

City needs a memorial to the lives lost, the sacrifices made in World War II

WE MADE a mistake in the paper on Jan. 1 because a young man from Manchester made a mistake 64 years earlier.

Our story wrote that William J. Holleran Jr. of Manchester was involved in the Battle of the Bulge "on Jan. 15, 1944." That was our mistake. The battle began just before Christmas of 1944 and ended in January of 1945.

The Allies hadn't landed at Normandy until June of 1944. Yet Holleran, in a letter dated Jan. 6, 1944, wrote to his mom from somewhere near the Ardennes Forest in Belgium, scene of the Bulge fighting. He apologized for not writing, "since France," and said he had been up in the front lines at Christmas and New Year's. How could this be? The an-



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swer is in that second holiday. A colleague here guessed it before I did.

"I wonder if he confused the years?" she asked as we puzzled over the letter. "You know, how it takes awhile to write '2009' after writing '2008' for so long?"

She was right. Like so many of us, Holleran hadn't gotten used to writing the date of a new year. And he never got the chance. Nine days after writing

to his mom, with barely a mention of his part in what became the deadliest and most costly American engagement against the Germans, he was killed by a mortar shell, on Jan. 15, 1945.

He had been entering his senior year at Manchester High School Central when he was drafted. He was just 19 when he died. There are so many things to which a man that young should have a chance to grow accustomed. Getting used to writing a new year might seem the least among them.

But I'm pretty sure that Billy Holleran and those he left behind would have loved to have had him around to get used to writing many new year dates. His comrades, those who made it home and those who didn't, no doubt shared the sentiment. The story was part of our

Veterans Page series, a "Monumental Generation." In it we profile a few of the thousands of men and women from Manchester who served in World War II and for whom a memorial remains to be built.

In a way, I am happy that Billy Holleran misdated his letter and that we didn't pick up on it all these years later. It gives me another chance to promote the memorial. Donations may be sent to the Manchester World War II Memorial, One City Hall Plaza, Manchester, N.H. 03101.

The memorial will contain the names of Billy Holleran and his comrades. To see the list, check www.Manchestern-hwwiimemorial.com.

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