SIEGFRIED LINE - SAAR MOSELLE TRIANGLE

It is never a simple operation to move a division of infantry, even for a short distance. The move from Brittany to Combat Operations in Germany entailed a number of problems. The 94th Division was no exception. In the first place this was not to be a short distance. From Brittany to the destination staging area at Reims was several hundred miles. A replacement unit, to assume containment duties at the Lorient - St. Nazaire pocket had to take over the positions established and maintained by us for four months. Equipment worn and damaged during the stint in Brittany had to be replaced, to put all units into fighting shape.

Transportation had to be arranged, and that problem was complicated by the necessity for keeping crucial petroleum supply lines fueling the front line tank units unobstructed. That supply project, dubbed "The Red Ball Express," was a magnificent achievement, involving hundreds of tanker trucks moving huge quantities of fuel from the Normandy beachheads to the front lines in Belgium and Germany. It operated around the clock, and was one of the basic reasons for the success of American armored units, and the defeat of Germany.

A unit to replace the 94th was identified, due to a tragic set of circumstances. The U. S. 66th Infantry Division was moving from England to France, in British ships. On Christmas Eve, His Majesty's Transport "Leopoldville" was torpedoed by a German submarine at a point in the channel about 6 miles from Cherbourg. 784 enlisted men and 14 officers of the 262nd and 264th infantry regiments were lost. This severely damaged the fighting strength of the 66th Division, and a decision was made to move that

unfortunate division to replace the 94th. On the 26th of December replacement was begun, and 94th Division units were pulled from the lines into assembly areas at Pontivy and Chateaubriant.

It was bitterly cold, and during the assembly days we slept on the ground in our pup tents, which provided little protection against the frigid air. The ground itself was frozen, and provided no comfort. In desperation we sought any solution to our misery. Near our company's area, a farmer had a large hay stack which we appropriated for ground padding under our sleeping bags. This somewhat mitigated the cold, and also provided padding, to an extent. When we broke camp two days later, we piled the hay and burned it, setting off a sort of Fourth of July occasion when carelessly dropped ammunition began exploding in the fire. Luckily, no one was hurt, but we did get a good bawling out by Captain Donovan and First Sergeant Wood.

We were re-supplied and re-fitted, and necessary medical and personnel problems attended to, and then we were taken in trucks to a railhead, where we loaded into those ridiculously small French boxcars, dubbed 40 & 8's, because they held forty men or eight horses. With no idea about our destination, or the length of our confinement in these cars, we began to move. I don't remember how long the rail trip took, but do remember how terribly cold we all were, even crowded together as we were. Although we did not realize it, we were in the midst of one of the coldest winters in history, in that part of the world.

I must now confess that after sixty one intervening years my memory of the events,

places, and sequences that follow is not exactly precise. Because life was now reduced to basics - food, some trace of comfort, survival - each day was quite like those which preceded and followed. As a consequence, I find it impossible to construct a flowing sequential narrative. Instead, I will try to sort out those things I recall, and present them as nearly as possible in their proper order. As I have mentioned before, a printed and accurate (as far as I know) history of the 94th Division is available for reference. As a "Top Down" record it is without doubt complete. Actually, it also includes some "Bottoms Up" activities to give intimate color to the broad perspective.

When beginning to compose this personal history, I was tempted to resort, in the interest of precision and accuracy, to the Division history as a reliable guide for organizing my memories. I decided against that practice, however, because my war was not the Division's war. Mine was the war of the squad, the platoon, and the company in which I found myself. Others, better qualified than I, and using official military records, have written splendid books and papers dealing with all aspects of World War II. None of them, however, could possibly describe the experiences of Donald Russell Parks, Serial Number 17071614, in the period from January 1 to early June, 1945. With that caveat, I will continue.

I believe we were originally destined to de-train at Reims, France, to organize for movement to the front in Germany. I don't know what happened to that plan, but actual events were certainly different. When w climbed down out of the rail cars, we were immediately loaded into open, stake sided, semi-trailer trucks. We were given no food, and no information. The bitter wind from the north was made even more cruel as the

trucks began moving toward Germany, and truck speed was added to wind speed, producing a frigid gale from which there was no escape. The previous discomfort of the rail cars was now overwhelmed by the complete misery of slowly freezing - possibly, we feared, to death. We decided, though, that no commander would want to explain the arrival of truckloads of frozen corpses at the front lines of the war.

It may be helpful, in trying to understand the climate through which we were hauled like unprotected livestock, to look at a map of the world. The area in which we were located is at the 50th Parallel, which is the same latitude as southern Canada. The winter of 1945 provided strong evidence of that northerly location.

Finally, after what seemed to be an eternity, the trucks ground to a halt, we were off-loaded and lined up in formation, and began a long hike through the evening dark, on a snow-packed road. You must understand that at this time we had absolutely no idea about where we were, or what lay ahead. All we were sure of was increasing cold, hunger, fatigue, and the few feet of apace around us that we could see. Our trek came to a halt in a village, where we were ordered to go into houses and barns, to find space for our sleeping bags, to sleep. We were issued several K rations per man. There was, of course, no heat in any of the buildings, but they at least gave us shelter from the wind. After posting guards and assigning relief, Lt. Tuckman also spread out his sleeping bag, crawled in, and in a few minutes everyone was asleep, too tired to attempt eating cold K rations in the dark.

Activity began next day, when gray light announced the end of night. I realized how hungry I was, and lost no time melting snow to make K ration bouillon, and eating a tin of cheese, with crackers. For the next few weeks, nearly all our meals were K rations or what we could scrounge in village homes wherever we were. K rations were designed for portability, simplicity, and durability. In achieving those qualities, little attention had apparently been given to including variety or flavor. As I recall, they made a sufficient diet, and with them we were able to avoid starvation. They were packed in heavily waxed boxes, about the size and shape of Cracker Jack boxes. Breakfasts contained instant coffee, sugar, crackers, and a tin of what seemed to be a scrambled egg mixture. Also, there was toilet paper, cigarettes, and matches. Lunch rations contained a folder of bouillon powder, crackers, a tin of cheese, a small chocolate bar, and a few other items. The evening meal had a tin of something like Spam, coffee, crackers, cigarettes, and another chocolate bar.

To heat water, each squad was equipped with a very useful little one-burner gasoline stove. Because I had no special equipment assigned, I volunteered to carry it and as a result was able to melt snow and heat water for coffee or bouillon at every opportunity. Many men didn't like the bouillon, and I did, so I was able to keep plenty of it on hand. Water was no problem, as we had plenty of snow to melt. Also, potable water was placed as close as possible to front lines, in large canvas containers called Lister Bags, which had outlets for filling canteens. However, due to subfreezing temperatures this supply was frequently not available so snow answered the purpose. Each man had halogen tablets which made the water taste vile but supposedly safe to drink.

We explored our new location that first morning while maintaining security. Lt. Tuckman attended a briefing, and returned to tell us that we were a few miles from the front, in a village named Beurig. We were to replace another division when all the details were completed. Meanwhile, we could do whatever possible to keep alive and functional. I was walking down a street, near the Lieutenant, when Hy Kroll, a member of our platoon, came along leading a cow with a rope around its neck. Tuckman asked "Kroll, what the hell are you doing with that cow?" This was an appropriate question, because Kroll was from Brooklyn and until he was drafted had never been outside New York City except to go on occasional vacations at Jewish resorts in the Catskills. Tuckman was from the Bronx, and only slightly less citified than Kroll. Kroll's response, which made very little real sense, was "Lieutenant, I'm hungry!" I don't know how he proposed to eat that cow, but the problem of hunger was soon solved by a man from the weapons squad, named Walton.

Walton was a real country boy, from the mid-south. He was very large, and strong, and always agreeable. He and some other men in the platoon became concerned about the livestock roaming free in the village. The German civilian residents were gone, and the animals had not been cared for, fed, or watered. Soon men were throwing hay down from lofts, and filling feed bins with grain, and breaking the ice in the water troughs. The animals were once again fed, watered, and quite possibly saved from starvation. I say "quite possibly" because we did not stay in the village very long, and after we left the livestock were once again without consistent care.

Back to Walton. He decided that he might as well make use of his rural skills. He

located a good looking hog, and a young cow, and killed and butchered them. Aflter moving tables and clean linens from houses, he set up a very serviceable butcher shop in an empty machine shed along the main street. He expertly produced steaks, roasts, chops, loins, and most other market offerings except ground beef, for which he had no grinder. He was happy to give anyone who came by anything in his stock. By now, we were putting house kitchens into their intended use, and were using stores of carrots and potatoes and onions from cellars, and had soups and meat dishes of all sorts. Because the weather was below freezing there was no spoilage problem at Walton's shop, and we ate very well for two days. This brief respite came to an end and we were ordered to move out, to the north and east, to assume our share of the Battle of the Bulge.

I don't know the identity of the division the 94th Division replaced in that region we came to call the Saar Moselle Triangle. I do remember the relief in their dirty, bearded, exhausted faces when we finished our march by moving into their foxholes and cellars in the village of Nennig. As we walked past destroyed Tiger tanks, and passed German bodies lying blanketed in the snow, we knew something brutal had taken place here, and felt that we were perhaps viewing only a prelude to what we were to encounter in days to come.

Finally, we were given real concrete information about our location, our mission, and the enemy we faced. We were between the Saar and the Moselle rivers which flow generally north to a point where the Saar joins the Moselle, which then continues north to enter the Rhine River. We were surrounded by portions of the heavily fortified Siegfried Switch Line, a complex of fortifications built by the German government in the decade of the

Thirties, opposite the French Maginot Line of border fortifications. This French defensive effort was rendered useless by the German blitzkrieg, which made an end run through Belgium and completely avoided the French armies.

Whereas the Maginot Line had proved to be an expensive failure, the Germans were now making full use of portions of the Siegfried Line in an effort to deny allied troops entry into "the fatherland." Across the terrain were long arrays of so-called dragon's teeth, which were concrete pyramids, about five feet high, so arranged that tanks could not go between them and impossible for tanks to surmount or push aside. To connect these fields of concrete obstacles, steep-sided anti-tank ditches were dug. These were, I estimate, about ten feet deep, and tanks could not go past them. Any armor that tried would invariably end hopelessly nose down in the bottom of the ditch, unable to go forward or to back out.

The defenses described above were designed to prevent allied armor from proceeding to the north, into Germany. To stop infantry units, pillboxes were strewn across the countryside, so placed that each was covered by supporting fire from at least two neighbors. These were of various sizes, with some serving merely as battle stations and others, larger, in use as command headquarters, barracks, kitchens, and medical facilities. All were made of concrete, with above-ground walls up to eight feet thick, impervious to artillery or tank fire. Gun apertures faced in appropriate directions, to cover all approaches. All these positions were armed with machine guns and rifles, and in some cases heavier weapons, and all were surrounded by mine fields.

The Germans had placed extensive mine fields on all routes the U. S. army might use.

These mines were of several types. Largest were the anti-tank mines, which were of little concern to infantry troops because heavy pressure was necessary to detonate them. They could usually disable a tank by blowing off the tread or penetrating the soft underbelly of the unit. Devastating to infantry were the Schu mines, which were easilystrewn around and concealed by the snow. These blew off the feet and lower legs of men unlucky enough to step on them. The most brutal of the German mines were the "Bouncing Betty" types. These were usually set off by trip wires strung about to prevent detection. When detonated, a small charge blew the main mine a few feet into the air, at which point a large explosion sent shrapnel in every direction, with terrible effect. One such mine could wipe out a squad or more. Frequent heavy snow fall rendered mine fields most deadly, because the white blanket concealed all tell-tale signs of their existence. When possible, our engineer troops could locate, survey, and neutralize prospective attack routes, for our protection. On other occasions, we used bayonets and extreme caution to prod through the snow covering any attack route we might have to use.

Finally, the Germans had heavily fortified several villages in the triangle area. Pillboxes were disguised as houses, and mine fields lay across feasible attack routes. Their artillery, armed with the 88 mm. gun, was precisely zeroed in on every point of significance in the whole triangle area, and was employed with deadly precision to defend against our movements. In sum, the job of clearing the German defenders out of this small part of their county was obviously going to be difficult and deadly. It was now time for us to begin.

At the beginning, our task as prescribed by higher headquarters was to engage the enemy to our immediate front in a series of small attacks, designed to prevent the withdrawal of that enemy force for use in the area to our north, where the German Ardennes offensive of December 1944 had been halted and was being turned back. At the very top of the "top down" war General Eisenhauer (Ike) was deciding between two courses of action. General Patton, whose relief of the besieged Americans at Bastogne had been the turning point of the Battle of the Bulge, wanted to take advantage of enemy disorganization and make an immediate thrust around the German left flank , to cut off the huge enemy forces now in retreat. That accomplished, he intended to destroy the German army piecemeal, as they retreated into the homeland. The British general on scene was Montgomery, and his plan was to just continue pushing the enemy back by exerting maximum pressure on their front, destroying them by overwhelming force.

To carry out this operation, it would be necessary to concentrate on the Belgian front all available forces and support, to apply maximum pressure on the enemy. It would also be necessary to guard the allied flanks as they advanced, to prevent any enemy encirclement. As it turned out, the task of the 94th Division was two-fold. We were to keep pressure on the 11th Panzer Division and their infantry support, to ensure that they would remain in place in the triangle and not be withdrawn to assist in the German defense further north. We were also to safeguard the right flank of the allied forward push. Finally, we were to perform these assignments with minimum use of supplies and equipment that could be used in the major push. Our artillery ammunition was rationed, held to the minimum necessary for our limited operations. Gasoline was limited, and our armored units were

held to absolutely necessary movement. This was the "top down" situation in which we found ourselves.

In fact, to the infantry soldier facing an enemy, there is no such thing as a limited attack. Any confrontation with an enemy carries with it the danger of being slain or wounded. The grand plans of generals and diplomats are not relevant to the individual who is advancing across unfamiliar terrain toward an armed and equipped and veteran enemy. To the infantry soldier, every attack is major because it is so personally involved. Each success is followed shortly by another challenge, another attack, another necessity to kill or be killed. Each victory creates the probability of an enemy counter attack. After a while, the whole of life is reduced to a sort of game of chance, and civilization becomes remote and a distant memory. The only reality is a sort of dance of death, in which the A individual is involved only because higher powers dictate that he should be there.

Our first view of Nennig came as we marched through, heading up the hill north of the village, into the woods where the units we were relieving had dug in their front lines, in a line running more or less east and west. The line consisted of a series of foxholes, scattered irregularly among the trees. Their random and scattered distribution was in compliance with one of the first principles of infantry warfare in the modern world. In ancient days, wars were fought by masses of men wielding swords or spears or maces, most carrying shields, and fighting as close together as possible, for mutual protection.

In modern warfare, the principle is to create as much interval between individual soldiers as possible, in whatever circumstances prevail. Artillery and machine gun fire is less effective in producing casualties when only one or two enemy are in the line of fire or area of impact. The terrible slaughter inflicted on the orderly ranks of British soldiers in the Battle of New Orleans, as they marched across a level expanse toward American troops firing from cover, seldom is repeated today. Although instinct is to mass together, much time is spent in training to teach men to scatter as widely as the mission will permit, while maintaining visual or audible contact between individuals and units. This practice applies when moving, and when establishing fixed positions.

We paired off as we arrived at the line, and moved into the holes we found convenient. It was obvious that this line had not been in existence very long, because the holes were still in rudimentary condition. When dug in, men spent time improving their positions - by digging deeper, partially covering the position with logs or brush, covering the bottom with whatever cushioning material could be found. This work continued as long as the position was maintained, and as continuously as enemy activity would allow. We began

improving as soon as we entered the holes, but didn't have very long to do so. On the second day, we began moving the line forward, to the north edge of the woods, to overlook a field which sloped gently for about a half mile to another woods, where the enemy was located.

The woods in which we found ourselves were fairly open, and consisted of hardwoods generally about a foot in diameter, and of course bare of leaves now, in January. In other locations the Germans had large tracts of coniferous forests, where visibility was very limited and fighting was a deadly process, often at close quarters. The Saar Moselle area forests were deciduous, and therefore more open. Upon completing our move, we began to dig in, paired off as Tuckman directed. My partner was Billingsley, a large fellow from Alabama, who was well liked in the platoon.

We began digging as soon as we were placed by Tuckman, and continued until we had a hole about five feet deep, big enough to accommodate the two of us and our gear, and with a half cover of branches. The only problem was that when we neared the desired depth, water began flowing out of the earth. Tuckman had placed us in a spot with underground water. We had dug into a spring. It was by now too late, and we had dug too far, to change locations. Besides, there was no assurance that moving would solve the problem, because we might hit water wherever we went. We stayed where we were, bailing out the bottom of the hole with our canteen cups when the water accumulated in a deeper corner, created for that purpose. During our days in that hole, the slope in front of it became a fairly respectable sliding area, had any of us wanted to risk playing in the open, with German gunners across the field.

I should say here that our digging was interrupted shortly after our arrival in that position, when Tuckman told Billingsley and Lambert and me to patrol to our left, to contact the second platoon which was supposed to have taken the area in that direction. In compliance, the three of us picked up our gear and prepared to move out. We were all wearing our heavy overcoats, over our field jackets and wool uniforms and long john underwear. We carried our packs, because in combat one usually left nothing behind because there was no certainty of return. We had our rifles, and bandoliers of extra . ammunition clips. I don't know how much weight we were wearing and carrying, but I do know that we moved slowly, because we also had to contend with knee-deep snow. We began our struggle to find the second platoon.

As we proceeded, we found our route blocked by one of those anti-tank ditches, which extended north and south across our path. There was no way to carry out our mission without getting to the other side. There was no way to go around the ditch, which ran north to the woods where the enemy was located, and to the south as far as we could see. Our only course was to get across, which meant getting down into it and up the other side. I was in the lead, and just sat down and slid down the steep wall, followed by the other two. Now, we realized that getting up the other side was not going to be easy. The snow and frosted earth were slippery, and there were no footholds or other projections to help us. We were literally in a hole we couldn't get out of.

That was only the beginning of our problem. As we pondered our predicament, a mortar round exploded about twenty yards away, in the ditch, leaving a blackened impact scar. In a few seconds another exploded, in the other direction. We realized that someone was

shooting at us with a mortar, and that the next round would land precisely where we were standing. We began running, if that is the word for it. Bundled and burdened as we were, our run more resembled an rapid crawl, but at least we were moving. As we thought, another shell landed where we had been a moment before. We reversed direction, thinking that the gunner who had us in his sights would aim beyond us. He did so, and once again we had avoided death. Once more we reversed, and once more he missed. Now, we reasoned, he would expect us to reverse after every shot, and would aim to catch us doing so. This time we kept going, to the south, and his shot exploded harmlessly to our rear.

During this short event, which could not have taken more than five minutes, the explosions were so close that once Lambert was inside the blackened blast area, knocked off his feet but miraculously not hurt. As we got to the edge of the woods to our south, Lambert (who was now leading the flight) spotted a root sticking out of the ditch wall, and we were able to clamber out and into the woods, where we succeeded in finding the second platoon. We went far back into the woods when we headed back to report to Tuckman that the second platoon was where it ought to be. We agreed that none of us would ever again get into an anti-tank ditch unless we were certain of an escape route, and I can say for certain that I never did.

In the years since that day, I have thought about it often. The experience of being chased back and forth by those mortar rounds was exactly what I would feel if a giant were trying to stamp on me while I tried to escape. It was terrifying. On the other hand, I have thought about the real fun that German gunner was having, chasing us as we floundered

Print the complete address in plain letters in the panel below, and your return address in the space provided on the right. Use typewriter, dark ink, or dark pencil. Pale or small writing is not suitable for photographing.

(CENSOR'S STAMP)

TO: Mrs Georgia Parks
Harris,
Iowa

SEE INSTRUCTION NO. 2

FROM
Pfc. Don R Parks 20716619
Co I 301 Inf. APO 94
% P.M., N.Y., N.Y.

(Sender's complete address above)

Feb 21.

Dear Mom

Guess you've seen by the papers that we've been pretty busy. As of this date, I'm ok. So don't worry too much about me. I'm a battle-wise veteran now.

Mom, I heard over the radio that some American P.W.'s + officers - were liberated in Poland by the Russians. Could Lane be one of those? See, if you hear anything about it, let me know.

I may be Sgt. Parks soon. Right now I'm a squad leader, and may get my stripes soon. I hope. I've got a great bunch of fellows, and am very proud of them. Combat teaches a fellow to appreciate his buddies more than anyone could ever imagine. Believe me, when every man's life depends on his neighbors, and theirs on him, a feeling of comradeship arises which it's impossible to find elsewhere.

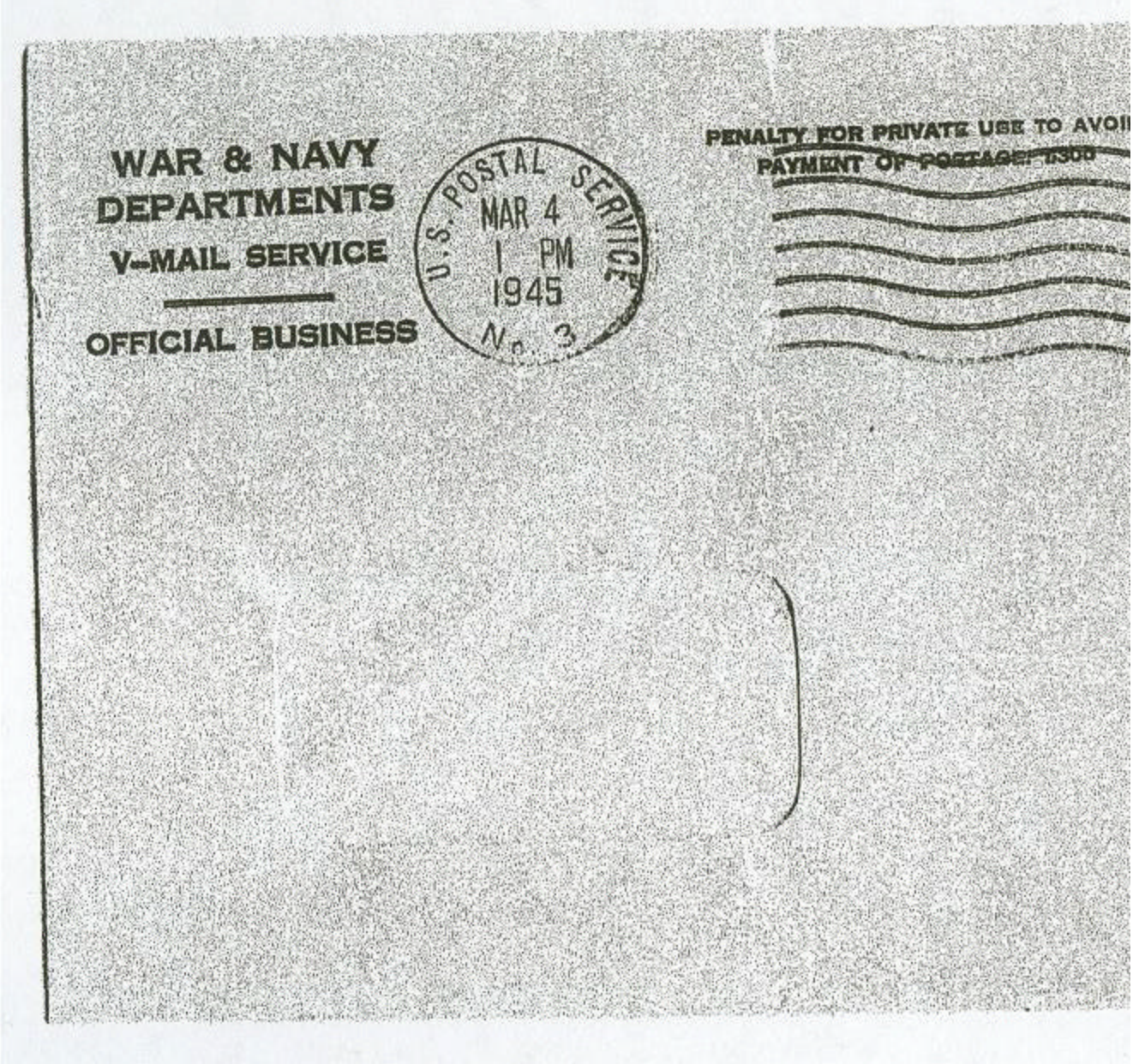
Lots of love, Mom. Pray for me.

Your son
Don

HAVE YOU FILLED IN COMPLETE ADDRESS AT TOP?

REPLY BY V-MAIL

HAVE YOU FILLED IN COMPLETE ADDRESS AT TOP?



Letter Home March 1945

through the snow, back and forth in his view. We were the flies he was trying to swat, and I am very glad that he didn't succeed, although I must say he did his work well.

I have written praise in of our division artillery. While we were in that watery position, Billingsley and I, we had a splendid demonstration of their skill. One of the least enjoyable assignments an artilleryman could have, I believe, was to live at the front with the infantry, carrying a radio (such equipment at that time was bulky and heavy) or using a field telephone to direct his battery's fire. Many of us in the infantry could direct such fire, because we had had extensive training in that skill, but usually we had no means of communicating with the rear areas where the artillery was located. The assigned spotter carried out that function, at least when we were in a fixed location for even a short period.

Early one morning we heard the sound of heavy motors in the enemy position, in the woods across the field. We knew something was happening, but hoped it would not be an attack by the 11th Panzer Division Tiger tanks. As it turned out, it was not. Instead, three half-track vehicles, loaded with enemy infantry, emerged from the enemy positions, and headed straight for us, across that half mile stretch of open land. The artillery spotter was in a hole right next to ours, and when the enemy attack began, he immediately called his unit by radio, and began to call fire from the 105 mm. Howitzers in our rear. The approaching enemy was still too far away for us to begin small arms fire with rifles or BAR's. The first artillery shells whined overhead, and burst near the enemy. The spotter corrected the fire, and called for proximity fuses. These were shells that, instead of exploding on impact, would detonate when they reached a fixed point above the ground, splintering into deadly shrapnel to spray the target area below.

The enemy continued to approach, but then one vehicle stopped, and a few of the infantry dismounted and tried to run, but another shell left them all lying on the ground. Almost immediately another of the half-tracks stopped, and again the deadly shower wiped out everyone. The third, which by now was nearer, then halted, and once more all the men aboard were killed. In the space of a few minutes, that entire German attack had been wiped out, and the men left dead in the field, to be covered that night with a new snowfall. In the process, we infantrymen had not fired a single shot. One artillery spotter, with his radio and his unit far to the rear, had prevented what would have been a bloody fight, with both sides losing men and no assured outcome. Yes, our artillery was a splendid segment of the 94th Division, not only on that occasion but throughout our battles to come.

They were so skillful that we often, when making an attack, used a tactic called a rolling barrage to soften the enemy before we contacted them. In this process, shortly before our attack would jump off, our artillery would begin firing a heavy concentration closely in front of us. They would then gradually move their aim forward, and we would follow closely behind the shellfire, to reach the enemy while they were still stunned by the artillery fire that had hit them. To accomplish this maneuver, two factors were required. The artillery had to be accurate and reliable, and the infantry had to trust in the artillery skill. In the 94th Division operations, both requirements were satisfied. We worked together very well, and I might not be here today were it not for those cannoneers a mile or so to our rear.

Now, faced with a skilled and dangerous enemy and terrible weather and unfamiliar surroundings, we began learning to live in a fashion none of us, I believe, had ever envisioned. Most of our waking hours were devoted to continuing attempts to make ourselves as comfortable as possible, while at the same time maintaining constant alert and the ability to wage battle if necessary. Since I am trying to describe my own experience as completely as possible, I now find it necessary to describe another facet of that experience.

As physical creatures, we begin eating and drinking as soon as we are born. The necessary final result of eating is getting rid of waste. As a child of what may be described as the "working poor" I did not have the luxury of indoor plumbing. Instead, there was an outhouse, or privy, set at the rear of whatever lot we lived on, and there we went in hot weather or cold to relieve ourselves. I was therefore better prepared than many of my fellows for living in primitive conditions, outdoors. The solution for waste disposal used by armies since warfare began is the straddle trench. When occupying a new position, along with digging foxholes was the necessity for digging a straddle trench in the area.

As soon as a position was established, and digging in began, one or two men were detailed, by the sergeant or officer in charge, to the job of digging the straddle trench. Until the next advance or change of position, that was the designated place for relieving oneself. Each user was expected to cover his deposit with some of the excavated dirt, left beside the trench when it was dug. At times, when under enemy observation or artillery, it was not possible to leave one's hole and get to the straddle trench. In that

circumstance, one resorted to use of the canteen cup for urination and then pouring the result as far as possible from the foxhole. Defecation was a bigger problem, and one got used to holding it until night fell. The straddle trench was used until the position was abandoned. If departure from the area was planned and orderly, with time available, the trench was filled before leaving. Otherwise, it was marked with crossed sticks and left for someone else to tend to.

A big problem was tending to one's relief before making an attack. At some point in the final preparations, it was quite necessary to attend to that detail, along with drawing rations and ammunition and putting on necessary clothes and planning the action. A few men had trouble with incontinence when under stress, and these unfortunates often went into battle with wet or soiled drawers, not from cowardice but merely as a result of failure of their own particular physical equipment. One of the best items of equipment for any soldier is not issued by the army. It consists of a commodious bladder, paired with tight control. Entering an attack, it is usually difficult to predict its duration. Sometimes deadly action continues for hours, and those unfortunates who have limited urinary or bowel capacity find themselves in distress with no means of relief. As far as I know, there are no temporary truces to allow for "piss call." In this regard, I was extremely fortunate. I never had a problem.

If the preceding discussion seems either gross or unnecessary, I do not apologize. Life in combat, in the face of the enemy, was yet life, and in relating my experiences as I am attempting to do these details seem to me to be appropriate and integral.

We now set about the task of clearing enemy forces from the triangle, and forcing them back to their rear. The 11th Panzer Division was formidable. It was a veteran force, having fought in Russia. It was equipped with Tiger tanks, which were heavily armored and carried the very efficient 88mm gun which the German army used so effectively.

Because of the allied push developing to our north, pursuant to Montgomery's plan, ammunition for our artillery was limited. Our footwear was unsatisfactory, not suitable for the cold and wet conditions in which we found ourselves, and trenchfoot casualties were the result. I was in one hole for several days, and in that time two other men left with frozen feet. For some reason, my feet remained pink and healthy, even though I would have been pleased if they had furnished me a reason for being evacuated to a hospital. As the French put it, "C'est la guerre!"

We made numerous attacks during this period, usually confined to company or battalion strength. I cannot now, after 62 years, relate them in sequence. I can, however, remember clearly many incidents that took place during this campaign. The entire period of January and February was homogenous, consisting of cold and digging and being in the woods and enduring enemy artillery fire and moving forward from present positions into others slightly or significantly north.

One morning I Company was involved in an attack on the village of Orscholtz, which turned out to be a heavily fortified position. C Company, from the first battalion, was to make the initial assault, through a ravine and into the village. That ravine was a deadly trap, with machine gun emplacements on both sides and well dug in infantry, and precise

defensive artillery fire. We marched into our holding position, and waited for orders to join the battle which we could hear ahead of us. We waited most of the day, and at last some of us were detailed to carry wounded men from the ravine, leaving the dead for later attention. C Company, which entered that ravine full strength, with 200 men, was withdrawn and the attack aborted before any additional men were committed to the battle. I Company was spared from the slaughter. Of the 200 men who entered the attack, only about 40 emerged uninjured and intact at the end. All but one of the company officers were killed or wounded, and Lieutenant Cancilla, I Company's executive officer, was assigned to build and command a new C Company, with a promotion to Captain.

This failure taught the 301st Regiment that plans could fail, and that bravery and skill could be canceled by the determination of an equally brave and skillful enemy. It was a bitter day, and was never repeated in all our efforts.

One morning we were making an attack up a small defile into a woods, with limited knowledge about the enemy's position. The squad was dispersed as usual, in single file, headed up the defile, with about ten feet between each man. Once again, as far as we were concerned, this operation involved only what we could see and hear. As far as we were concerned there was no U. S. Army - just our platoon proceeding into relative unknown. For some reason that morning I was at the rear of the column. As usual, Lieutenant Tuckman was near the head of the column. We were under artillery fire by the enemy, with shells hitting the trees in all directions, but so far having inflicted no casualties. One, however, impacted where I suspected the head of our column was located, and we were ordered to halt and hit the ground. In a few minutes the lieutenant

Lieutenant Tuckman,
Photo taken in Saar Moselle Triangle
before he was wounded

came hurrying down the path, grasping his left arm with the right. There was a big hole in his jacket, and his shirt beneath, and raw flesh and bone were laid bare. Obviously, a shell had hit close enough to hurt him badly, but he was smiling as he came past me. He said "So long, Parks. I'm going back to count shelter halves with the quartermaster corps." For him combat was over, and he had a ticket, if not for home at least for rear echelon duty. We were sorry to see him go, but glad he was leaving alive. He had been a good platoon leader, both in training and in combat, and had certainly fulfilled his duty to the nation. He survived the war, and returned to the Bronx, and I occasionally heard news of him from other 94th veterans who also came from the New York area.

We were now without an officer in the platoon, but the platoon sergeant took over that day's action, and we went on with our mission. The woods did not have any enemy in them, and we went to the far edge and dug in. I sometimes think, now, that if I had been in my usual position that morning - in front, where scouts usually are - I might have taken that shell fragment instead of Tuckman.

We were without a platoon leader for a couple of days, and then the regiment sent down a new man, reassigned from some other part of the army, we never did find out where. He was a real jerk from the outset, and tried to assert "authority" over us, with no obvious knowledge to back it up. We watched him disintegrate for a few days, becoming more and more frantic whenever there was enemy fire. I do not think he was a coward, but he was not fit for leading a platoon of infantry in the face of an enemy. We managed to get word to Captain Donovan about his condition, and he was withdrawn, to go I don't know where.

We advanced further, under leadership of platoon Sergeant Theresi. Our new position was on the forward slope of a hill, and we were dug in pretty well, when I saw a gangly looking guy coming down through the woods. He came to my hole, and asked me where he could find Sergeant Theresi. I pointed to Theresi's hole, and then said "Oh, come on. I'll take you over there." He meekly followed, and began an explanation with the announcement that he had graduated from college four months before, and that he was our new platoon leader, and his name was Key, and he sure didn't know what was going on and would really appreciate whatever help we could give him. In addition to being green as grass, he was without his uniforms except for what he had on, because his bags had been lost on the voyage over, and his only insignia of rank was one discolored gold second lieutenant's bar he had kept track of.

Theresi began his greeting with "Damn it, Lieutenant, don't ever come strolling through the woods again, like you just did. This isn't a picnic, and you'll get your head blown off. Now remember this, the lower you are the safer you are, and you won't draw fire on the rest of us. Now, I'll have a couple of men dig you a hole, and then you stay in it unless you have something important to do like taking a piss. You'll be called to a company officers meeting in a while, and you listen carefully and then come back and give us our orders, because you are now in charge. Welcome!" We liked him right away. His humble approach, and his frank admission that he needed our help, rated him high in our esteem. We took good care of Key through the rest of the war, and he became a very competent platoon leader, considerate and genial, but able to lead when we needed him The third platoon continued to function as expected.

Enlisted men in combat were paid an extra amount, as risk compensation, I suppose. I guess I'd have forgone the money to take away the risk, but we weren't given the choice. Officers did not get extra pay, but were given a liquor allowance each month. Lieutenant Key never benefited much from that allowance, however, because on pay days we non-coms held convenient platoon meetings around Key's hole or cellar or wherever he was, and drank every bit of his allowance as he protested loudly but fruitlessly. I guess it wasn't fair, but then nothing was exactly fair about anything that was going on. After all, war is hell. We were just trying to make it more bearable, at the lieutenant's expense. I'm quite certain he understood, and forgave us our trespasses. He was still our platoon leader in Czechoslovakia, after combat ceased, and was with the company when I left. He grew from a green ROTC college kid to become a real leader of men in danger, in the time I knew him.

The experience with Tuckman's replacements - one who collapsed when confronted with danger and responsibility, and the other who actually grew into manhood as we watched - has remained a lesson to me during the rest of my life. I don't know what happened to Key after the war, but I really hope he had a fine life. He earned it.

On a morning etched deeply into my memory the 3rd Battalion was making an attack along and on both sides of a crest road that ran along the top of a ridge, with open forest on both sides. I Company was moving along the road, and the other elements were variously placed on both sides of the road, over a front that I suppose extended a quarter mile in all. We had progressed a short distance when enemy artillery opened up, firing into the general area of our advance, with their 88 mm. shells impacting sometimes on the earth along the road or between the trees, and sometimes hitting substantial parts of trees, causing tree bursts.

We continued our advance, dispersed along the road, despite the scattered artillery attack. The intensity of the barrage increased, however, to the point where we were ordered to get off the road and hit the dirt (actually the deep snow.) Attacks by 88's were different from a shelling by U. S. artillery. Because our shells fired from 105 mm. howitzers traveled in a high arc, and spent seconds in flight, their whistle, or whine, or hiss (or however they sounded to the individual) was distinctive, and preceded their impact. The enemy 88's, on the other hand, were very powerful and the projectile moved at such a high rate that their was no advance warning of their approach. These shells simply slammed into their destination with a sharp explosion, and scattered shrapnel about the area of impact. As we lay there in the snow, one explosion detonated immediately above several of us. I wasn't hurt although shrapnel splattered into the area around our little group.

The barrage continued for probably fifteen or twenty minutes, and then stopped. Apparently this attack was not directed at our advance, but was another of the random

shellings that were intended, I suppose, to keep us on the alert and off balance. In a few minutes we were ordered to get back on the road and to continue the attack. I stood, and Lambert, lying close to my right foot, told me he was wounded. My squad leader, Sergeant "Pappy" Blaylock, didn't move. He was inert in the snow, just beyond where my hand could have reached his foot as we lay there under fire. I spoke to him but he didn't move. I went to him, and rolled him over on his back, and he was dead. I remember that he had a sort of surprised expression on his face. Shrapnel from that shell that hit the tree over us had hit him directly, and he was dead. Lambert and I got back on the road, and Lambert found the medic and went wounded back to the rear.

We attained our objective that day, and dug holes in our new position, and life went on. Pappy was replaced by his assistant squad leader, and life went on. That was really not an exceptional day, or a momentous attack, but Pappy was dead, and life went on for the rest of us. Pappy was given that nickname because he was older than the rest of us in the squad. He was twenty six years old when he was killed, but we called him Pappy because he was at least four years older than any of the rest of us. He was a nice guy, and had been an effective squad leader, taking care of us as well as circumstances would allow. We missed him, because he was a brother in arms from the days at McCain, and he had drunk with us and partied with us and told us about his family and his life before the army, but now he was dead and he was replaced and the war went on. But he was not forgotten. No, and he is not now forgotten, as long as I live to remember lying near him in the snow under that tree, as he died silent in the cold.

With each infantry platoon, all through training and maneuvers and shipment into combat zones, was one individual who did not carry a weapon, or ammunition. Regardless of location or mission, this soldier was with the platoon. He hiked and ate and dug holes with the riflemen, but did not wage war with them. He was the aid man, the medic, who often meant the difference between death and continued life for soldiers who were wounded in combat. His only protection was the red cross on his helmet. His equipment was a couple of bags, containing bandages, and wraps, and tourniquets, and aspirins, and laxatives, and syrettes of morphine. When the cry of "Medic!" sounded over the battlefield, this man went to the individual in trouble, and performed all the lifesaving actions possible, in battle, often within sight of the enemy, relying on his helmet crosses to protect him.

The medic with the third platoon was a small guy, with a ready grin and a good sense of humor. He never asked for any favors. He was as much a part of the platoon as the rest of us, but when he looked at us he must have seen, in addition to comrades, potential patients to whom he might one day be a lifesaver. In all the action we were in, he was always there with us, and he did care for us whenever the need arose. There were thousands of such men in our army, all doing the same merciful work without complaint or shirking. We called our medic "Doc" and I am happy to say that he survived the war without any damage, and when I last saw him, In Solingen before he was rotated home, he told me he was going to go to medical school and become a real "Doc," because his military experience with saving lives and limbs was so rewarding and he wanted to spend the rest of his life doing what he could for people.

A friend of mine from Ole Miss, named O'Donnell, who had such poor eyesight we all wondered how he got into the army, was assigned as a medic in K Company when we were reassigned from ASTP to the 94th Division. I lost contact with him between the time at Ole Miss and our combat operations in Germany. While I was at the regimental rest area, after being evacuated for battle fatigue, he was brought in for rest. I asked him about what he had been doing, and why he was removed from the line, and he told me about the morning before, when his company was in one of those "limited" attacks we engaged in until the major offensive took place.

In that morning's attack, which followed a deep snowfall the night before. his platoon was moving as ordered when it ran into a minefield and three men were left with terrible wounds. Each stepped on a mine, and each lost a foot and a portion of the lower leg. O'Donnell was at the rear of the action, and saw what had happened even before the cry of "Medic" sounded. He crawled to the nearest wounded man and wrapped the stump where his foot had been minutes before. He gave the man a shot of morphine to lessen his pain, and then began going to the next wounded man. The first, whom he had just treated, told him to wait, because he might blunder into a mine and become just another wounded man needing attention. Instead, the first man used his bayonet to probe a safe path to the second, leading O'Donnell to him. Then, while the second man was being treated, the first probed to the third, and O'Donnell followed that path and helped the last of his patients for that morning.

Soon a team from the regimental aid station appeared, and evacuated the three wounded men, and their lieutenant ordered O'Donnell to go immediately to his company

commander, and request time at the rest center, which he did. As he described this action, he began to cry, and I could see why that regimental doctor had ordered him out of action. He had experienced just too much horror in that hour in the minefield. Most of all, he could not get over the wonderful selflessness of that wounded man, who cared so deeply for others that he ignored his own grave condition, and went to the aid of his buddies, in the snow, in Germany.

I have heard, in the years since the end of the war, explanations of the course of action followed by the allies after halting the German campaign through the Ardennes in Belgium, in December 1944. That attack and the successful counterattacks to stop the German advance, have been known as "The Battle of The Bulge." In the minds of many, after Patton's troops relieved the besieged American forces at Bastogne, and the enemy attack ground to a halt because of such factors as the allied air attacks, stiff ground resistance, and a lack of fuel for their tanks, the Battle of The Bulge ended. Unfortunately, that was not so.

Now, the task confronting the Allies was major. Areas previously occupied by allied troops months before but re-conquered by the enemy advance had to be fought for and won again. The bulge in the allied front had to be eliminated. Following that, the remainder of Germany had to be fought for and won, to end the war in Europe. Among explanations for ensuing events the most credible, in my opinion, involved two very colorful generals. They were the British hero of north Africa - Montgomery - and the American genius of armored warfare - Patton. These men were both great military figures, both colorful, and direct rivals since their race across Sicily, which Patton won.

Montgomery was a meticulous planner, demanding detailed preparation and desiring least possible losses of men and materiel. Patton was a cavalryman whose emphasis was on mobility, daring, surprise, and innovation to deal with whatever his armies encountered. These two each had plans for the next and final phase of the war.

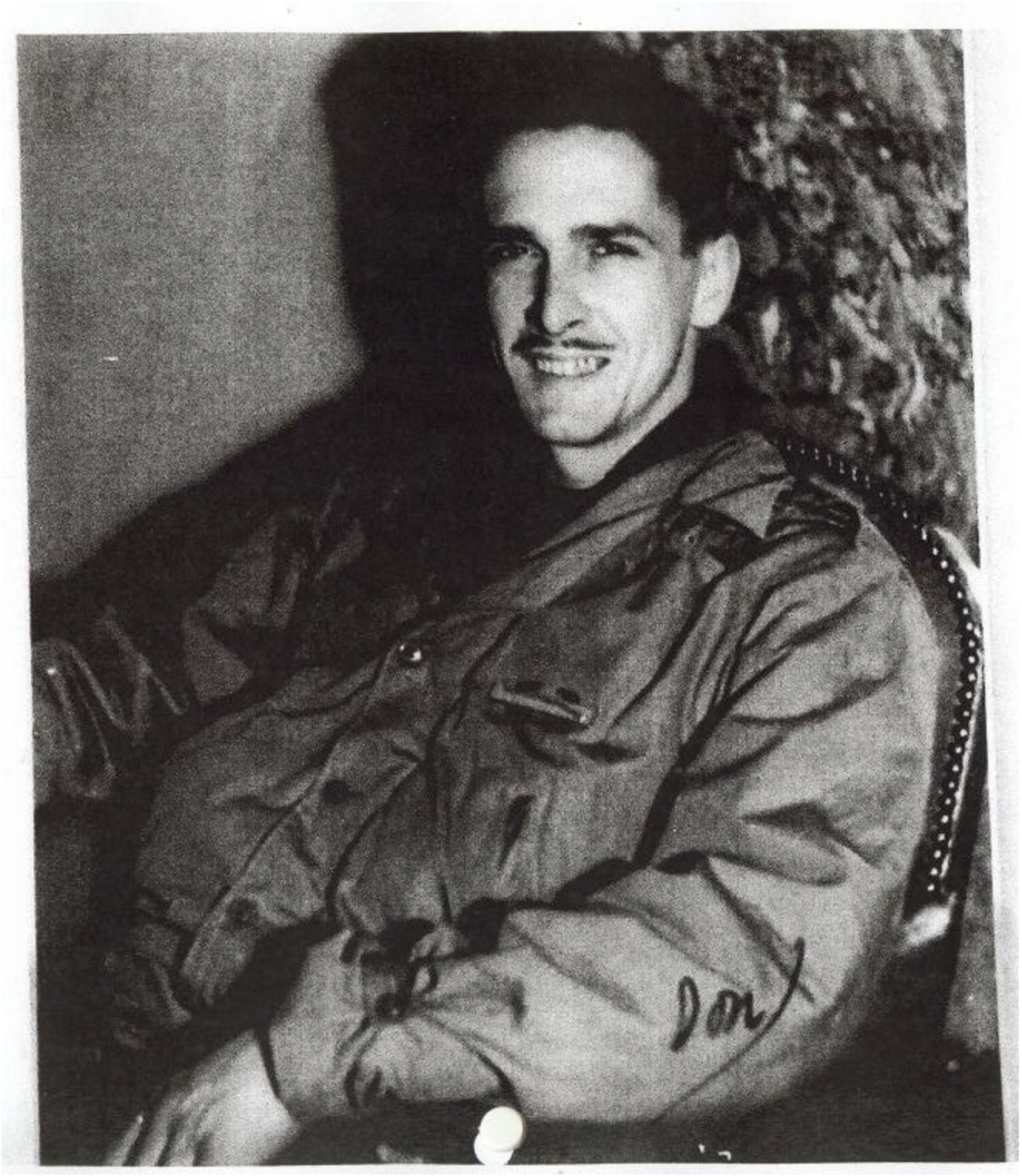
Montgomery wanted to concentrate allied forces, to attack the German lines with massive force, and to push the enemy back into Germany, using superior numbers and logistics, and applying steady pressure to finally win victory. Patton wanted to send rapidly moving forces around the flanks of the enemy, to cut off any retreat, and to kill or capture them where they were trapped.

Eisenhauer, the supreme commander of allied forces, was the man who had to decide , choosing between these two very different proposals. He was pressured, not only by the two protagonists but also by political considerations in the British and American governments. He must have invested much analysis and thought, and finally decided to pursue Montgomery's course. I don't think anyone can call his decision right or wrong. Opinions vary.

The following months were occupied with a succession of bitterly fought battles, all won eventually by the allies, but at high cost in men and materiel, exactly contrary to Montgomery's usual practice. I believe that Patton's thrusts around the enemy's main force would have led to rapid German retreat to meet this new threat, fighting in unprepared positions, and would have ended the war in West Germany at least one month earlier, with less loss of allied lives. Now, of course this is idle speculation. What was done led to victory, and history has been written.

I believe Eisenhauer's decision had a direct bearing on me and my life. It might indeed be the reason I am alive, and here, and writing this memoir. Had Patton's plan been adopted, the 94th Division was so situated that it almost inevitably would have spearheaded the attack in company with the massive armored forces of the U. S. Third Army. Such campaigns are audacious, and carry with them great risk in their execution. They are often waged against superior numbers, and usually entail high casualty rates while accomplishing their purpose. Instead, we continued with our prescribed role in the triangle, pinning down a sizeable German force while advancing slowly northward, clearing the triangle, and crossing the Saar River in due time.

In February my time at the front earned for me a three-day pass to Paris. I was, to say the least, elated. At the appointed time I left my foxhole, walked back to company headquarters, picked up my duffel bag, rode in a jeep to regimental headquarters, boarded a military bus, and in a few hours found myself in the Hotel Gare de la Este in Paris. Here, there was no war. After months of facing the enemy, it was surprising to witness civilian life once more. I had forgotten. The intensity of combat, with the threat of death or injury a constant fact of existence, eventually seems to be the only life there is. The contrast between combat in Germany and the now peaceful scene in Paris was at first shocking. The streets had cars and buses and taxis and motorcycles and trucks and there were men on the sidewalks wearing suits and hats and women with dresses and fashionable shoes and children playing and policemen directing traffic. There were shops with perfume and jewelry and cafes with waiters and wine on the tables. I had forgotten.



Don in Paris February 1945

The hotel was luxurious with a grand lobby and splendid salons. The large rooms were carpeted, and there were real beds with smooth sheets and warm comforters and mirrors. The bathroom was tiled, and had a large tub and there was real hot water in the tap.

Before getting on the bus at regimental headquarters I met another former ASTP student who was now in K company. We decided to pair off in Paris, and were assigned to the room together. We had hardly found our room and put down our packs and duffel bags before we headed for the streets, to begin our three days of respite. I do remember that while first exploring our room and bath we discovered a fixture we had never before seen, and could not imagine any use for. That was the first bidet either of us had ever seen or heard of, and it was the subject of much speculation until another GI, definitely more sophisticated than we, explained its function. His disclosure was accompanied with the expected quota of ribald humor. Well, live and learn.

We left the hotel, still dressed for combat and with two days growth of unshaven grime on our faces, and began a stroll down the sidewalk. At the corner stood a small French lady, selling little nosegays of violets to passersby. We stopped, and I employed my rudimentary French to ask the price of her wares. She answered in quite good English (certainly better than my French) and gave us a price in francs. With money in our pockets, and strangely happy to see real flowers after weeks spent in the snow, we each bought a little bouquet. Then the lady began issuing orders, telling us in no uncertain terms what we must do immediately. She told us to return to our room, take off our clothes, bathe, shave, comb our hair, and dress in clean clothes. Only after doing so, she said, would it be possible for us to really enjoy our brief time away from the war. She

bade us bonjour, and shooed us back toward the hotel, where we did exactly as she had ordered. As we did so we were really grateful for this motherly stranger in a strange land, who cared about us enough to give us advice when we really did need it. When we emerged an hour later she was gone from the corner, and we didn't see her again while in Paris, but I see her in my memory as I write this.

We walked around the city, just happy to be safe and temporarily free to do as we pleased. We visited Notre Dame Cathedral, and a museum or two, and spent time in cafes, and one evening at a dive in Pigalle, where the floor show was not as risque as we had expected but was adequate to getting well loaded and earning an MP escort back to the hotel in the wee hours of the morning.

While in combat, and even before, at Lorient, we had heard about new footwear called combat boots, intended for those of us in the infantry who were doing the fighting. These boots had a high leather collar, with straps and were intended to replace the World War I leggings and shoes we were presently equipped with. For several of those inexplicable military reasons, we had never seen such boots, although the term "combat boots" would seem to put us in the infantry at the front of the line for them. Now, in Paris, we saw them. All of the rear echelon clerks and ordinance and supply personnel had them. MP's and jeep drivers and even the few WAACS we saw were wearing combat boots. I even saw some on men who were obviously not in our army because they were wearing civilian clothes. At this point I understood why we had not been issued them. Every person in the army who was not in combat had to be shod with them before anyone actually fighting the enemy could have them. We were not happy!

We learned the location of a huge U. S. quartermaster depot at the south outskirts of the city. We rode the Metro (subway) to that area and found the depot. We entered in what I admit was a fairly belligerent manner, and asked the corporal behind the counter to get us combat boots, because we were infantrymen on pass from the front in Germany. His reply, as I repeat it now, is really laughable. At the time it was anything but funny. He said, as if it made real sense, "I can't issue combat boots to you because you don't have combat boots. If you had combat boots, I could give you combat boots. You have shoes, so I can give you shoes, but I cannot give you combat boots."

We argued that since we were real live combat soldiers, on pass from combat, perhaps combat boots were really intended for us instead of for all the GI's on rear echelon duty in Paris, including him. We argued with great emphasis, but to no avail. No combat boots.

Finally, completely frustrated and mad as hell, we left him behind his counter and went out into the sunshine. We sat on the curb, with our feet in the gutter, and pondered our next course of action, hoping that our next venture would be better than this one. As we sat there, a shadow fell across us, and a deep voice rumbled, "What's goin' on, fellas?" We looked up, and discovered that the voice belonged to a very tall, very black, and (as we discovered) very understanding and resourceful master sergeant. He sat on the curb beside us, and we spilled our guts, venting our anger at the corporal, the system, the war, the army, and everything else that came to mind. As we talked he began unstrapping his combat boots, which were much bigger than my shoes. He calmly removed them from his feet, and handed them to me. He said "Put these on. Don't matter if they don't fit.

Just put them on, and go in there, and tell that corporal you are wearing combat boots and you want another pair. When you get them, come out here, and your buddy can do the same thing. When you both have boots, give mine back to me, and then go have a good time 'til you have to go back to the war. And good luck, fellas. You need it."

Everything went just as he said. Within a half hour, we both had new combat boots under our arms, and we thanked our large friend, got on the Metro, and rode back downtown to the hotel. We still had a day and a half of freedom before going back to the nightmare of our real lives in Germany.

The sun shone brightly on our last day in Paris. We savored our breakfast, knowing that tomorrow we would eat K rations. Before we ate, we took long hot baths, and put on the clothes in which we had arrived, now washed and pressed by hotel staff. We walked out to the street, and strolled over to the Champs Elyssee. That boulevard was busy with pedestrians, from the Arc de Triomphe to Place Concorde. We idled along, watching French kids beg their parents for treats from the vendors who sold candies and other treats from little stands along the way. We had had a good time in Paris, and indulged ourselves with food and wine, and bought gifts for loved ones at home, but we found that we each still had money in our pockets. We knew it would be along time before we would again have an opportunity to spend it, if ever. On impulse, we pooled our cash and bought the entire stock from two vendors, and gave it all away to kids as they passed by on their family promenade on that sunny afternoon in Paris.

Time was passing, and we had a date to keep at our hotel with the bus that would take us

north into the cold, out of France and into Germany where we would once again be with our squads and platoons. For a day or two, we would tell a little about our pass, but only a little because it would be unfair to our audience to expound on the pleasures we had enjoyed. Brief though the time had been, dwelling on it would not be fair, and could only add to the misery all had to endure.

I was glad to learn that no one in the squad had been wounded or killed while I was away. The line had advanced a quarter mile in my absence, and I helped my buddy enlarge the hole he had dug for himself. The first action we were involved with came soon. We were ordered to assault a little village to our immediate front. To do so, we were forced to advance across a large open area, extending about a quarter mile from our beginning line in a woods, to the edge of the town. We knew there were enemy troops there, although their armor had pulled back a short time before. To make the assault we planned to advance in an extended skirmish line as rapidly as possible, following a rolling barrage by our artillery. In preparation the night before, the 105's had shelled suspected enemy artillery positions. Apparently this effort was effective, because during our attack we took no fire from enemy 88's.

In attacking a house, procedure was to throw grenades through the windows when near enough, and then to storm inside. The leader would take the first door to the right, and others following would peel into the other rooms, continuing until the premises were cleared. On this occasion, I was at the extreme right end of the skirmish line as we entered the town, and at the first house I led the assault, followed by the remainder of the squad. I threw a grenade first, as I approached the door. We had our bayonets fixed on

our rifles, in anticipation of any close combat we might encounter.

I had not shaved since Paris. A slight thaw had turned our holes into mud, and our clothes were really filthy. As I jumped through the first door on the right, where my grenade had gone, I saw no enemy. The door, however, was swung back close to the wall and I thought it possible that a German might be behind it, ready to attack. Using my bayonet, I hooked the edge of the door to pull it toward me. As it swung toward me, I assumed the proper position to begin a bayonet attack. No enemy appeared, but there was a full length mirror on the back of the door, in which I saw my own image - a dirty, desperate, thug lunging at me with bayonet aimed for my throat. For one brief instant, I felt sheer terror and a determination to kill before being killed. Then I realized the truth, and that I had nearly scared myself silly, and I went on to join in clearing the house. We found warm food on the table in the kitchen, but no foe. The entire village had been abandoned, with the enemy leaving the north side as we approached from the south. Apparently the enemy artillery had been effectively neutralized the night before, and without armor or artillery support the remaining enemy troops left as we began our advance. This morning proved to be a battle without any resistance, but I remember it because of the fright I inflicted on myself. War can be amusing even when it is hell. I was certainly happy that nobody else had witnessed my moment of self-inflicted terror, and even then found myself laughing at the silly things that can happen to us in nearly any situation.

After the advance to take that village, I can now recall only one other attack that was significant to me, in the triangle. That came near the end of our involvement, and I will deal with it later. Now, I'd like to describe a couple of incidents that deserve mention. One involved a soldier in the squad named Lenarcic. He was a really good man, always dependable, always active in whatever was taking place, and normally with great self control. While not reckless, he nevertheless gave performance above average on every occasion. As a fellow rifleman, I valued his presence.

One day we were exchanging rifle fire with a group of enemy, over a clearing that I would estimate to be a little more than 200 yards across. I don't know why the exchange was going on, because we had not attacked and had no orders to do so, but someone had fired a first shot, and someone answered, and soon a number of us were involved. As usual, our fire was not precisely aimed. An interesting fact is that when we did fire our rifles we seldom were aiming at any one target, but instead were just shooting at enemy sounds, or a suspected position. I don't know if, on this occasion, we had hit any enemies, and they had not hit any of us.

As we continued to fire, Lenarcic began swearing , which was not his normal behavior. His M-1 rifle had jammed! This was unusual, because our M-1 Garand rifles were the best on any battlefield in the world at that time. They were a great improvement over the bolt-action Springfield (U. S.) or Enfield (British) rifles used in World War I. Or, for that matter, the Mauser (German) World War I weapons still standard in the German infantry after thirty years of improvement in their other weapons, particularly their machine guns. The M-1 was gas operated, and loaded automatically into the chamber from a clip of 8

rounds. All we had to do to fire was pull the trigger, which gave us much faster fire power than the enemy we were facing.

The M-1 was rugged, and easily cleaned, and despite the conditions in which we fought these rifles performed as intended. Lenarcic's frustration was understandable. An infantryman without a rifle is akin a ditch digger without a shovel. He moved back into a more sheltered area, and tried to clear the jam, to no avail. His gun was, as a German would say "Kaput!" It was done for, finished, junk. By pure chance a man who had been evacuated with frozen feet that morning had left his rifle in his hole, and Lenarcic took his useless gun to that hole and swapped for the usable weapon. He rejoined our little firefight and continued until both sides just got bored and quit shooting. However, that didn't end the matter.

The next day, I saw Lenarcic when we went to the rear for our hot meal and dry socks, and he was carrying two rifles, one on each shoulder. I don't know where he got the second gun, but from that day to the end of the war Lenarcic carried two M-1's, carefully cleaned and maintained. He was determined that he would never again be n the middle of a firefight without a functioning rifle. A few weeks later I became his squad leader, but I never tried to get him to put aside one of his guns. When hostilities ended, he finally turned one of them over to the company supply clerk. I last saw him in Czechoslovakia , the day I started for home. Lenarcic was a good soldier.

When I said above that the Springfield was used in World War I, I left out one fact. Because of the construction of the M-1, it did not accommodate a telescope for use by

snipers. For that purpose, each platoon had one or two sniper rifles, Springfield, equipped with telescopes for accuracy at a distance, and these were used quite effectively by the expert marksmen to whom they were assigned. One of my best friends, Homer B. Hull, from West Virginia, was a sniper and a deadly shot - a skill developed while hunting squirrels in the woods back home, when he wasn't working in the coal mine. He was an affable man, and had amazing musical talent. He could play any string instrument, by ear, though he had never had any lessons. When I asked him one day how he had learned to play the fiddle, he said, "My Pap taught me." All through our battles, he always had an instrument - fiddle, guitar, banjo, harmonica - with him, and put them to good use when conditions allowed.

While we were at Lorient, he was at one point positioned where he could see an enemy outpost at least a quarter mile away. One of the enemy occupants had developed a routine which proved deadly. Every afternoon he would leave his dugout, walk to a large tree, and urinate. Home B. watched this for several days, and then said, "I'm gonna get that guy." He estimated the distance involved as closely as possible, and then went back of our lines to lay out the proper range. He fired a few rounds, until he was satisfied with his accuracy, and then waited for the next afternoon. When that poor German took his regular stroll to the tree, Homer B. fired one shot and killed him instantly. It is interesting to me to know that Homer B. was a gentle companion, a musician, a hard worker, and had no rancor toward anyone, but because there was a war to be fought he could kill a man, a stranger, with no regret.

Now, back to the triangle. I should say something about the term "casualty" as it is used

in warfare. A casualty is an event or condition that removes a man from action. Fatalities, illnesses, disabling wounds, broken or sprained arms or legs, frozen feet, or many other conditions may be casualties. During our time in combat, the 94th Division which numbered at full strength between 15,000 and 17,000 men, had about 40,000 individuals on its roster and involved in operations. A great many of these excess numbers were killed or wounded in encounters with the enemy. Another large number were those who became ill just as they might have ailed in normal civilian circumstances. After all, donning a uniform does not make the wearer immune to pneumonia or appendicitis.

In our campaign in the triangle, a major factor was the weather. The winter of 1945 was a record breaker for cold and snow. Living in holes, without shelter or heat, took its toll. Day after day men in otherwise decent condition were evacuated with frozen feet. This condition was usually so severe that the victim was returned to the states for medical attention, and was thus lost to the unit forever. Combined with the loss of experience fighters was the necessity for breaking new replacements as they arrived to fill in the ranks. Usually new men were quick to adapt to their new situation, but complete assimilation took time we did not have.

This situation prevailed throughout the Third Army, Patton's command. In one period, the casualties resulting from frozen feet were the most numerous in the entire command. The general was furious about this situation, but soon took effective action. He issued an order to his entire command, stating that every man in the Third Army would be furnished one hot meal every day, and before eating that meal would change his socks,

putting on a clean dry pair to be furnished without fail by his unit. Furthermore, if any failures occurred, no matter what the excuse, the cooks or supply personnel responsible would be immediately put into rifle squads, and replaced with men who could execute orders.

Following this general order, we left our holes a few at a time, walked back to the nearest location the cooks could reach with their jeep, and obediently changed our socks, ate our hot food (usually hearty stews and bread) and returned to the line. The result was amazing. The frozen foot problem ended almost immediately. Also, at about this time we were issued shoe-pacs, heavy rubber and leather footwear, waterproof, accompanied by very thick outer socks as liners. With this equipment and the effects of Patton's order, weather evacuations ceased almost entirely. The war could go on. Once again a general had demonstrated powers beyond the reach of ordinary men. Patton, though not a doctor, had eliminated a medical problem with his signature on an order.

During our campaign in the triangle, we in the rifle companies enjoyed a favorable imbalance in artillery coverage. Despite higher echelon rationing of ammunition for our 105's and 155's, when we engaged the enemy we always had at least adequate, if not overpowering artillery support. In one instance, two different regiments failed in attempts to dislodge the enemy from a hillcrest position. The enemy was well entrenched, and well armed, and fought fiercely, repelling the American advances. Army command was not happy about the outcome. When a third attempt was made, the infantry attack was preceded by a fifteen minute saturation shelling coordinated by corps, army, and division artillery. Immediately after this shelling, a rolling barrage was laid down as the infantry

advanced. In this third attempt, almost no resistance was met, because the enemy forces who remained were too stunned by concentrated artillery to present a fight.

In contrast, while the enemy 88's were a fearsome weapon, the forces in the triangle did not have enough of them to lay down a heavy concentration of fire. During our actions, we usually endured sporadic shelling, which did on occasion have effect, as with the death of Sgt. Blaylock. I don't recall that our movements were ever defeated by enemy artillery.

There was one instance which, as I mentioned before, followed by a few days the Sinz attack. That morning stands out in my memory. We were ordered to move across a road and into a woods some distance away. Everything went smoothly, and we encountered no resistance although there was evidence that the enemy had been there quite recently. We were beginning to organize our new position when suddenly we came under fire by what I believe was the most terrifying weapon in the enemy's arsenal. Dozens of Niebelwerfer rockets - Screaming Meemies, we called them - came shrieking down on us. These rockets were launched from multiple assemblies of barrels mounted on mobile carriers. They were designed to strike terror into their victims while they also threw shrapnel when they detonated. The sound, beginning at the moment of launching and continuing through their flight, was a loud whistling scream. Since they were fired in groups and impacted in groups, there was really no way to evade them. I can clearly remember the panic I felt when that shelling began. That morning was the time of the deepest fear I have ever felt. Nothing before or since has even come close. Long after that, similar sounds revived the sensations of that morning.

May 15-

Dear Patty:

I'm just a friend of Don's, who happened to have remembered that a year ago, you two got married.

I don't know if you recall or not but I was the one you were to visit, when you spent your honeymoon in Chicago.

At any rate, I would like to extend my best wishes, and I sincerely hope that you and Don are together again very shortly.

I am very grateful to Don for what he did to me that one night in Germany. Of course, the many months we've spent together here in the States and overseas were grand. But that one particular night I'll never forget.

If it wasn't for him, I would be minus at least, a foot. He really did an awful lot to help me. His concern over me that night will never be forgotten.

While I was in the hospital in England I met Floyd Ross, another boy in our platoon. He had told me that Don was evacuated because of his feet. I hope it wasn't serious, and may he recover very soon. It would be great if he was sent back to the States.

I do wish you would send me his address, so I can write to him.

In closing let me again wish you all the happiness in the world and may God smile you two very sweetly.

May I hear from you? Till then I remain,

A grateful friend and admirer,

Harry Pappas

One early evening, when dark had begun to erase our surroundings, we were in a woods, in deep snow, but not dug in because we were supposed to move soon, it was said. As it turned out, we spent nearly the entire night in that location, and then returned in early morning to the holes we had left the day before. This scenario was not uncommon, because units were often moved into position as reserves behind another unit's operation, and not utilized because the need for assistance did not arise.

One of my roommates from Ole Miss, Harry Pappas, was nearby as we waited for orders. Harry was a small man, with very small feet which army footwear did not fit well. That night, he told me he thought his feet were frozen. I helped him remove his shoes (he did not have overshoes, because the army didn't stock them in his size) and I felt his feet, and they did feel like ice. I tried to rub life back into them, and wrapped them in a blanket, but soon decided they were beyond my help. Over his protests, I called the medic over, and we decided Harry couldn't remain with us. He was evacuated for medical attention, and wound up finally at Camp Carson, Colorado. While there he met a nurse working on his ward who was a classmate of mine through high school and junior college, and who remains a good friend of mine. Harry was given a medical discharge, and went home to Chicago, where I believe he still lives.

By this time we had been in the triangle, making limited attacks, living in extreme cold and snow, in holes in the ground, for seven weeks. We had entered this campaign in excellent condition, but as time passed and conditions worsened, and men were killed and wounded, it began to seem that none of us would ever leave this war alive, and that winter would go on forever, and that there was no longer any reason for hope.

After the war, analysts of military affairs wrote about the "thousand yard stare." That term describes the expression, or lack thereof, on faces of men who have endured privation, physical misery, fear, and the nearness of death until they lose contact with their lives and everything they know is the battlefield. At this stage, men continue to perform as a sort of robot, detached from all memory and human feeling and relating only to the nightmare around them. At the extreme, a man may slip into a state in which he can no longer perform and must be removed from battle. In WW I, this condition was called "shell shock." In WW II, the term was "battle fatigue." No analyst attaches cowardice to what happens to men pushed beyond endurance.

Initially, men in this state were evacuated in the same fashion as the wounded, to medical facilities in the rear. This meant at least a week of time under care, and the possibility of reassignment to other units when fit for duty. General Malony, commander of the 94th Division, decided to establish a sort of rest house where men would remain in the division but could be removed from the line for a brief period, to be fed hot meals, allowed to sleep, and could be evaluated by the division psychiatrist before returning to battle. This program was effective, and averted the personnel loss which occurred under the prior practice.

I have personal knowledge of this, because one day platoon Sgt. Theresi told Ed Finkelstein to take me back to company rear CP (Command Post) to 1st Sgt. Wood. I obediently followed Ed, not knowing or caring. Sgt. Wood took one look at me, put me in the jeep, and told the driver where to take me. Next, I was in a warm room, and a medic was giving me a capsule (sodium pentothal, known as a Blue 88) and I laid down

on a mattress on the floor and woke up twelve hours later. There was a hot meal, and clean clothes, and more sleep. An officer came in and sat down with me and talked about what was going on and how I felt about it, and told me the enemy was retreating. He took my pulse and listened to my heart and my lungs, and thanked me. He said I would go back to my unit that evening, and I did. It was during that two days that I talked to O'Donnell about the three wounded men in the minefield. I resumed life in Company I and nobody ever mentioned my absence.

In about the fourth week of our triangle campaign, the 301st Regiment was pulled out of the line into Division reserve. We walked back about ten miles, to a portion of the now abandoned Maginot Line. We were to be in reserve for several days. When we finally arrived at our new position, well out of combat, we found that our duffel bags with clean clothes and personal possessions were waiting for us. After our time in battle, we were hoping to just crawl into our pup tents and go to sleep. Instead, we were ordered to get hot water from the kitchen and to wash and shave and change our clothes, which we did. Now, instead of being allowed to sleep we were called into company formation, marched to an assembly point, and formed into battalions for a parade!

We could not believe what was happening. In our opinion, our commanders were completely insane. There, on a wintry afternoon in France, our regimental band played and we began to march, and we paraded in front of General Malony and Colonel Haggerty and we saw the American flag and the regimental colors for the first time in months. We marched in formation, which we had not done since we left England. In other words, we behaved again as a trained and cohesive unit. After the parade we at last

returned to our assigned areas and ate our fill of a really good hot meal, and then went to our tents to sleep or write letters or read our mail or just do as we pleased. We ended that day with the expectation that we would have several days to relax. We still believed that our leaders were either idiotic or cruel, when all we wanted was to sleep in safety.

That evening events proved how very wrong we were in our assessment. The officers were right. Sometime after midnight we were all awakened, and hurriedly issued K rations and ammunition, and marched back into battle against an unusually heavy and unexpected enemy attack. We had been out of the line for not quite 24 hours, but at least we were now clean and in clean clothes, and we had seen the flag and heard the band and felt once again that we were part of something a lot larger and more powerful than our squads and platoons. We remembered that we were soldiers.

I have said much about the abysmal conditions we endured. We were, however, never out of touch with the big, top down, war. We received our mail from home as often as possible, at times under difficult circumstances. I still recall seeing Chaplain O'Rourke coming down through the woods on his belly in the snow, dragging a bag with mail and cigarettes for us. Once, Bridwell, the mail orderly, and a cook and a jeep driver, were coming to the line with mail, food, and a new weapon, a bazooka. Rounding a curve in the trail they saw a moving German medium tank which had slipped through the lines and was in our rear. The three of them did not hesitate. They put a rocket in the bazooka and fired at the tank, hitting it and knocking it out of action. The enemy tankers were all killed. We re-named that little group the "kitchen commandos."

Letters were not our only source of information about the war, the home front, and other matters far from our holes. The army published and distributed to soldiers in all theaters and in all situations a splendid newspaper - The Stars and Stripes. I don't remember the frequency of issues, but I do know that it was distributed through all possible channels and that it reached us regularly. In its pages were factual stories about battles and campaigns around the world. Reporters who wrote the stories did so from the front lines, accompanying infantry and armored units into battle and suffering their share of casualties in the process. A young cartoonist, Bill Mauldin, distilled infantry warfare into a memorable series with the characters Willie and Joe, enduring along with us the rigors of combat. Men who later became well known journalists in civilian life were on the staff of Stars and Stripes. Andy Rooney, for instance, was a staff member.

I have mentioned Nennig before, because we spent a good period in the vicinity of that little town. It remained headquarters for our company for several weeks, and we used some of the cellars under the houses as relatively safe shelter when we were in reserve. It was below several low hills, and there were a number of wooded areas. The enemy made several attempts to expel us, mounting attacks down a draw that led from territory still in their control. Each such attack was stopped, with heavy losses by the enemy, by strong rifle and machine gun fire from houses that fronted the draw. These attempts were made at night, and in the following mornings there would be a number of German bodies lying in the snow, frozen as they fell. Carrying parties would bring them back into the village, to a house where they were stored, frozen, until it was possible for our graves registration units to identify them and move them to the rear.

I have written before about our basic tools of infantry warfare: rifles, bayonets, grenades, BAR's, sniper rifles. There were a number of other, more specialized implements, for use in particular circumstances. Among these were bangalore torpedoes, barbed wire, beehive charges, satchel charges, bazookas, TNT blocks and igniters, tank dozers, mines, prima cord, mortars, and strangest of all, L-5 observation planes.

We seldom had occasion to use barbed wire, because during the triangle campaign we kept pressure on the enemy and moved our lines forward frequently. The enemy used barbed wire to afford protection for their positions, to deter our approach and assault moves. The bangalore torpedo was the tool we used to break through barbed wire entanglements. It consisted of a long, probably six foot, metal tube filled with high explosive. Under covering fire by squad or platoon, one man would crawl to the wire, shove the torpedo under it, and retreat to safety before it exploded. Usually the result was a gap in the wire through which it was possible to continue the attack.

Attacking the pillboxes and other hardened defenses in the German fortified line posed a serious problem for infantry. These positions, as I have noted before, were so located that each gave covering fire for its neighbors, and approaching them was a very dangerous operation. They had almost no vulnerable spots. Their firing ports were small and had steel covers. They were formed of reinforced concrete, of various dimensions, but never under eight inches and sometimes twenty four inches in thickness. Their doors were usually below ground level, and were heavy steel. In a word, they were formidable.

After getting close to them, the method of attack involved massive explosive charges.

We had satchel charges, which were musette bags filled with TNT, and were effective in knocking the doors off hinges or buckling them. We also had beehive charges, which were shaped according to what is known as the Monroe effect. This effect was observed by accident, and it became standard in what is known as shaped charges. A quantity of explosive, formed with a hole at one side, and with that hole lined with a metal cone, will direct nearly all the power of the explosion in a small but terrifically violent force out of the shaped point. Beehive charges had that name because they were shaped like a beehive, and when used the point was placed against the target and the result was devastating to the occupants of the target pillbox. Against steel, penetration will equal seven and a half times the length of the cone. Against concrete, the effect is even greater, and beehive charges were an efficient weapon.

The Monroe effect was also the basis for development of antitank weapons, including the American bazooka and the German Panzerfaust. Missiles thrown by these weapons were shaped charges, and could punch holes in most tank armor, resulting in a stream of lethal metal fragments which often killed all occupants of a tank. Our bazooka was a rocket launcher, and had no recoil. A slight drawback was the hot trail of rocket propellant which could burn the face of the operator. The bazooka was reusable, and could fire repeatedly if rockets were available. The Panzerfaust, in contrast, was a single shot weapon, with a charge larger than the bazooka but more difficult to fire and once used was just scrap.

During the winter of the triangle campaign, the soil was frozen to a depth of six to eight inches, making almost impossible the task of digging in when occupying a new position.

Each infantryman was equipped with a tool for this purpose. Some of us had entrenching tools which were small spades, suitable for carrying on ones pack. Others were equipped with a small pick-mattox. Using these, it was possible for two men to dig a suitable hole quite rapidly, except in frozen soil. As a solution to this problem, each man carried a half pound block of TNT, usually in his field jacket pocket. Around the helmet was wound a fuse and cap, with a friction igniter. To begin a hole, the cap was inserted into the TNT, and snow was piled on it. Then the igniter was pulled, and we retreated a safe distance. When the TNT exploded, it cracked the frozen soil, making it possible to pry up chunks which were placed around the edge of the prospective hole, and digging into the soft earth below the frost could begin.

Mortars were the frontline artillery equipment used by infantry companies. They were in two sizes, and were small and light enough to be carried by their gunners. They accompanied riflemen and were immediately available for aggressive or protective cover when needed. They fired fragmentation rounds for use against enemy personnel, and also could fire smoke rounds to obscure the battlefield when needed. There were also incendiary shells for setting structure fires. My experience in the anti-tank ditch, with an enemy mortar gunner chasing us back and forth, taught me first hand the great utility of mortars.

At times, when attacking enemy pillboxes, an attempt was made to persuade the enemy to surrender in the face of certain destruction. There were successes and failures in these attempts. One weapon which almost invariably succeeded was the tank dozer. This armored vehicle could approach a pillbox, immune to enemy small arms fire, and using

the dozer blade could bury the entrance to the fortification. Because there was only one entrance and exit to these structures, anyone inside when the entrance was buried in this fashion was doomed to certain and horrible death. There could be no escape. Enemies in nearby positions having observation of the area usually were eager to come out with their hands up. Even the bravest of warriors did not relish the idea of being helplessly buried in a concrete coffin.

The enemy made far greater use of mines, both antipersonnel and antitank, than we did. We were usually in a given location only for a brief time, while the enemy was slowly retreating over familiar fortified ground, and had ample time to put down mine fields. On occasion, however, we did use mines to protect certain positions from enemy attack.

I have mentioned briefly the explosive RDX and primacord. RDX was a sort of putty like explosive, that could be molded in the hands, and fixed in position by just sticking it to the target surface. It was very useful in demolition work, because it was easily and safely handled and could be used in otherwise difficult circumstances. In France, we experimented with it, blowing down trees and destroying railroad lines. A companion to RDX was primacord, which closely resembled cotton clothesline rope, but was actually a highly explosive substance. Primacord could be used by itself, wound around a tree or a door handle, or other target, or it could be used to tie together widely separated charges of TNT or RDX. When used in this fashion, the primacord was fitted with a cap and fuse, and when set off it exploded along its entire length simultaneously, and detonated all the other explosives to which it was attached.

Defensive weapons with which we were not exactly equipped, but for which we were always grateful, were the L-5 artillery observation planes which flew over our lines intermittently in even difficult weather conditions. These little planes, which resembled the Piper Cub aircraft flown by amateur pilots in the decade of the thirties, usually carried a pilot and an observer, and had direct radio contact with artillery units in the area. When they spotted enemy installations or activity, they could direct destructive artillery fire against those targets. When we were under enemy artillery or mortar fire, the appearance of one of those little aircraft slowly buzzing around above the battlefield was almost certain to end enemy fire. The planes were small and slow, but they controlled a mighty force of artillery. After the war I talked with several men who had flown L-5's, and they told of returning to land with many bullet holes in their aircraft but no injuries to themselves.

I need to tell a little more about the village of Nennig, which was our base of operations in the Triangle. While we were fighting in the vicinity, it held no particular interest for us. Decades later, in 1971, Pat and I visited the region while on a veterans' tour of battlefields. To my amazement, I discovered that Nennig had been the site of the summer palace of the Roman governor during the days of the empire. Preserved is a magnificent mosaic tile floor of the ancient baths, and along the side of a slope are the ruins of a marble walkway. Trier, which remains a city of importance on the Moselle just below the confluence of the Saar, was the Roman capitol of the north extreme of the Roman Empire during the period of its greatest expansion.

DESCRIPTION OF A GERMAN FIELD MESSAGE FORM OF WORLD WAR II.

TELEPHONE - TELEX - RADIO-ADVICE - SIGNAL-ADVICE

Message Center. No. Location: Origin, Date &
Time HGIX 0423 Hq. Army Group: dispatched:
22. Feb. 45 rec.1896,45 22/2 at
12:55
indicates signature (name) of
official dispatcher.

Order received:
from:(designation): Day Time Through/from:
HMEX : 22/2 12:00 illegible

designated as +KR BLITZ (Lightning speed) HMEX 05492
URGENT (DISP.II)22/2/45
Time:1100(1140)

Directed to: COMMANDING OFFICER OF H-GR G= Army Group "G"
Addressed to: COMMANDING OFFICER OF II-GR G= Army Group "G"
Mr. Lt.Gen. of the SS Hausser
GKDDS -- QWD -(unknown codes) FOR IMMEDIATE DISPATCH

THE CROSSING OF THE SAAR BY THE ENEMY AT SERRIG EVOKES EXTRAORDINARY DANGER IN AS MUCH AS THE ENEMY MAY BREAK OUT THROUGH THE WESTERN FORTIFICATIONS AND THEN CUT OFF THE FRONT AND CONQUER THE AREA PIECE BY PIECE.
IT IS THEREFORE IMPORTANT THAT ALL FORCES BE THUS PRIMED FOR THE ATTACK TO DESTROY THE ENEMY BEACHHEADS WITHOUT FAIL.
I REQUEST THE COMMANDANT OF THE FIRST ARMY AGAIN TO NOTE EXPLICITLY THE DECISIVE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE IMMEDIATE CLEARING OF THE BEACHHEADS; AND THAT HE ASSUME THE RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY.
THE COMMANDANT WEST: SIGNED: VON RUNDSTEDT
GENERAL-FIELDMARSHAL ROEM, EINS A NR 2003/45 GKDDS
(THESE CODES UNKNOWN)

Author's description of the above document:
Telex from the Commanding Officer of the Western Front, Fieldmarshal von Rundstedt to Commanding Officer of the Army Group G, SS-Oberstgruppenfuehrer (Lt.General) of the Waffen-SS Paul Hausser ordering the counter attack against the American units who had advanced at the Saar-crossing at Serrig.

(Translated by Edgar Alexander 7/1/92)

Fernspruch - Fernschreiben - Funkspruch - Blinkspruch

Durch die Nachrichtenstelle auszufüllen!

Nachr.-Stelle: HGrX — Nr.: 0423

Vermerke: M AUE=

Angenommen oder aufgenommen: von HMEX — Tag 22/2 — Zeit 1200 — durch [illegible]

Obkdo. Heeresgr. B — Befördert: an [illegible] — Tag 22 FEB 1945 — Zeit [illegible] — durch [illegible] — Kasse [illegible]

Abgang: Tag: — Zeit: — Dringlichkeitsvermerk:

+KR BLITZ HMEX 05492 22/2.45 1100-(1140)= — Stelle

KR BLITZ AN DEN OBERBEFEHLSHABER DER H- GR. G= — Fernsprech-Anschluß

GLTD: AN DEN OBERBEFEHLSHABER DER H GR G=

HERRN SS-OBERSTGRUPPENFUEHRER HAUSSER=

--GKDOS-- --QWD-- SOFORT VORLEGEN=

DER FEINDUEBERGANG UEBER DIE SAAR BEI SERRIG BIRGT DIE --AUSZERORDENTLICHE GEFAHR, IN SICH, DASS DER FEIND DORT EIN STUECK DES WESTWALLES HERAUSBRICHT UND DAN AUCH DIESEN ABSCHNITT DER FRONT STUECKWEISE AUFROLLT.- ES IST DAHER --ALLES-- DARANZUSETZEN, DEN UEBER DIE SAAR GEDRUNGENEN FEIND SOFORT ANZUPACKEN UND ZU VERNICHTEN.- ICH BITTE, DEN OBERBEFEHLSHABER DER 1. ARMEE NOCHMALS AUSDRUECKLICH AUF DIE --ENTSCHEIDENDE BEDEUTUNG-- DER -SOFORTIGEN-- BEREINIGUNG AN DER UEBERGANGSSTELLE UND DIE DAMIT VERBUNDENE VERANTWORTUNG AUFMERKSAM ZU MACHEN=

DER OBERBEFEHLSHABER WEST GEZ. VON RUNDSTEDT

GENERALFELDMARSCHALL ROEM EINS A NR 2003/45 GKDOS+

Inhalt

Fernschreiben des Oberbefehlshabers der Westfront, Feldmarschall von Rundstedt, an den Oberbefehlshaber der Heeresgruppe G, SS-Oberstgruppenführer und Generaloberst der Waffen-SS Paul Hausser, mit der Aufforderung, die bei Serrig über die Saar vorgestoßenen amerikanischen Einheiten zurückzuschlagen.