

JOINT STATEMENTS OF Eldephons C. Reischel, O-1306147, 1st Lt Infantry, Graves Registration Officer, 3rd Bn, 134th Infantry Regt, APO 35, US Army; Andrew (NMI) Baumgartner, 39030693, Pfc; Erwin C. Choate, 1281174, Pfc; J.P. Brown, 34198870, Pfc, all of Hq Co, 3rd Bn, 134th Inf

Before me, 1st Lt Morace R Hansen, being authorized to administer oaths personally appeared 1st Lt Eldephons C. Reischel, Pfc Andrew (NMI) Baumgartner, Pfc Erwin C. Choate and Pfc J.P. Brown who being by me first duly sworn, severally and jointly made and subscribed the following statement:

1st Lt. Eldephons C. Reischel states that he is Graves Registration Officer for the 3rd Bn, 134th Inf Regt, 35th Inf Div and acted in that capacity during the period concerned in this statement.

Pfc Andrew (NMI) Baumgartner states that he is a driver in Hq Co 3rd Bn, 134th Inf Regt and during the period concerned in this statement, he was a member of a Graves Registration detail under Lt Reischel. Pfc Erwin C. Choate states that he is ammunition handler in Hqs Co, 3rd Bn, 134th Inf Regt and during the period concerned in this statement was a member of the Graves Registration detail under Lt. Reischel. Pfc J.P. Brown states that he is a member of the A&P platoon of Hqs Co, 3rd Bn, 134th Inf Regt and during the period concerned in this statement, was a member of the Graves Registration detail under Lt Reischel.

Jointly, Lt Reischel, Pfc Baumgartner, Pfc Erwin C. Choate and Pfc Brown state that on the 13th Jan 45, they acted together as a Graves Registration detail and on that date removed bodies from the battlefield in the vicinity of F5752 grid square (France & Belgium, 1/50,000, Bastogne Sheet 121.)

On 12 Jan, 45 in a renewed attack, elements of the 134th Inf Regt cleared the area of grid square 5752 southeast of LUTREBOIS, BELGIUM and on 13 Jan 45, the Graves Registration detail was called upon to clear this area of dead bodies particularly because an Arty Bn was setting up positions in that area. About 1600 hrs on the 13th of Jan 45, the detail first came upon the bodies of two American soldiers lying side by side at F573523. The first body examined was identified as that of --

Carl R. Sahli, 35588131.

It was observed that the only wound on his body was a small arms bullet wound entering the center of the forehead and coming out the back of the skull in the center just above the base of the skull. The body was clothed in underwear, trousers, shirt. Dog tags and paybook were found. Shoes and socks had been removed and there was no other equipment or clothing anywhere near the body. The body was found lying on its back uncovered on the ground in a spruce woods.

The second body, also of an American soldier, was identified as of --

Robert L. Stone, 37974306

This body was also lying on its back immediately next to the body of Sahki. The only wound found on this body was a small arms bullet wound through the region of the heart. The body was clothed in underwear, trousers, shirt, field jacket and socks. The shoes had been removed and there was no equipment or other clothing found anywhere in the vicinity. Dog tags and pay book were found on the body.

The detail next came upon the bodies of two more American soldiers at P572527. These bodies were lying on their backs side by side on top of the ground uncovered at the edge of a woods. The first body identified was that of --

Russell J. Johnson, 36988980

On this body was a wound on the lower left leg and another in the left shoulder. Both of these wounds were dressed with American GI First Aid Packet bandages both blood-soaked. In both places, the clothing had been cut away for the application of these dressings. The other wounds which were undressed were caused from small arms bullets. One was through the base of the left hand and the other through the center of the forehead emerging at the top of the head where the skull was broken away and the brain was exposed and protruding. This body was dressed in underwear, trousers, shirt, field jacket, overcoat and socks. The shoes had been removed and the only other piece of clothing or equipment was a helmet lying about 5 to 6 yds away which had not been punctured. Dog tags and pay book was also found. The body lying next to that of Johnson was that of --

David I. Bowen, 34794378

This body had a wound in the left upper arm which was dressed with an American GI First Aid Packet dressing. Above the wound was a tourniquet made from a bandage and a stick. The only other wound on this body was a small arms Bullet wound entering the base of the skull in the back and emerging at the juncture of the neck and the left shoulder where a larger hole was observed. This wound was undressed. The body was clothed in underwear, shirt, trousers, field jacket, overcoat. Shoes and socks had been removed and there was no other piece of clothing or equipment in the vicinity except a helmet lying about 5 to 6 yds away, the helmet being unpunctured. Dog tags and pay book were found on the body.

The detail next came upon the body of an American soldier at P57255270 and was identified as that of --

Troy R. Eader, 37058996

This body was found lying on its right side on top of the ground in a gully. The only wound found on this body was a small arms bullet wound entering the back near the spine just below the shoulder blades and emerging at the breast bone where a larger hole was observed. This wound was not dressed. The body was clothed in underwear, trousers, shirt, field jacket, one shoe and a waist belt. One shoe was hanging from the branch of a tree next to the body. No helmet or other piece of equipment or clothing was found in the vicinity. Dog tags and pay book were found on the body.

The detail next came upon the body of another American soldier at P575527 which was identified as that of --

Wilbur C. Pyle, 18198599

There was a wound in the left chest which was dressed with an American GI First Aid Packet bandage which was blood-soaked. The clothing had been cut away for this dressing. The only other wound was a small arms bullet wound in the left upper skull. This was a creasing type wound which was about $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long in the flesh and had caused a piece of the skull to be knocked away about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch long and about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch wide. The brain was exposed. The body was clothed with underwear, trousers, shirt, field jacket and socks. The body was lying on its back with the head resting on an American gas mask. There were no other pieces of equipment or clothing except a helmet lying about $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft from his head which was unpunctured and a pack which had been stripped lying about 30 yds away. The body was found in a Spruce woods. Dog tags and pay book were found.

/ In the order stated above,
The second pair of bodies was found 200 yds north of the 1st pair; the 5th body was found 35 yds west of the second pair and the 6th body was found 200 yds east of the second pair of bodies. The only personal items found in the clothing of the bodies was dog tags and pay books. All waist belts had been removed except on the body of Bader. These six bodies were the only bodies of American soldiers found in the grid square 5752 by this detail. In this same grid square, this detail cleared the bodies of 17 enemy, eight of which were SS troopers. In this grid square, no items of American clothing or equipment were found except as stated above.

On 12th & 13th Jan 45, the days were clear without snowfall. On 10 & 11 Jan 45, the days were foggy but without snowfall. At some time prior to 10 Jan, there had been snowfalls, the exact time of which they do not now recall. The entire area was covered with snow and all six of the bodies of American soldiers referred to were lying on top of the ground on the snow and each of the bodies was covered with light film of snow about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{5}{8}$ of an inch. This indicates to them that the fatal wounds had been inflicted upon these men prior to 10 Jan while these soldiers were in the hands of the enemy.

The bodies were removed to a Collecting Point located at the east edge of the town of LUTREBOIS.

Lt Reischel states that on 13 Jan, he informed the Regtl S-2, Major Dale M. Godwin, of his findings as related above and that on 14 Jan, in company with Major Godwin, a further examination of the bodies was made at the Collecting Point and photographs were taken by Major Godwin.

1st Lt Eldephons C. Reischel

Pfc Andrew (NMI) Baumgartner

Pfc Erwin C. Choate

Pfc J.P. Brown

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 18th day of Feb, 1945

MORACE R. HANSEN
1st Lt, Infantry
Summary Court Officer