

*Off to War*

*Franklin Countians in World War II*

by Roscoe Barnes III

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## INTRODUCTION

When Roscoe Barnes III joined *The Record Herald's* news staff in December 1994, one of his first assignments was a feature story about Bill Shoemaker.

The World War II veteran recounted his horrific experiences at the Battle of the Bulge 50 years before—in December, 1944.

Roscoe's story touched a nerve. Soon, World War II veterans were calling him weekly—many offering to tell their stories for the very first time.

Some of their wives sat in on the interviews. More than one wife told Roscoe afterwards: "That's the first time I've ever heard my husband talk about this war experiences."

One of Roscoe's many strengths is his ability to make people feel at ease, so I understand why those veterans were so willing to open up and share painful memories with him. Roscoe is a veteran himself, and I suspect that also inspired confidence in the men he interviewed.

What started with one interview grew into a series that ran in *The Record Herald* throughout most of 1995, fittingly the anniversary of the end of World War II.

Readers should keep in mind that Roscoe had many other tasks to do during that time—covering government and breaking news stories, writing obituaries, doing day-to-day police news—but he always found time for the World War II veterans, many times sacrificing his personal time and putting in long hours in the office.

Because of his willingness to "go the extra mile," future generations now will know of the sacrifices made by World War II veterans to end the scourge that was overtaking much of the world. Even after they are gone, their words and their thoughts will be forever preserved.

In 23 years in the newspaper business, I have read thousands of feature stories, but few have made me cry.

Several of Roscoe's stories did make me cry. Perhaps they will touch you as they touched me.

**Sue Ernde**

Editor

*The Record Herald*

Waynesboro, Pa.