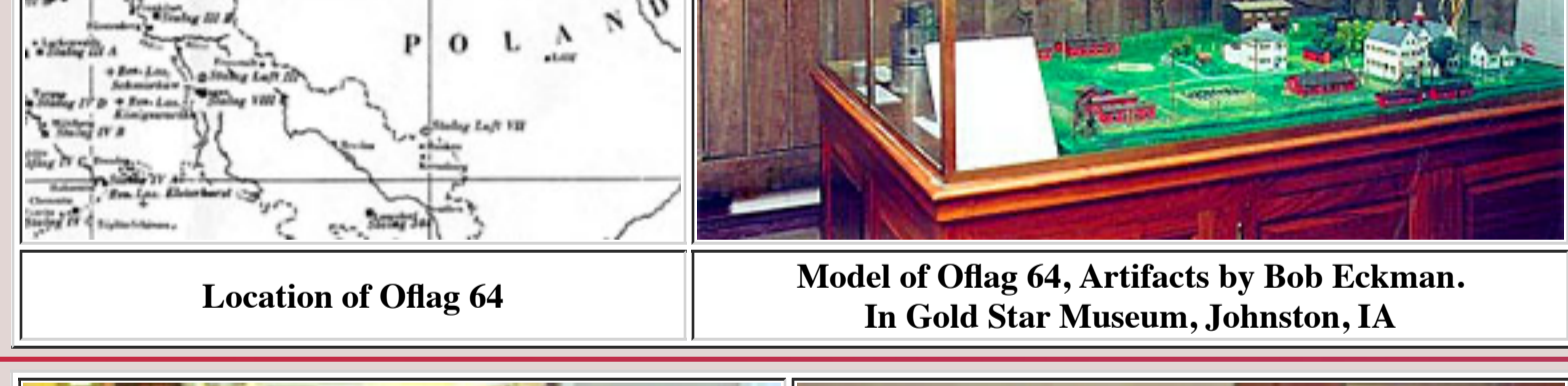
Fort Lewis



The Battle of Monte Cassino



The Battle of the Bulge



The Battle of the Bulge



The Battle of the Bulge



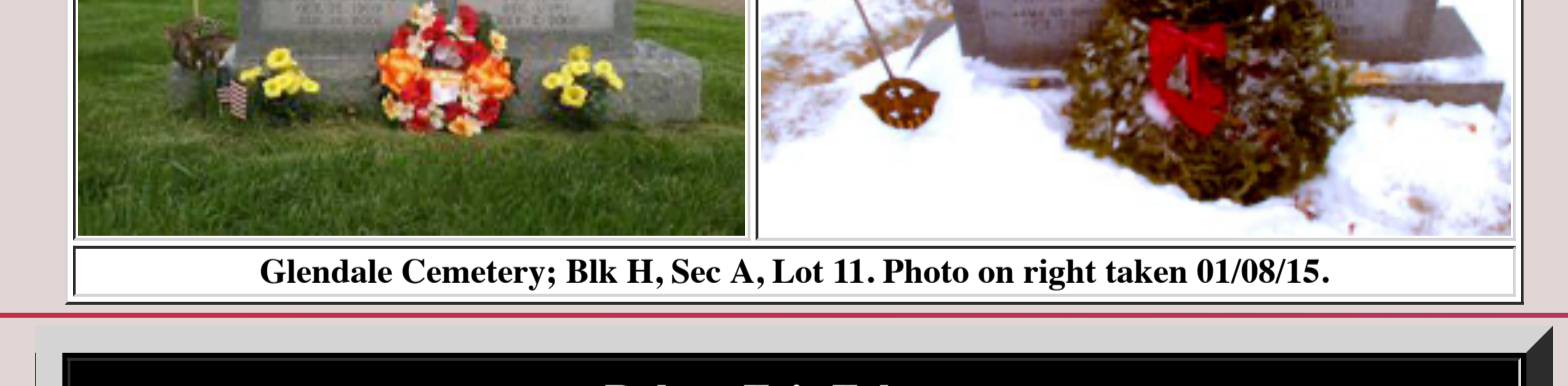
The Battle of the Bulge



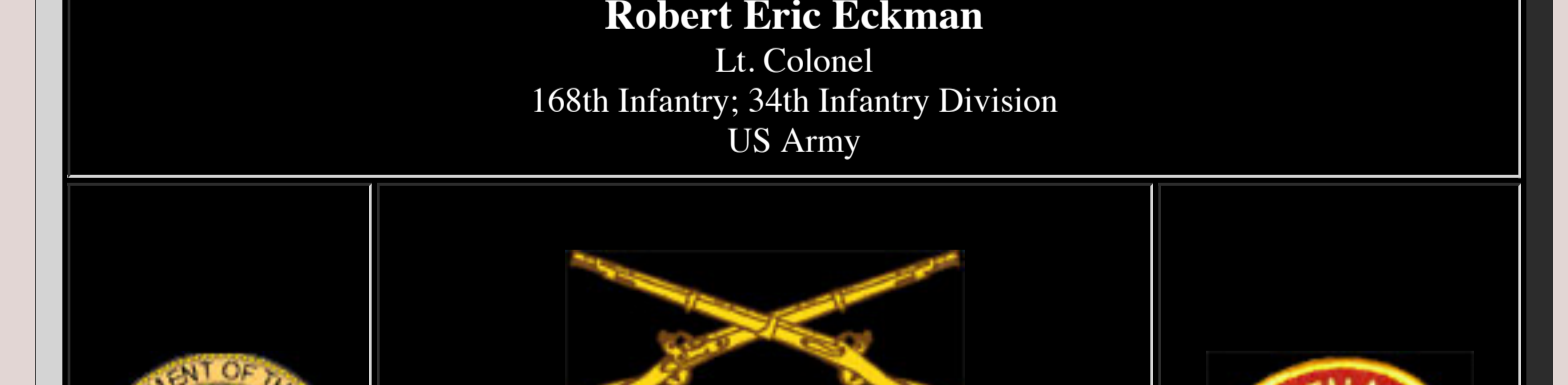
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The Battle of the Bulge



The Battle of the Bulge



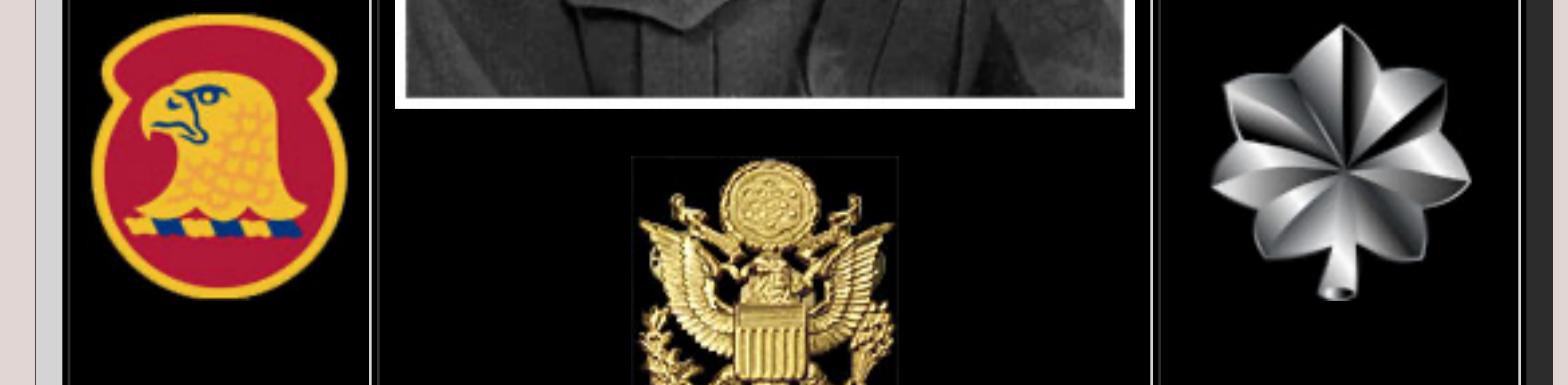
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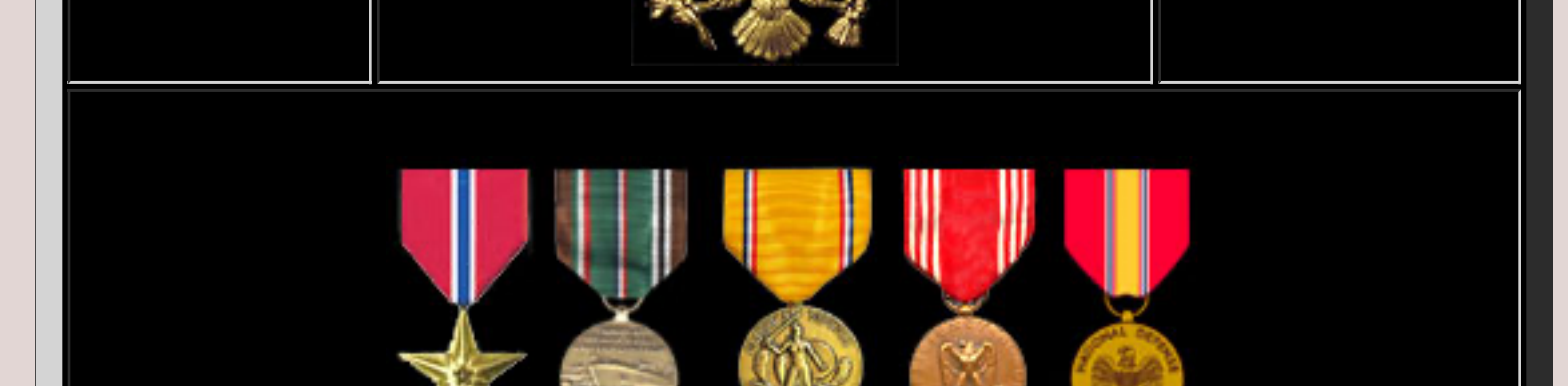
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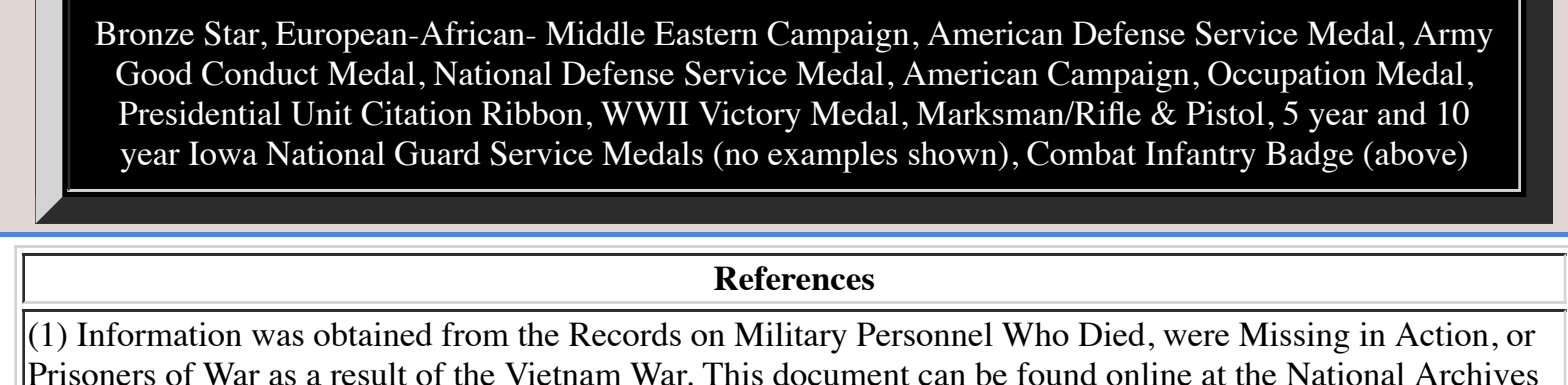
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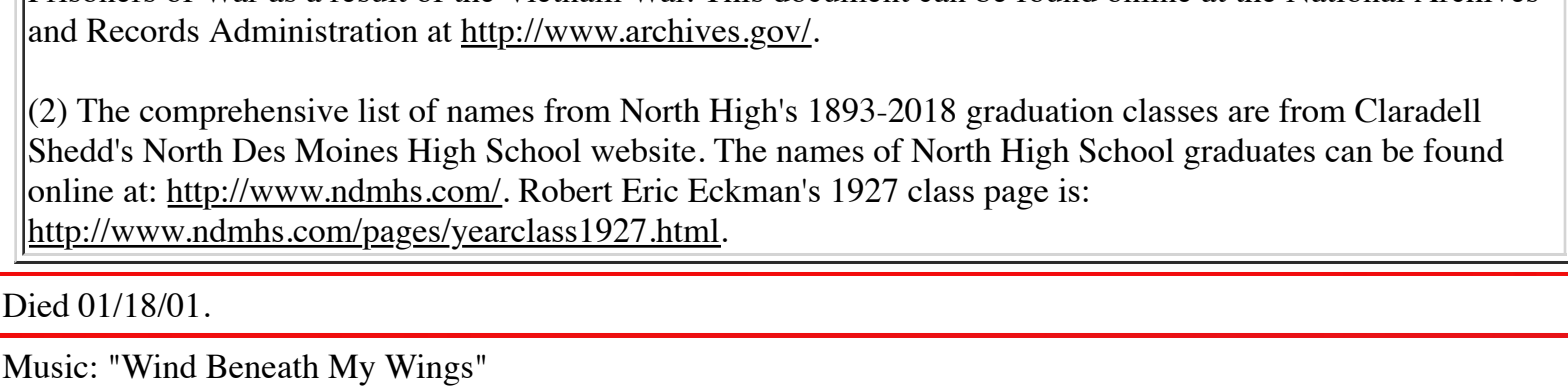
The Battle of the Bulge



The Battle of the Bulge



The Battle of the Bulge



The Battle of the Bulge

Glendale Cemetery; Blk H, Sec A, Lot 11. Photo on right taken 01/08/15.

Robert Eric Eckman
 Lt. Colonel
 168th Infantry; 34th Infantry Division
 US Army

