

Nine From Aberdeen



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Nine from Aberdeen



- **This book originated in 2003 as my M.A. thesis.**
 - Fascinated by stories of the Royal Engineers in WWII.
 - Undiscovered wealth of information on U.S. Army.
 - Project enlarged into my first publication in 2012.
- **Primary Resources and Document Collections.**
 - Bob Leiendecker and the National EOD Association.
 - Royal Engineers Association (United Kingdom)
 - Aberdeen Proving Ground Ordnance Museum.
 - NARA's extensive World War II collection.
 - Private collections from living veterans & families.

U.S. Army Ordnance Bomb Disposal



- The forerunner of our modern-day Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) profession.
- All major service branches had B.D. units in WWII, but the Army had the largest.
- Over 2,000 men served in Army B.D. units, suffering 10% casualties in Europe alone.
- B.D. squads participated in every theater, but received very little media coverage.
- Their story begins with the London Blitz.



Lt. Robert Davies removes a 1,200 lb. UXB endangering St. Paul's Cathedral.

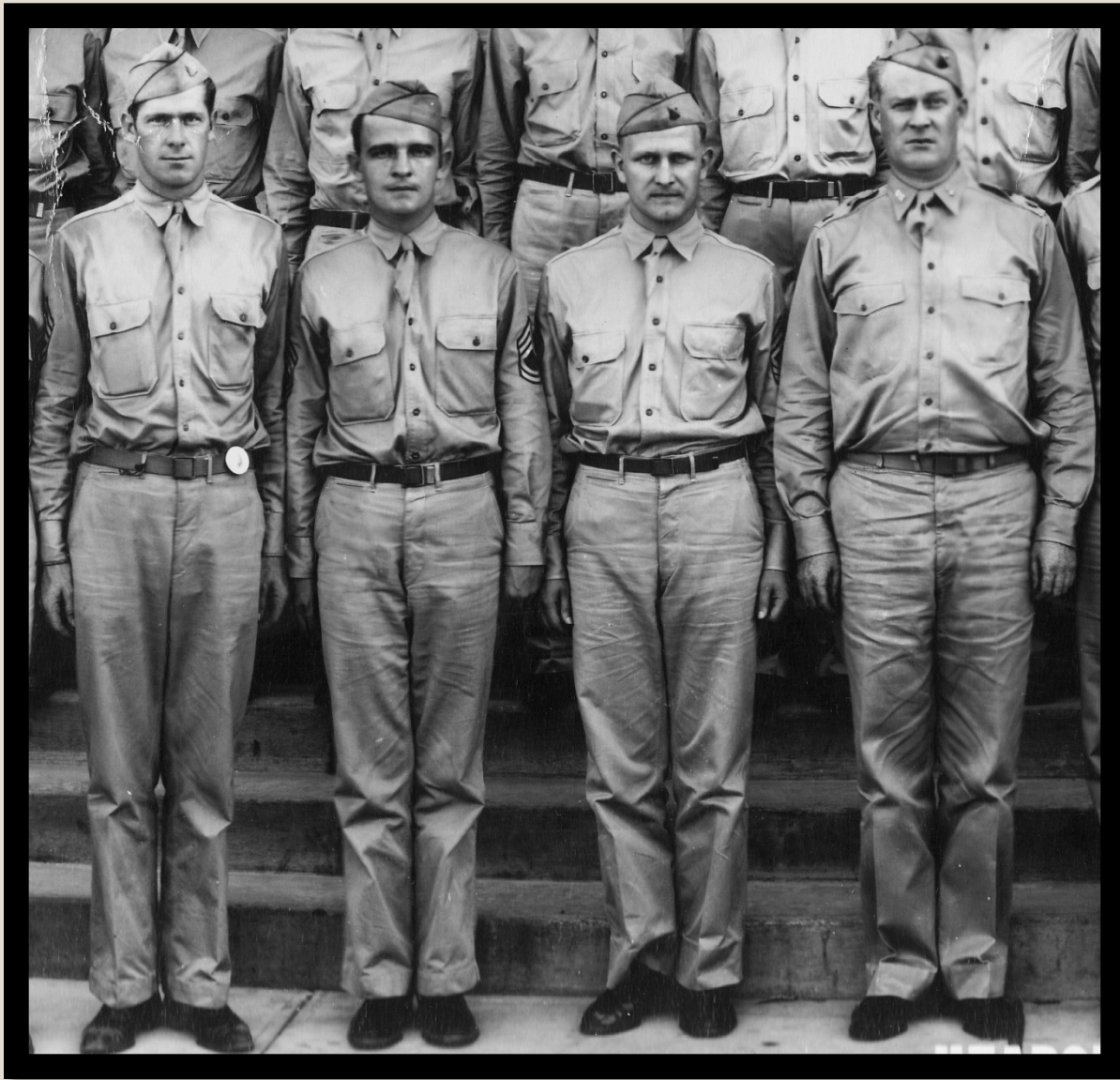
Royal Engineers Bomb Disposal



Bomb Disposal U.S.A.



- **By 1941, U.S. recognized German UXBs as threat.**
 - Ordnance Corps given responsibility for military affairs.
 - Conflict with the new Office of Civilian Defense (OCD).
 - Arguments not resolved until shortly after Pearl Harbor.
 - Military became senior partner in bomb disposal tasks.
- **U.S. Army Ordnance Bomb Disposal School.**
 - Located at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.
 - Maj. Thomas J. Kane chosen as the first commandant.
 - Kane and eight candidates went to U.K. in January 1942.
- **This is the birth of U.S. Army & Air Force EOD.**



Maj. Kane (at right) with Joseph C. Pilcher & Richard E. Metress







SWEEPING ALONG







U.X.B. No 1
JULY 9, 1942

Raymond Lee

Stewart

Halle

Wright

Franklin

Wright

Wright

Wright

Wright

Wright

Wright

To: Capt. Colonel J. A. Stone
From:
The 10th Troop, 1st Co (Pz)

B.D. in the Mediterranean Theater



- **North Africa (Spring 1943)**
 - Ordnance lacked B.D. units in Algeria & Tunisia.
 - Two B.D. companies arrived in April-May 1943.
 - Top brass dissatisfied with companies' performance.
- **Sicily (Summer 1943).**
 - Last hurrah for B.D. companies; replaced by squads.
 - Mystery of Capt. F. H. Dillon's disappearance.
- **Italy (Autumn 1943 to Spring 1945)**
 - B.D. secured enemy airbases & ammunition dumps.
 - Supported three Mediterranean amphibious landings.

12th Ord. Bomb Disposal Squad



Capt. Ronald Felton

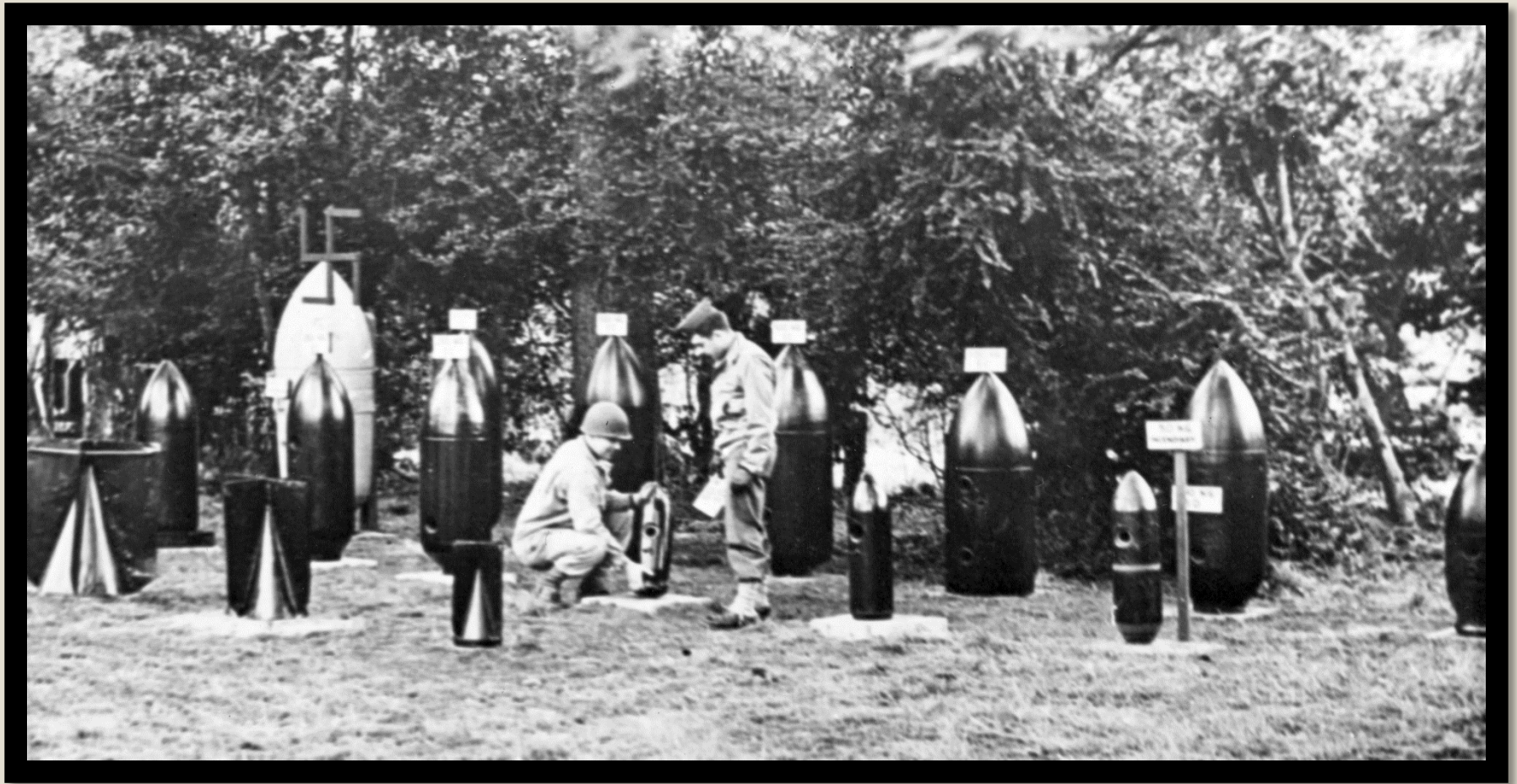


European Theater (1944-45)



- **Allied Preparations for D-Day at Normandy:**
 - Importance of Ordnance Bomb Reconnaissance School.
 - Bomb Squads assigned to U.S. Special Engineer Brigades.
- **The U.S. Army Ordnance Bomb Disposal Center**
 - Col. Kane became Director of Bomb Disposal in the ETO.
 - Communication Zone squads disposed of enemy munitions.
 - 9th Air Force B.D. secured airbases in France & Germany.
 - Infantry divisions used B.D. squads as troubleshooters.
- **Evolution of Bomb Disposal into modern EOD:**
 - B.D. handled more than UXBs; mines, shells, and rockets.
 - Post-war partnerships with British & French organizations.

Bomb Reconnaissance School



17th Ord. Bomb Disposal Squad





Capt. Joseph C. Pilcher at War's End

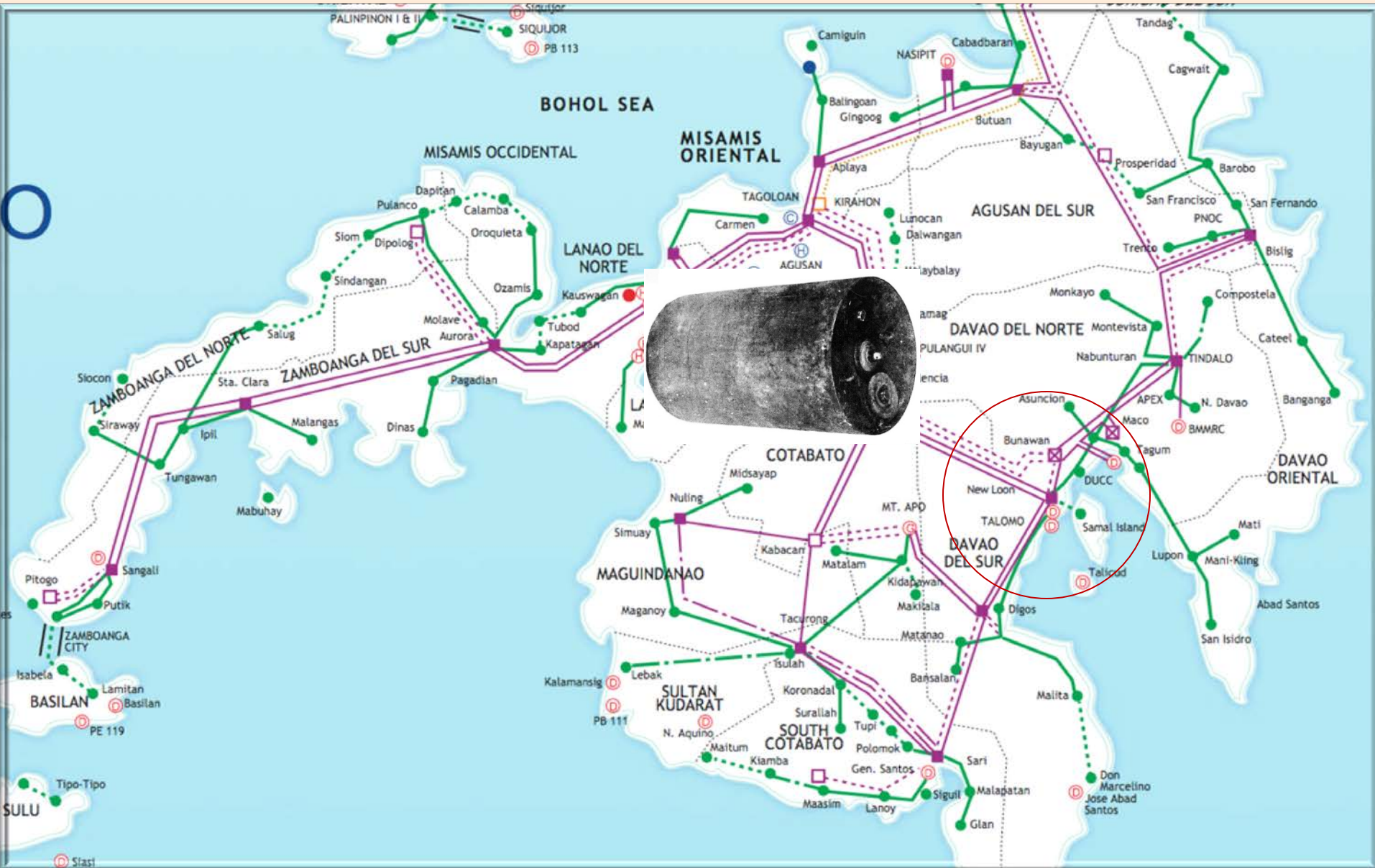
Pacific Theater (1942-45)



- **Two Army B.D. companies went to PTO in 1942.**
 - One company went to Hawaii, the other to Guadalcanal.
 - Both companies disbanded into squads in November 1943.
- **Unique challenges of the Pacific Theater:**
 - Squads covered long distances in island-hopping campaigns.
 - Constant work and jungle climate affected record-keeping.
 - Army personnel were expected to handle naval ordnance.
- **Japanese equaled the Germans for ingenuity.**
 - Tenacious defense of islands, including mines & booby-traps.
 - Heavy casualties from the Aleutian Islands to Okinawa.
 - More B.D. squads were required to liberate the Philippines.

Richard E. Metress





TEXAS	MERRILL WILLARD D	PVT	2 OBSN SQ	MAINE
W MEXICO	MERRITT GRADY W	PVT	HD OF MANILA	CALIFORNIA
COLORADO	MERRITT HAROLD J	SGT	436 BOMB SQ 7 BOMB GP (H)	VIRGINIA
PHILIPPINES	MERRITT ROBERT L	TEC 5	543 ENGR SHORE REGT	PENNSYLVANIA
OHIO	MERRITT THOMAS A	PVT	200 CA REGT	TEXAS
PHILIPPINES	MERSEREAU EVERETT B	LT COL	182 INF AMERICAL DIV	MASS
CAROLINA	MERSEREAU JOHN G	1 LT	373 BOMB SQ 308 BOMB GP (H)	OREGON
OREG	MERTZ RALPH W	PFC	75 ORD CO	PENNSYLVANIA
PHILIPPINES	MESSANA BENEDICT	2 LT	99 FA BN 1 CAV DIV	NEW YORK
PHILIPPINES	• MESSER JENNINGS B	SGT	65 BOMB SQ 43 BOMB GP (H)	W VA
PA	MESSER MARTIN J	SGT	31 INF REGT	MICHIGAN
NDIANA	MESSINGER CHARLES H	CPL	30 BOMB SQ 19 BOMB GP (H)	CAL
ILLINOIS	MESSMER JOHN J	1 LT	57 INF REGT (PS)	MINNESOTA
N Y	MESZAROS ALBERT A JR	PFC	328 AIRDROME SQ	NEW YORK
PHILIPPINES	METCALF PERCY M	S SGT	319 BOMB SQ 90 BOMB GP (H)	MAINE
OHIO	METCALF WILLIAM S	S SGT	31 INF REGT	ALABAMA
NESSEE	METRESS RICHARD E	CAPT	209 ORD BOMB DISPOSAL CO	N J
OHIO	METSKER PHILIP T	2 LT	21 PUR SQ 35 PUR GP	ILLINOIS
TEXAS	• METTAM JOSEPH B	CPL	500 BOMB SQ 345 BOMB GP (M)	CAL
YORK	METTES JOSEPH D	1 LT	320 BOMB SQ 90 BOMB GP (H)	MISSOURI
PINES	METZ JACK M	TEC 4	69 ENGR TOPO CO	WEST VIRGINIA
PINES	METZINGER GEORGE W	S SGT	372 BOMB SQ 307 BOMB GP (H)	OHIO
ORNIA	METZLER JACOB JR	S SGT	1330 AAF BASE UNIT	OHIO
ANIA	METZLER JAMES F	1 LT	FIELD ARTILLERY	PENNSYLVANIA
ARNIA	MEUSE LEONARD F	PFC	182 INF AMERICAL DIV	MASSACHUSETTS
ARNIA	MEUTEN DONALD W	1 LT	8 FTR SQ 49 FTR GP	CALIFORNIA
AMA	MEYER DALE O	2 LT	433 FTR SQ 475 FTR GP	ILLINOIS
ORK	MEYER JACOB A	S SGT	21 INF 24 DIV	LOUISIANA
MD	MEYER LENARD P	PFC	302 MED BN 77 DIV	ARIZONA
ORK	MEYER RICHARD C	PFC	INFANTRY	INDIANA
ANIA	• MEYER ROBERT R JR	2 LT	30 BOMB SQ 19 BOMB GP (H)	ALABAMA
FTS	MEYERHEIN RALPH F	CAPT	HQ 71 RCN GP	OHIO
IO	MEYERS FORD H	PVT	93 BOMB SQ 19 BOMB GP (H)	CALIFORNIA
AL	MEYERS JACK E	TEC 5	14 BOMB SQ 7 BOMB GP (H)	PENNSYLVANIA
ES	MEYERS JOSEPH F	1 LT	823 BOMB SQ 38 BOMB GP (M)	NEW YORK
IA	MEYERS LESLIE D	PVT	30 BOMB SQ 19 BOMB GP (H)	MARYLAND
ES	MEYERS OLIN E	PFC	31 INF REGT	IOWA
ES	MEYERSON JOSEPH	S SGT	72 BOMB SQ 5 BOMB GP (H)	NEW JERSEY

WWII Bomb Disposal Remembered



- In November 1945, the Ordnance Bomb Disposal School finished its mission.
- Ammunition and Bomb Disposal services were combined into one EOD directive.
- Joint-service training corrected the errors of WWII -- just in time for the Korean War.
- Col. Thomas J. Kane retired from the Army in 1955, and passed away in 1965.
- However, his legacy will not be forgotten.

12th Ord. Bomb Disposal Squad



Dedication of Kane Hall (2004)



Col. Kane's daughter at Fort Gillem, GA

Dedication of Kane Hall (2013)



Col. Kane's 113th Birthday at Fort Campbell, KY