OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS

As I thought about the next material with which this memoir is concerned, the above heading seemed perfectly to describe what we, the 94th Division, and Company I, 301st Infantry, embarked on as part of the drive by the 3rd US Army. The line evokes memories of a Christmas song familiar to my childhood, but this time when we went over the river our destination certainly was not Grandma's house.

When I returned to the company after my brief absence at the regimental rest house, I found that the psychiatrist had spoken the truth when he said that the enemy was retreating. During that brief time the entire triangle had been cleared by our army as the enemy beat a hasty retreat across the Saar and the Moselle. When I reported back for duty, the company was spearheading an assault crossing of the flooded Saar River. It was February 23 when I reported and Company I was already in the process of going across in boats, under a heavy cover of fog which filled the valley. At first the crossing was done in 16 boats with paddles, which were later supplemented with motorized boats. Captain Donovan was among the first officers across, and performed with great skill and courage, leading the assault on the heavily defended and fortified town of Serrig.

We had spent many weeks fighting through the Siegfried Switch Line, an offshoot of the main Siegfried Line defenses of the 3rd Reich. Now, we were engaged against the main defenses. The entire east side of the river was covered by enemy fire from pillboxes, bunkers, and hardened artillery emplacements. Because of the covering fog, enemy gunners could not identify targets by visual observation, but they directed withering machine gun and mortar fire at any sound, and particularly at the rumble of motors.

Germany.
Mar. 30, 1945

Dear Mom,

Another day, another letter. The V-mail comes through fine. And I really do like to get them. Of course, a regular letter now and then is swell, too.

A Skelton paper came today, and it carried the sad news that Don Lottery was killed in action. I am really very sorry. He was a swell kid. But then a lot of swell kids are getting it every day. I've been very lucky with my squad. A number of my men have been wounded, but not many killed.

One morning, in the space of two hours, I had three men wounded and one captured. At last, I think he was captured, although we've never had word of him. Days like those are

The division crossed the river at three places. To the south, the 302nd crossed almost unopposed at Taben, where the enemy had believed the steep cliffs and hills would make a crossing unlikely. Because the surprise allowed the regiment to maintain good organization, an attack to the north, to engage the defenders of Serrig from the rear was immediately begun. At Serrig, the 301st, with Company I in the lead, encountered massive resistance, which was even more deadly when the fog dissipated and the enemy gunners could actually see targets. During that day's action, I unexpectedly found myself in the position of assistant squad leader, when my predecessor was wounded. Promotion following preparation is the goal of many. Promotion without warning is not. However, I was one of only a few men remaining from the 200 who had left McCain months before, and those of us who were experienced in warfare were logical leaders of the replacements who were not.

I performed no heroic deeds that day, but functioned adequately as a part of a really scary action. One of the men in the third squad, who I had first met when he said he was scared some days before, as he joined the company, did go above and beyond the call. His name was Calvin G. Schermann. He was from Herman, Missouri. He had not quite reached eighteen when he joined the company. He was a great soldier, strong and smart and willing to do whatever was required of him, and a bit more. Because of his young strength he was assigned a BAR. It the boat with him on crossing were two other men from the platoon and, I believe, an engineer. Because the river was in flood due to snow melt, the stream was very rapid. The boat with Schermann and the others went out of control and wound up on the enemy side down river from the town of Serrig.

These men were now unexpectedly out of the action at the crossing point, and could legitimately have maintained their position and awaited further orders. Instead, Schermann led them back up the shore, and began an independent attack on the town. He fought their way back to the company, and continued to use his BAR effectively in the battle. For his bravery and leadership, I recommended him for heroism, and he was later, in Czechoslovakia, awarded the Silver Star.

On the 26th, after the town was taken through efforts of the 301st and the 302nd, it was time to move further away from the river, to enlarge the bridgehead. Movements were all by foot, since there was no motorized transport on this side of the river. We began a march to the north, along the river past the town of Beurig and to Ockfen. When we passed Beurig, a remnant enemy position began firing at us with what seemed to be a small automatic mortar, which was a weapon of which we had never heard. When nearby mortars fire, one can hear the propellant charge, and then following the high arc of flight the impact of the round. A fast moving and proficient crew could have two or three rounds in the air before the first impact. This gun seemed to have as many as twelve on the way before the first landed. When the position was taken, it was found that the mortar was indeed automatic, with a belt feed mechanism that fired more rapidly than previous experience would indicate was possible.

On the 27th. the attack was continued to the east and north. The 3rd battalion 301st was ordered to move to the east to take three hills surrounding the town of Zerf, through which the US 10th Armored Division and the 376th regiment of the 94th Division were to advance to take the important city of Trier. After a long cross-country trek (necessitated

because the 10th Armored had road priority) we arrived at Zerf. Along the route, we at one point observed a group of US ambulances and other indications of a medical group positioned along the road which we were not allowed to use. Years later, on one occasion when I was seeing Dr. Robert Griffin in Sheldon for some purpose, I mentioned having been in that area near the Saar River when moving to occupy a remote German town named Zerf. To my amazement, Dr. Griffin said that he was there that day, with that field hospital that I had observed from a distance.

When we arrived at Zerf, we found that hills 4 and 5 were yet held by the enemy, but hill 6 was not. Company I immediately occupied hill 6, and in the process, through a tragic error, I became squad leader. We were in the process of relieving the unit holding the hill. It was very dark. Because hill 6 was under close enemy observation, no movement was possible during daylight. A sergeant of the occupying unit was guiding our squad to the holes we were to occupy. That non-com was in the lead, followed by one of our riflemen and squad leader Dunstan, with me next in line. Without warning, a man in the hole to which we were going fired at us, and killed Dunstan. He dropped without a sound. I moved to him, and rolled him over and knew immediately that he was gone. You may remember his name. He was the young man who, at McCain, dined with his dad and General Malony on occasion. From a wealthy and influential family, he fought bravely and died quietly from a tragic error that night above Zerf. I was now squad leader with seven men remaining out of the normal twelve. Dunstan lay beside the trail for two nights before I could get a carrying party to move him in the night down into the village, for attention by a graves registration unit. We used an abandoned German litter cart to

KILLED IN ACTION

STAFF SGT. PAUL M. DUNSTAN

A lieutenant of Nunan-Slook Squadron No. 338, Ardmore, Upper Darby, Pa., at the time he entered the service, Paul M. Dunstan was with Co. I, 301st Infantry, 94th Division, Patton's Third Army, when he was killed in action in Germany on March 6, 1945. He had been promoted from private first class to staff sergeant in February. He was not quite 20 years of age, the son of Horace E. Dunstan, who served with the Ambulance Service overseas in World War I.

move him down the trail and into the town.

One day, in Czechoslovakia, Captain Donovan called me into his tent and handed me a letter. It was from Dunstan's father, asking for details about his son's death. The captain asked me to answer it, since I was almost touching Dunstan when he was shot. I didn't want the assignment, but the captain insisted. I certainly didn't want to tell the father that his son was killed by an American soldier, who shot blindly in a panic in the dark. After several attempts, I was able to write a truthful answer without that terrible fact in it. I described his son as a fine soldier, an excellent squad leader, and a good friend. I told of the position on the hill, where we truly were in close proximity to the enemy, and described the ongoing battles we were engaged in, and said that his son was slain as a result of enemy action. I did not lie, and my letter must have been adequate, because I never heard of the matter again.

I don't recall how many nights we were on that hill. Because we observed strict non-movement during the days and exercised caution when moving at night, nothing really happened. Each night I had to go down the hill to the meeting with the officers and other non-coms, at which we learned about expected developments, drew rations, supplies, and mail for the men, and reported whatever had happened during the previous day. Because the men naturally grew tired of spending all their time in their holes, I began taking two or three at a time down into town, where I located a cellar I could use. I would let them have a couple of hours sleep, and heat a K-ration, and perhaps write a letter. It made a nice break for them, and kept me from the boredom of inactivity.

One evening I took, among others, a large and obviously athletic man named Maloney, to whom we gave the nickname "Bull" because he was much larger than most of us. That night Bull was really sick when I got him out of his hole. He was flushed, and had a fever, and felt terrible. He didn't tell me his condition because he didn't want to leave the squad, but his illness was obvious. Despite his protests, I got the medic to look at him, and Bull was evacuated to the hospital. He didn't return to the company until a couple of weeks later, when the enemy had collapsed and most of what could be called combat was finished. From the date of his return he became my bodyguard and companion. He was a good friend. He survived the war, and played, with George Pavlick, on the Division football team in Czechoslovakia. He died in his home area in Pennsylvania a number of years ago.

After our stint on the hill, we were moved to another location at Zerf. I was at the company command post one very dark night. I believe I was drawing my pay. One of my men came running into the room, quite excited, and told me that a flare had gone up over the enemy position across from our line, and that there were some men standing in the open field with their arms up. He asked me what to do, and I said "Well, go out and get them." I followed him out, and another flare went up, and there were eight enemy soldiers, standing with their arms up. A couple of us went out and brought them to our line. One of my men could speak a little German, and before we turned them over to regiment for interrogation we got their story.

Their sergeant had spent his entire military career in Berlin, in a supply depot of some sort. One day he was ordered to get on a truck, and with all his gear was taken to another

location, and merged into a group of other non-coms, and taken in a truck for quite a long distance, and then marched a few miles, and told that he was now an infantry squad leader and that the enemy was across the field in front of him. He said he spent that day looking over at our line, and talked to his new compatriots, and they decided to surrender that night, which they did. They were very glad to have put an end to their war. The sergeant gave me a very nice Walther automatic pistol, 38 caliber, which I brought home and kept for many years before selling it.

After we left Zerf matters became more complicated and are now harder to remember. One period we spent in a water-powered flour mill, tucked close up against a steep hill. We liked the location because enemy artillery could not hit it, since they could not achieve a trajectory which would drop down that close to the hill. The entire platoon was there. To get supplies to us, jeeps would come speeding across the field to the shelter of the hill, hoping the enemy could not aim and shoot quickly enough to hit them. We thought there were enemy dug in on top of the hill, but were not certain. Not, that is, until three of our nuttiest platoon members decided to find out. Without orders, or to be more accurate, against orders, Sgt. Anderson and Privates Leake and Williams decided to go up the hill to collect souvenirs from the enemy. For these men, this was a perfectly reasonable way to spend a sunny morning during a war.

Our first inkling of their action was a sudden outburst of small arms fire on top of the hill, that sounded like a western movie, with the addition of men shouting. Several of us stepped outside and looked up at the hill, to see Anderson, Leake, and Williams sliding

down the hill through the remnants of winter snow still clinging to the slope. They were all laughing as they came down. Anderson said they had reached the top and were looking around when Leake said there was a German coming out of a hole. Anderson said "Well, shoot the son of a bitch!" Leake did, and that's when all hell broke loose, with enemy soldiers coming out of holes all over the hilltop, and shooting at Leake and the others. Anderson said they ran around a little and exchanged fire and hit a few enemy before things got too hot and they came down the hill.

The sound of the battle roused some of the nervous nellies at battalion HQ, who got on the phone immediately to find out what was going on. I explained as well as I could, and then the battalion commander, a lieutenant colonel whose name I don't remember, got on the phone and said he wanted to talk to Sgt. Anderson. When Anderson finished telling the colonel about the events on the hilltop, the colonel told him that if he went back up and got some identification off the dead enemies, the army would give him a silver star medal for valor. Anderson's reply was, "Colonel, I've been up on that hill once today. I ain't going back. You can stick that silver star up your ass, Sir!" An instantly demoted Private Anderson put down the phone and went to take a nap on his bedroll.

It was while we were in that mill that we found out at last who had assaulted Kroll those months before, in the latrine at Camp McCain. One of our least effective redneck privates, Simpkins, began raving about hitting that "bastard Kroll" because he listened to the wrong kind of music on his radio in the barracks. Simpkins had never been much of a soldier, and we managed to get him removed from the company and sent back to wherever the army put failures.

As squad leader, I now had numerous functions that occupied my time and energies. To the squad, I was the one who described what we were doing (or rather, what we were supposed to be doing. There is a difference.) I also went to platoon and company planning meetings, and drew rations and ammunition and equipment for the squad. As my predecessors had done, I tried to listen to the men and resolve their questions as well as possible. It was necessary to watch them, also, because sometimes they kept problems to themselves. All in all, it was a challenging assignment, and at first I didn't know whether I could measure up. Soon, it became apparent to me that I was much happier with this responsibility. I was busy with necessary tasks, and no longer able to pay so much attention to my own miseries. The number of men in a squad was supposed to be twelve, but at this point in our operations I might have as few as five or as many as eleven to take care of.

Luckily, I never had any really problems with the squad. They were all reasonable and intelligent, and we worked together quite well. Despite changes resulting from casualties and the influx of replacements, there were always enough old hands to show the way to the new men. Replacements were usually scared of combat, (as we all were,) but that never seemed to stop them from obeying orders or from working with the rest of us.

From Zerf on, the next couple of weeks remain a blur in my memory. I was so busy and so tired I was living from minute to minute, and nothing in that period is a coherent or organized recollection. For instance, I can remember a morning attack when we had to wade through a little brook, and I later found myself flat on my belly exchanging fire with a German who was behind a small tree. He stopped firing, I suppose because I had hit

him. Then we all got up and advanced and found a few enemy survivors with their hands in the air. But that's all I recall about that day. On another occasion we were advancing through a woods and came upon a clearing with evidence that the enemy had been there recently. There was a sort of underground space with a small opening. Not wanting to bypass live enemy, I threw a hand grenade into the opening as we went by. I still wonder whether there were enemy soldiers, or perhaps German civilians taking shelter in that place. If there were, I killed them. And if I did, I'm sorry.

One evening I had two new men assigned. I don't remember the name of one, but the other was Private Yelle. I don't remember many of the names, but his stays with me because of the following day's action. We had jumped off on a side area, with platoons operating almost independently. We in the 3rd platoon (which was now operating at only half strength) advanced as planned, and came across some enemy foxholes which were empty when we approached. Yelle had been wounded earlier, and I put him in one of the enemy holes to await a medic. My squad was in the rear of the platoon, most of which went on down the brushy slope while I stayed at the rear in case of attack from that direction. I noticed movement above me on the slope, and couldn't decide, looking through the heavy brush, whether they were GI's or enemies.

While I was lying there trying to get a better look, a blue grenade came down the hill directly at me. The Germans at times used concussion grenades which were blue. These were intended to stun the victim. I am grateful for that fact, because if that had been a fragmentation grenade I would have been killed. Instead, I ducked my head down, and the explosion felt like a blow on top of my helmet. It did no damage, and I didn't

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING: THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AUTHORIZED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER, 24 AUGUST 1962 HAS AWARDED

THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL

TO DONALD R. PARKS
(THEN STAFF SERGEANT, INFANTRY, ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES)

FOR meritorious achievement while serving in the European Theater of Operations in military operations against an armed enemy of the United States during World War II. Staff Sergeant Parks' exemplary performance of duty in active ground combat was in keeping with the finest traditions of military service and reflects great credit upon himself, the 301st Infantry Regiment, and the Army of the United States.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON
THIS 14TH DAY OF NOVEMBER 2000

THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

DA FORM 48, ..., 2000. Previous edition is obsolete.

S-SGT. PARKS HAS CITATION FOR HEROISM

Expected Home Soon; In Europe 13 Months

S-Sgt. Donald Parks has just been awarded the Bronze Star Medal for heroic achievement in the Battle of Germany according to word received here by his wife. Following is the official citation he received:

Staff Sergeant Donald R. Parks, 17071614, Infantry, Co. I, 301st Infantry Regiment, United States Army, for heroic achievement in connection with military operations against an enemy of the United States in Germany, on 14 March 1945 near Heddert, Germany. Sergeant Parks repeatedly distinguished himself by his heroic actions. On one occasion when his positions were subjected to a concentrated enemy counter attack, he repeatedly exposed himself to heavy enemy fire to personally place his men in position, bring to use the maximum fire power from his weapons and repulse the attack with heavy losses to the enemy. His conspicuous courage and fearless leadership are in keeping with the finest traditions of the military service. Entered the military service from Sheldon, Iowa.

By Command of
Major General Barnett
J. W. Giddis
Lt. Col. G. S. C.
Chief of Staff

Sgt. Parks has been stationed in Czechoslovakia since the end of the war in Europe, but word was received by Mrs. Parks Friday that he is on his way home. He has been in the service three years in November, and has spent 13 months overseas. He expects his discharge as son as he gets home, as he has 90 points under the discharge system.

`Bronze Star Clippings

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Mrs. Hicks Talks Before Kiwanis a Club Dinner M

Mrs. Ruth Seaton Hicks o
Iowa State extension servic
dressed the Kiwanis club at a
day evening dinner at the Arth
Hotel on the modern trends and
courses in nutrition.

A number of men of town
were present at the dinner and
cluded Kiwanis Dr. Cavender
Mark and Henry Olsen of S
Lake, Dewitt Lockwood, Dr.
man Glen Albright, Chas. Pub
Vet. Pettingill, Otto Behrens,
Dave Bernstein of Rock Ra
Guests from Sheldon were Dr.
Warren and Mrs. C. L. Schneid

All Roads Lead To Sheldon October

All roads lead to Sheldon Tue
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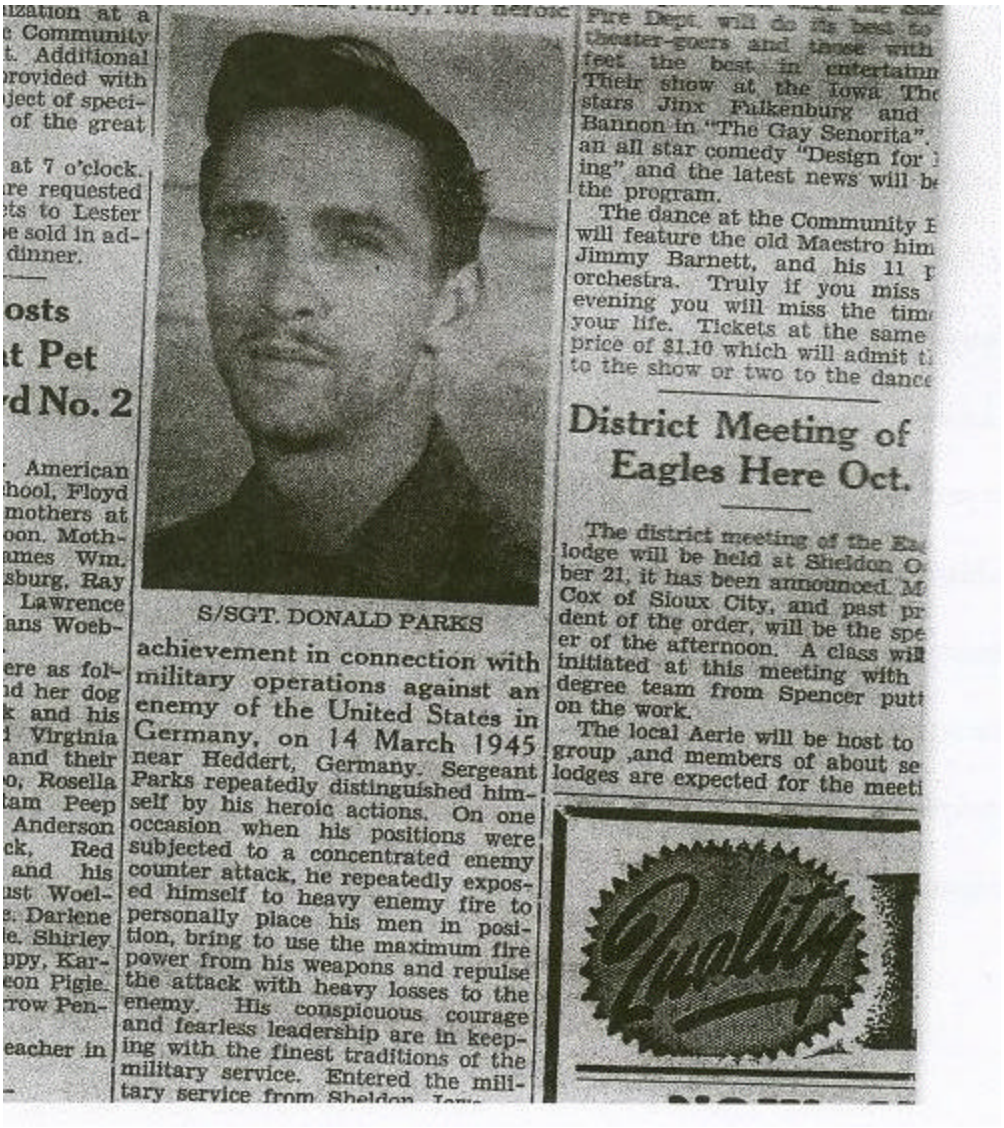

S/SGT. DONALD PARKS

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District Meeting of Eagles Here Oct.

The district meeting of the Ea lodge will be held at Sheldon O ber 21, it has been announced. M Cox of Sioux City, and past pr dent of the order, will be the spe er of the afternoon. A class will initiated at this meeting with degree team from Spencer putt on the work.

The local Aerie will be host to group ,and members of about se lodges are expected for the meeti

Bronze Star Clipping

wait to see what would happen next. I high-tailed down the hill, to where the rest of the platoon had stopped. Lieutenant Key was on the radio, telling Captain Donovan we had been attacked and driven from the hill by the enemy. Key asked what we should do. I can still hear the captain roaring "Get back up on that god damned hill!" Which we did.

Near the hole where I had left Yelle was a slight draw, down the face of the slope. I told the lieutenant I would go up that draw and attack the Germans from the flank, while the rest of the platoon advanced in skirmish line up the slope, firing blindly through the brush as they went. As I ran up the slope, I stumbled over the corpse of Stuart, one of the BAR men from another squad, who had also been wounded earlier. Half his head was missing. Later a German captive said he had fired his panzerfaust anti-tank rocket and thought he had hit an American soldier. He certainly had.

When I was near Yelle's position, I began firing at the enemy in the holes. In the process I drew some fire from the enemy. By ducking, moving rapidly, and maneuvering closer to them, I was able to avoid being hit and must have given the impression that they were being attacked by more than one enemy. They were now under fire from two directions. I know I had hit at least one of them, and grievously wounded him. Some of them began to yell "Kammerade" which to us meant they wanted to surrender, so I blew my whistle to stop the platoon from firing, and ran to the hole where Yelle was, along with an enemy soldier who had his hands in the air. They were both smoking cigarettes. By now the remainder of the enemy had all emerged from their holes with their hands in the air. Inexplicably, they had not used their machine gun against us when our counter-attack began. The gunner said one of the first shots fired blindly by our men as they came up the

slope had hit the machine gun on the breech, putting it out of action. I guess that is what is referred to as "the fortunes of war."

Yelle told me that after our platoon was gone, the German who got in the hole with him didn't pay any attention to him. Yelle wanted to smoke, but had no matches. He said he tapped the German on the shoulder, and offered him a cigarette. The German took the cigarette, lit his and Yelle's, and resumed firing down the slope until we attacked. Several of the enemy were wounded, one of whom was dead before we left the hill, and we had two men wounded also. We put our prisoners to work carrying all the casualties until we re-joined the company and turned the whole lot over to be taken care of by others. That morning's action was the basis for the Bronze Star citation that later, in Czechoslovakia, gave me the necessary service points to return to the USA. I guess my solo flank attack against an entrenched enemy force was sufficient to merit an award.

A day or two later, after we had been advancing steadily day and night, we found ourselves in a very dense pine forest, where we were to halt until further orders. I had not slept for about two days, and when I finished my two hours of guard duty I went to sleep and my men couldn't awake me for eight hours. They had me up and walking around, but I slept on. I was not alone. Most of the leaders were in similar condition. We had been able to give our men some rest, but while they slept there were things we had to do to keep men fed and equipped and informed.

While we were in that woods, Lieutenant Key observed a small group of enemy soldiers coming from a woods across the clearing in front of us. He immediately began firing at

them with his carbine, which was a smaller version of our splendid M-1 rifles. The carbine was issued to officers. Key emptied his clip, and the enemy just put up their hands and surrendered. He had not hit one of them, although they were not very far away when he fired. We never let him forget the fact that he was such a terrible shot. In truth, the carbine was notoriously inaccurate so it was only partly his fault, but we told him he had better leave the shooting to the rest of us, who might stand a chance of hitting something.

At this time, we had a sense that the war was coming to an end. There were still pockets of determined resistance by the enemy, but they were more and more rare. We knew things were changing when we entered a village and found American trucks, instead of enemy tanks, and we began to ride after months of moving only on foot. The 94th Division was now the point of the U. S. 3rd and 7th Armies, and we were aimed at the Rhine, and more specifically at the city of Ludwigshafen.

From this time on, enemy defense was only sporadic, if at all. Whole units appeared out of woods or villages, with their hands in the air, wanting no more of war. Our convoys rolled down roads that were torn up by American P-47 and P-51 fighter planes on strafing missions ahead of us. Roadsides were littered with dead horses and men, amidst all the rubbish of war. There were artillery pieces, and vehicles, and wagons, and all manner of supplies of food and ammunition and other materiel, all strewn endlessly in the desperate attempt by the Wermacht to retreat to the center of their country. The surrendering prisoners seemed to be grateful that we did not kill them when they came to us. Their numbers became so great that we could not assign men to guard them, so we just waved

them to the rear, after taking their weapons, hoping that other units would tend to their capture formalities.

As we progressed, we usually stopped for the night in a village or town, where we occupied houses as needed, and scavenged for any food we could use to supplement our rations. I organized my squad into baggage handlers, scavengers, and cooks, according to talents the men displayed. We were able to arrange our comfort with little waste of time. In many of the village houses there were smoke rooms directly above the kitchen, where smoke from the kitchen fire would pass through and cure hams and bacon as it went on up the chimney. My man Robinson (Robbie) became expert at finding these storehouses of meat, and locating chicken houses and eggs, and cellars with potatoes and turnips, and cabinets with flour and salt and other materials. Ulrich and Simpson were pretty good cooks, and we ate quite well courtesy of the German countryside, thank you.

As we progressed toward the Rhine, the days were largely a matter of breaking camp in the morning from whatever house in whatever village we had found ourselves the night before, getting on a truck, and watching as the miles reeled by. On one occasion we rounded a curve and saw a burning American tank on the road ahead. Our truck stopped, and word was passed down from the front of our column that an enemy 88 had fired on the tank and that we should get into the nearest house for cover while the 88 crew was dealt with by the tank's accompanying infantry. For once, we were not the ones doing the fighting. As we headed for the nearest house, I shouted to the company runner "The 2nd and 3rd squads , 3rd platoon, will be in the cellar under that house!" We were riding in

trucks furnished by an ordinance battalion. As we ran for cover, our driver added "And one nigger truck driver!" to my message.

As we advanced, regiments and divisions and corps converged toward the same destinations, and sometimes became intermingled, and it was not unusual to find that heavy artillery units from the 7th Army were on the road ahead of us, or that our route was being crossed by a stray engineer battalion from another division altogether. Somehow we kept moving, and just hoped that in the end it would be possible to sort the whole mess out. We were happy to be moving toward the end of the war, and not under fire, and riding instead of marching. Life was pretty good.

In one small town, as we were taking shelter for the night, former sergeant Jimmie Anderson (who had suggested to the colonel where he could put his Silver Star) was as usual observing the civilian residents. A really pretty German teenager came walking down the road, and Jimmie began loudly and obscenely telling her, in English, his intentions and what he was going to do to her that evening. He relied on the probability that she could not understand him. She immediately fired back, with "Like hell you will, you miserable son of a bitch!" We all roared with laughter, because Anderson had finally met his match. I asked the girl where she had learned English, and she said she was born and raised in Brooklyn, and was in Germany only because her family was visiting relatives there when the war began and couldn't find a way to leave. Anderson was more careful about his behavior after that.

Once we were housed on a main thoroughfare, and some of us were sitting in front of our

quarters. A large unit of self-propelled 155 mm Long Tom artillery went by, moving from our left to the right. During a halt, they said they had heard of a battle in that direction, and wanted to get into it before it stopped. About an hour later, another similar unit of Long Tom artillery went by headed in the other direction. When we asked about their destination, they said there was a battle that way, and they wanted to get into it. By now, we really had a crazy mixed up war.

After days of movement, we knew we must be approaching our destination. This was confirmed when, before loading up one morning, we were issued our gas masks. We had not seen them since boarding the Queen Elizabeth after going through the gas chamber at Camp Shanks in New Jersey. 3rd Army headquarters ordered their issuance now because the city of Ludwigshafen was known to have large chemical factories, and the city had been bombed quite heavily as we approached. It was feared that some of the visible large storage tanks might have been ruptured by bombs, and that there might be chlorine or sulphuric acid, or fluorine, or other poisonous agents in the area. That day saw our arrival at the banks of the Rhine, and we were glad to find that the bombing raids had not caused the release of any problem chemicals. We found ourselves in quite comfortable houses on the outskirts, and began to take well-earned ease, after 195 days of fighting.

The house my squad occupied was surrounded by a brick-walled enclosure. Because the city utilities were not functioning, my men used the rear of the paved area as a latrine, since there was no other place to go. A day or two after our arrival, I noticed blood in some places. When I inquired about it, one of my men, Donarumma, said that he had been bleeding like that for quite a while, but didn't know why. I'm not a doctor, but I did suspect that he must have bleeding hemorrhoids, and needed medical attention. I told him to get his stuff together, and to talk to the medic. He was evacuated to a hospital in Paris, and spent several weeks after surgery enjoying that city's pleasures. When he later rejoined the company in the Ruhr, he was my greatest admirer and supporter. He was a short little guy from the Bronx, and had an uncanny resemblance to the then-mayor of New York City, Fiorello LaGuardia.

After some time in Ludwigshafen, we were ordered to an entirely different location and army. We were taken from the 3rd U. S. Army, and reassigned to a corps under command of Montgomery, far to the north. We were not very enthusiastic about the change, but had to follow plans and orders. After a short move by truck, we were loaded on a train (again those 40 & 8 boxcars) and began moving we knew not where. Travel was still sporadic and slow, with frequent halts. Our route looped back toward France, and then through Belgium, and one day we found ourselves halted in Holland. The weather was pleasant, and we were in good spirits.

We looked across from the railroad to a small church, where it was obvious something was going on. As we watched, a bride and groom came out of the church, accompanied by friends and relatives. Without any signal at all, our entire trainload of GI's spilled out across the little field, and lined up to kiss the bride. There were several hundred of us. The poor groom didn't quite know what to do, and his bride didn't either. Our soldiers behaved quite nicely, and the newly-wed couple decided they would welcome us. As we kissed, each GI presented them with cigarettes, or soap, or chocolate, or other items that were non-existent in occupied areas. In the end, before the train whistled its departure that young couple wound up with a real treasure, in exchange for a brief interlude of unplanned celebration of their nuptials by a trainload of strangers. We were so very young, and spring was here, and life was really splendid.

We had, as usual, no indication of our destination, or what we would be doing when we got there. Thus far, the only skills we had been required to demonstrate were those

involved in waging violent warfare against an enemy, and in winning battles, and in prevailing against adverse weather and terrain conditions. Although the war was still going on, in somewhat limited fashion as the enemy steadily lost ground and retreated ever further into their homeland, we didn't expect to be inserted into major combat again. As events transpired, we were correct in that assumption. Company I did not again find itself in confrontation with the German enemy.

From Holland, we moved east into Germany, at first into a small city - Homberg - near the Ruhr industrial region. Then we were moved to a larger city - Krefeld - in the same region. Here, we were given the task of patrolling the city streets, looking for enemy activity and locating any stores of ammunition or equipment that remained after the rapid abandonment of the region by the Wermacht. My squad was housed in a rather grand home, with a sophisticated kitchen and laundry, and luxurious beds which we put to good use during our occupancy. In rummaging through the house, I found a silk top hat, of the type worn to operas and concerts. It fit, and I put my helmet aside and began wearing the hat while on patrol. I found a fine bicycle, and rode it instead of walking. I must have made a great spectacle, riding that bike with my opera hat on, and with rifle and ammunition bag on my shoulders. Fortunately, there are no pictures to memorialize the scene.

While at Krefeld, one of my squad members, Bob Morris, demonstrated the meaning of absolute honesty. The enemy still had troops in Dusseldorf, across the Rhine to the east. Division decided to send a night patrol across in rowboats, to determine the identity and extent of German forces. Because there was a chance that a boat might capsize, or for

some other reason the patrol group might find themselves in the water, Division HQ asked for volunteers who could swim, to make the patrol. Of course, when I asked my men, none of them could swim. After all, they had no desire to endanger themselves now that the war was so nearly over. None of them, that is, but Morris. He said, "Sarge, I can swim." I said, "Bob, I didn't hear you. I'll just report that none of my men can swim." Bob repeated, "Sarge, I can swim. Back home in Kentucky, I swam all the time. I can swim." I said, "Bob, you know that. Now I know that. The army doesn't know that, and doesn't need to know. That patrol could be dangerous." Bob said, "I'm not volunteering,, but I can swim. Put me down that way." So I did. Fortunately, Division decided to send reconnaissance troops, and Bob didn't have to go. Also fortunately the patrol returned with no casualties and with information that the enemy was leaving the city. All is well that ends well.

After spending about a week in Krefeld, we were again moved, this time to Duisberg, and while there I had a fine musical experience. During our months in the ETO, we had not seen any of the USO groups that so bravely entertained the troops. At first, while at Lorient - St. Nazaire, we were not considered to be in need of entertainment, since it was not an "active" front. Then, when we were in the triangle and were in a "very active" front the entertainers could not get to us. Once, Bob Hope's show came to an area near us, and some of us were given a chance to go, but we were so far from the stage we couldn't hear or see much, and went back to our holes disappointed. One day, in Duisberg, notice came down that the USO was presenting a concert by Jascha Heifitz, violinist, in the opera house. Out of the entire division, which numbered about 12,000

men at the time, only 300 showed up for the concert. It was splendid. Heifitz played his scheduled concert, and then came to the front of the stage and began playing requests from the audience. He continued for more than an hour, and I reckon that those of us who were fortunate enough to be there have never forgotten that wonderful afternoon and the gracious artist who brought a reminder that there was still culture and beauty in the world, after all.

Our next move, in Germany, was to the city of Solingen in the Ruhr Valley. Solingen is known over the world for the fine cutlery produced there. We had finally and at last passed "Over the River," - the Rhine - and had new and different functions to perform.

HISTORY OF THE 94TH INFANTRY DIVISION

Excerpt, page 477:

...Moreover, the price that the Division had paid as its contribution toward victory could not be overlooked. As a result of its 209 combat days, 1087 men and officers had been killed in action or succumbed to wounds and injuries received in battle; 4684 more had been wounded or injured in action; 113 persons were missing; and 5028 of the Division's personnel had become casualties due to trench foot, frozen feet or other non-battle causes. In addition 45 men of the 94th met non-battle deaths. Only 719 of the battle casualties listed above were inflicted during the fighting in Brittany. Thus, in the 78 days from January 7, 1945 to March 25, 1945, during which the 94th was constantly in contact with the enemy, the Division suffered the bulk of its 10,957 casualties. These were sobering figures. The 26,638 Germans taken prisoner, the large tracts of enemy territory conquered, the hundreds of cities, towns and villages taken and the vast Wehrmacht stores and equipment captured or destroyed, did little to offset the loss in friends and comrades.

VICTORY PROCLAMATION - MAY 7, 1945

WE HAVE SET A STANDARD

This is the day for which we trained and fought for two and a half years. What it has cost us, you only well know. That we have participated effectively in the days of combat which preceded this Day of Victory is a great satisfaction. We feel justly that we have pulled our share of the load.

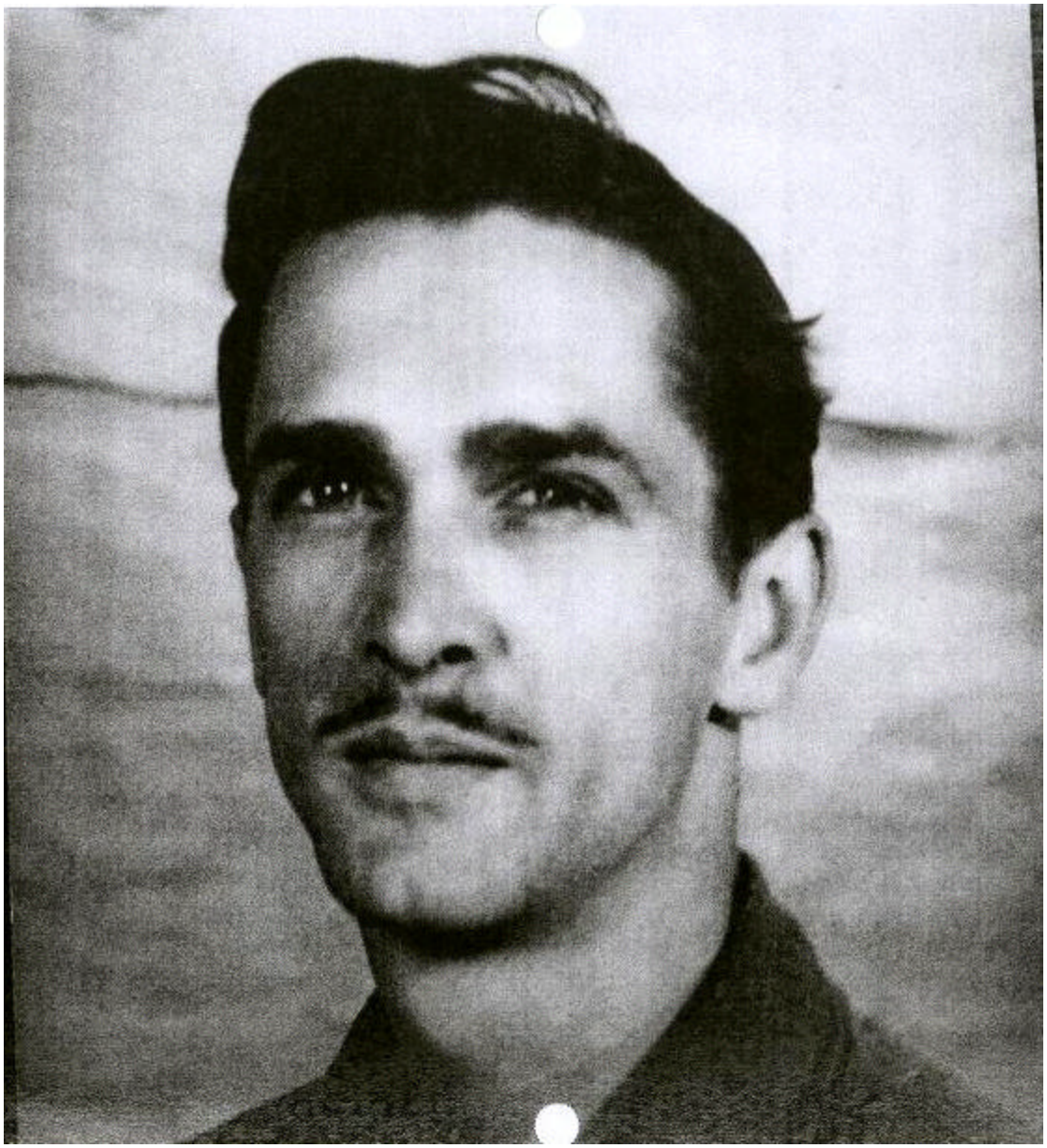
Between February 19 and March 5 we breached the Siegfried Switch position and then, assisted by the 10th Armored Division, mopped up all resistance in the Saar-Moselle Triangle; successfully crossed the Saar River in the face of the main Siegfried Line; and established a Corps bridgehead after assisting in capturing Trier.

Between March 13 and March 24 we broke the enemy's lines east of the Saar and advanced to the Rhine; captured an untold booty in supplies and equipment; took over two hundred towns including the key city of Ludwigshafen and captured 13,434 POW's. This was the first evidence of the dissolution of the German Army west of the Rhine and came after seventy four days of attack.

Until March 24 you have never been out of contact with the enemy, more than five days, since September 10.

This Division has never failed in a mission, nor has it ever permanently lost one inch of ground to the enemy; and whatever may be our next mission, we have set a standard which I ask each one of you to make it his personal business to meet.

HARRY J. MALONY
MAJOR GENERAL, USA
COMMANDING



Don Age 23 At Solingen