



## Tank battalion will be honored in Belgium

### Local man to attend for brother who died at Battle of Bulge

By Tribune Staff

David Curtis of Great Falls will be in Neufchateau, Belgium, April 22-29 to help dedicate a monument to the "Daredevils" tank group, members of the 740th Tank Battalion of the U.S. Army, who participated in the Battle of the Bulge.

That battle brought victory over Hitler's Germany.

Curtis' brother, Sgt. Clayton D.

Sgt. Clayton D. Curtis of Brady, a tank commander in the 740th Tank Battalion, was killed in January 1945 toward the end of the Battle of the Bulge.

Curtis of Brady, a tank commander in that battalion, was killed Jan. 31, 1945, as he was cleaning Germans out of the brush with his tank. He was killed by fire as he raised his head out his tank's turret to look around.

Local Belgians will hold a reception for those attending the monument dedication. The stone monument was fabricated in Belgium and will bear the names of 43, including Clayton Curtis, who was killed in action, along with the 278 men who returned.

The 740th originally consisted of mostly Texans and Oklahomans. They completed their basic training in Fort Knox, Ky., and advanced training in the Arizona desert where unit members used top secret high-powered floodlights mounted on their tanks.

During various combat engagements in the European theater, the 740th developed the reputation for its veracity, marksmanship and ver-

satility. Throughout its tour of duty the group's M-4 "Sherman" became an obstacle greater than the enemy in some cases. Consequently soldiers in the unit learned to adapt and cannibalize to maintain the tanks for combat readiness.

The armament and firepower of the Sherman tanks were clearly inferior to the "Tiger" tanks operated by the German Army. Despite this disadvantage, the Daredevils managed to outmaneuver, outshoot and eventually outsmart the Germans.

Individual operating units within the 740th are credited with stopping the German Panzer 1st SS Division commanded by Jochen Peiper in its farthest advance at Stoumont Station in the Ardennes in Belgium where the Battle of the Bulge was fought. Had Hitler's advance on the Allies not been stopped, historians predict that WWII could have been greatly extended.

Following the Bulge, the 740th

met heavy resistance as it successfully penetrated a portion of the Siegfried Line. Here the group encountered various anti-tank devices including dragon's teeth and anti-tank ditches, all defended by five-foot-thick concrete bunkers armed with 75mm guns.

In one of its last engagements, the 740th spearheaded the attack of the 8th Infantry in the battle of the "Ruhr Pocket" in Germany, advancing some 100 miles toward Düsseldorf. Here the battalion lost many tanks as it did in the Bulge.

Near the end of the war, tanks from the 740th were sent to Witzhausen, Germany, where they tracked Werner von Braun and team of German missile scientists known as "Operation Paperclip." The objective was to secure Braun's group to keep them from falling to Russian hands.

The 740th Tank Battalion was activated in mid-1946.

## IN UNIFORM

Pvt. Tomi D. Lehner graduated from the motor transport operational individual training at Fort Leonard Wood, Waynesville, Mo.

Lehner's parents are Mary A. Lehner and George W. Lehner.

Ingebribo, a 1988 graduate of Great Falls High School and son of Jean Ingebribo of 1408 5th Ave. N.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Randy A. Laursen, a 1987 graduate of Havre High School and the son of Robert and Lorraine Lauren of Havre.

Laursen's parents are Paul W. Mathison, a 1996

graduate of Great Falls High School and son of Robert and Lorraine Lauren of Havre. He is a 1993 graduate of C.M. Russell High School and a 1997 graduate of Carleton College in Northfield, Minn.

Army Sgt. Scott R. Tobin re-

sides in N.C. He is a 1996 graduate of Great Falls High School.

The following people recently were promoted in the Montana Army National Guard:

Kasidy H. Manderle, Great Falls, to the rank of specialist; Keith S. Deroche, Great Falls, to specialist;

Army Pvt. Jaime D. Evans, a graduate of Great Falls High School, has been assigned to 82nd Airborne Division at Bragg, Fayetteville, N.C. His mother is Patsy Evans of 2322 7th Ave.

Stuart A. Lawrence, son of Fred Lawrence of Harlem, was promoted to the rank of Marine C-1.