

Nov 30, 1944

It was raining very hard today. We had full field packs on our backs, gas mask, rifle, and a heavy duffle bag. We were all getting soaked while waiting for the train from Camp Myles Standish to Boston. Boston was where we were to get our ship for Europe or Japan???

All the guys were in good humor. We were all joking about how we would act when we got overseas. The train trip was short. It took about two hours to get to Boston. The lieutenant came into our car and told us - we get off here.

When we got off the train we were on the dock, and there was a very big ship named the S.S. Mariposa. There was a band playing marching music, but that didn't help my moral any. About that time we realized that we were leaving the good old United States. Believe me, I didn't wish that feeling on anyone. I thought of a million things that minute. I thought of all the wonderful times I left behind in the good old U.S. There were Red Cross girls handing out coffee and doughnuts. I was wondering how long it would be before we would have coffee and doughnuts in the U.S.A. again.

They started to call off our names, and one by one we went up the gangplank, loaded with full-field pack, gas mask, rifle, and a duffle bag dragging behind us. Once we boarded the ship there was no way of getting off. We decided we might as well make ourselves comfortable.

There were too many men for all of us to sleep in private rooms. To accommodate all the troops they set up four layer bunks on the outside decks. The decks were boarded up to keep out the wind and we used only blue lights for blackout regulations. I was among the men that slept on the deck. It's getting late about now, and since there were no lights to read by most of the boys went to sleep. There were still many stayed awake thinking of home and what the future holds for us.

Dec 1, 1944

This is a day that I will always remember. About 8AM the ship shoved off. We were allowed on the deck and we watched ourselves being taken away from the states. We kept looking towards the states until it finally disappeared. We knew we were on our way, but we didn't know where we were going. They had chow twice a day and the food was plentiful. They also had a p.x. on the ship which supplied us with all the chocolate, nuts, candy, etc. we wanted. There was a game room on the ship that supplied us with magazines, games, and musical instruments, so that we can spend our time. In the evening they had music over the loudspeaker that came from the United States. They also had a swing band that played for us every night.

Dec. 2

The Red Cross girls came down to our deck and had a barn dance. We called off the names of the bashful boys and the girls took them for dancing partners. There were only nine girls but it was still a lot of fun. We had nice weather that day.

Dec. 3

They told us we were going to France. They also started French and German classes.

Dec. 4 - same as above

Dec. 5 - same as above

Dec. 6 - same as above

Dec. 7 - same as above

Dec. 8 - same as above

Dec. 9

About 4pm we saw land for the first time since we left the states. It was the Straights of Gibraltar. When we went through the straights, Spain was on one side and Africa was on the other side. It was some experience seeing those two countries after reading about them in books. We could only make out outlines of buildings on Spain's shore and on the African shore all we could see were trees. That day I wanted to write my name on the railing of the deck. I took out my fountain pen and the cover slipped out of my hand and fell in the water. That is why I had to send for a new pen.

Dec. 10, 11

We saw the Marseilles harbor about 11 AM. the morning of the 10th. We were about a half mile from the harbor and we waited for tug boats to pull us into the harbor. Everyone on the ship was looking at this foreign shore. We couldn't see to much, but we saw several boats that were sunk in the harbor, you could tell that place was bombed. About 4 PM the tug boats finally pulled us into the harbor. There were some soldiers working on the dock. We were surprised to see them wearing mixed uniforms, such as fatigues, and O.D.s. In the states everything was uniform and here it seemed they wore what they pleased. There were also French civilians on the dock. They asked for cigarettes, since we had plenty of cigarettes, some of the boys threw cigarettes to the Frenchmen. About a hundred of them dived for the same cigarettes. They got in fist fights and the soldiers on the dock had to separate them. We were then ordered to stop throwing cigarettes overboard. They lowered the gangplank about 4:30 P11 and started unloading the soldiers. It was about 6:30 PM when I finally went down the gangplank. We left the ship with the same equipment on our backs as when we got on. We had full-field pack, rifle, gas mask, and heavy duffle bag. When I touched French soil I said to myself, "well here I am. I never thought I would be here." We had to carry our duffle bags about three blocks to an assembly point. I was so tired with all that weight on my back that I decided to drag my bag on the ground. When I got to the assembly point I noticed that I wore out a big hole on the bottom of my bag, but I didn't mind I just wanted to get rid of it. I threw it on a pile with the rest of the bags and then I was rid of it. It started to get dark about this time. We had to march about a mile through Marseilles to trucks which were supposed to take us to a processing camp. When we got there as usual the trucks weren't there so we had to wait. It was pretty chilly, so we built a fire while we were waiting to keep warm. The trucks came about two hours later which was about 1 AM. We were packed in the trucks like sardines and we started out for Delta Base processing camp. This was outside Marseilles. We couldn't see to much of Marseilles because it was dark when we rode through town. All we could see were dark shadows of houses. We wanted to pitch pup tents, but the major said it was to late and that we better sleep on the ground and pitch tents in the morning. We had K rations with us but they told us not to eat them and save them until morning. I was pretty hungry so I decided to eat mine then. I never had K rations before so I didn't know what the box contained. I opened it up in the dark and ate it. I had to wait until morning to see what I ate. That night Poltack and me put our blankets together so that we could sleep warm, and about 3 AM we finally got to sleep. About 5 AM I woke up and felt all my clothes were soaked. I woke up Poltack and he was soaked too, that rain was really coming down. There was no sense in sleeping in water so we got up and built a fire to keep warm. That was the first miserable night that we spent in France. We all realized that it won't be easy from here on out. We pitched a four man tent as good as we could in the rain. We ate K rations all that day and that night we had to sleep with our wet blankets.

Dec. 12

When we got up in the morning the sun was shining and it made us all feel better. We dried out our blankets and dried out our clothes and we felt good again. Instead of K rations the kitchen made us regular chow. I wrote my mail home at night in my tent by candle light.

Dec. 13

We marched about three miles cross country to a town named Victrol to see what a typical French town looked like. That is the town where I took some pictures. We ate some French bread for the first time and drank some French wine. I really had a hard time buying stationery in a French store. They didn't know

what I was saying and I didn't know what they were saying. After a half hour or so they finally understood me.

Dec. 14

They showed us a movie on the side of a truck. We all sat on the cold ground just to see a movie.

Dec. 15 - same as above

Dec. 16 - same as above

Dec. 17 - same as above

Dec. 18 - same as above

Dec. 19

We packed our things because we were moving out. We finally got to the train about 10 PM. We didn't ride in pulman or coaches but we rode in dirty old box cars. There was enough room to sleep on the floor if we slept in a certain pattern. It was really cold sleeping in those box cars. We ate 10 in 1 rations on the train because we didn't have a kitchen. We rode in those box cars for five days and we were really uncomfortable. We rode from Marsielles to the town of Brumath. On the way we saw many towns that were bombed. All along the road you could see vehicles that were destroyed. In fact we saw for the first time the tragedies of war.

Dec. 24

About 7 PM we got off these box cars in the town of Burmath. We were told that the train couldn't go any further because we were too close to the front, and that we would have to march to our destination. Way off to the right we could hear artillery shells hitting. We didn't know what town we were going to, all we knew was that we were going to the front. We marched through one town and we said that the next town must be where we stop. We said the same thing as we marched through four towns. When we hit the fifth town everyone was so tired that we just lay down on the road we couldn't march anymore. Our feet ached and every step we took was like walking on needles. It was about 1 AM and we were all dead tired. Since it was Christmas eve we all said that if we could stop in this town and get a little rest that would be our Christmas present. We got our wish and we were told we would sleep in the school house. The name of this town was Bishwiller. We dragged ourselves to the school house and went to sleep on the floor. Everyone was dead tired that night but tired or not we still had to pull guard. I got a couple of hours sleep and went on guard for an hour and then I went to sleep again. That was one long march I will never forget.

Dec. 25

Got up Christmas morning and instead of a nice Christmas dinner waiting for me we had 10 in 1 rations. We didn't mind it as long as we had a place to sleep and something to eat we were satisfied. Our outfit was in reserve at that time but we were still within range of German heavy artillery but they didn't shell our town. For some unknown reason. It seems they left two or three days before we got there. There wasn't much doing in that town all we had to do is pull guard duty and take life easy the rest of the time.

Dec. 26

Kitchen set up and we had regular meals again. We also did the same as above.

Dec. 27

About 9 P.M. we got another order to move. We were told we would have to leave our duffle bags behind and take whatever we could carry on our backs. I took some extra socks, underwear, toilet articles, and some stationery and left the rest of the stuff in the bag. We were told that we were going about a mile from the front line. We were all excited and scared because we didn't know what was in store for us.

About 11 P.M. the trucks came and took us to a town named Herrlisheim. We got to this town about 1 A.M. We could hear artillery landing to.. the right and left of town but none were landing in the town. We found out that our company was still in reserve and it sure made us feel good. We took over a beer parlor and we slept on the floor or on the tables. There were too many men to sleep comfortable so we decided to move in civilian houses the next day.

Dec. 28

This morning Raber, Pinkston, Reed, and myself got ourselves a nice room in a civilian house. The room was fixed up with a big stove and two great big soft beds. The people in the house were very nice to us there was always apples and wine on our table. Whenever we ate some apples or drank some wine the people always filled it up again. They also had a cow and they gave us some fresh milk every morning. We really had a nice set up in that town.

Dec. 29

Same as above.

Dec. 30

In the morning we got an order to move again. We packed our things and about 1 P.M. we were riding the trucks again. This time we moved back to Bischwiller. I sure was glad to see this town again instead of going to the front. We lived in a school house and all we did was pull guard and take life easy.

Dec. 31

It was New Years Eve and I was really disappointed. Instead of celebrating when the New Year came in I was on guard at the time. I was thinking of the folks and what they were doing at that time. I was thinking of the good times I used to have on New Years Eve. and here I was standing guard. I got off guard about 1 A.M. and went to sleep.

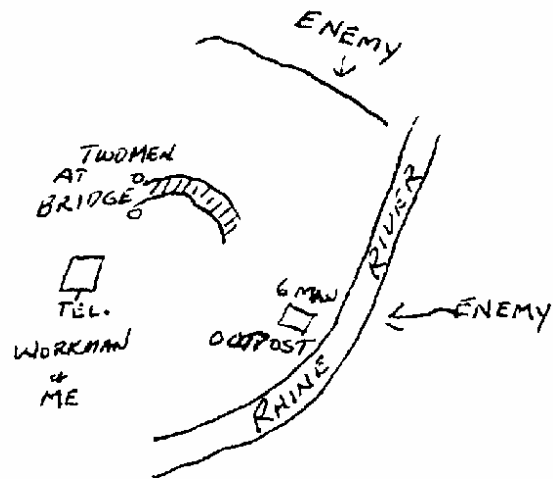
Jan. 1, 1945

Since this was the beginning of a New Year we started it off right by getting an order to move again. We moved that afternoon to a town named Seltz which was right next to the Rhine river. We stayed in a bomb proof factory and we felt pretty safe there. We had an outpost in a building on the shore of the Rhine and from there we could see the Krauts on the other side of the river. When we shot at them they returned fire, but when we kept quiet they kept quiet too. It was a mutual understanding, if you leave me alone I won't bother you. We were supposed to defend that town in case of an attack. We had patrols riding around town in jeeps and we had road blocks on all roads leading in to town.

Jan. 2

The night of the 2nd we were informed by headquarters that the enemy had crossed the Rhine and set up a fifty mile front heading in a direction to surround Seltz and cut us off from the rest of the outfit. There was only our company in Seltz and we were ordered to delay the enemy at all costs so that the outfits behind us can retreat to safety. We were ordered not to withdraw until they told us to. All night our planes were bombing enemy tanks which were about five miles from us. The sky was red with fire and all you could see was bombing and artillery shell exploding. We were getting minute information on the enemy and they were steadily closing in on us. You could imagine how scared we were. We all thought we would be killed or captured. While all this was going on we still had men out on the outpost. The outpost didn't have a telephone to the CP. The only telephone they had was to the last house in town. Workman and me were chosen to stand by this telephone and in case something happened at the outpost we were supposed to report it to the CP. In other words I was one of the ten men that were out in front of the rest of the company.

COMPANY
C. P.



We knew the enemy was getting closer by the minute. We had the telephone close to our ears to find out if there was trouble at the outpost. All of a sudden we heard rifle shot outside our building. Workman and me looked at each other and we said to ourselves that must be the enemy. Workman went out to see what it was while I stayed with the phones. I told him to hurry back and he should call his name before he opens the door because I will shoot whoever opens the door. I got down in the corner of the room, pushed the safety off my rifle and had my finger on the trigger. Believe me I was never that scared in my life. I was thinking of a million and one things that minute. Workman was gone about ten minutes and I began to worry about him. There may be Krauts outside and when he went out they must have stabbed him. Now I felt I was all alone in this miserable situation. About five minutes later the door opened. I was about to shoot when I saw it was Workman. I asked him why he was out so long and what had happened outside. He told me that the fellow that was guarding the bridge outside heard some ice cracking in front of him, he thought it was a Kraut and shot in that direction. I asked him why he was out so long and he said he went out to investigate to see if someone was really out there. That is one night I really sweated out, none of us got any sleep that night.

Jan. 3

We were all dead tired from not sleeping the night before. We were all waiting for the order to come through for us to withdraw. As I looked out of the windows I saw almost all the civilians in town moving. Some on bicycles and some pushing wagons and others whatever they could carry on their backs. Everyone was moving from babies in mothers arms to people so old they could hardly walk. I asked them where they were going and they told me they heard the Germans were coming and they wanted to get out before they came. They told me they would rather die than live under the Germans again. I asked them where will you go when you leave your homes? They looked up at me anywhere as long as we get away from the Germans. I really felt sorry for these poor people and I thanked God that my loved ones back home didn't have to go through anything like this. Late that afternoon we got the order to withdraw. As we left the town we blew the bridges behind us. We marched pretty fast because we knew the enemy was right behind us and getting closer all the time. We only had one road of escape and believe me we really marched fast. The trucks came to meet us after marching about three hours. We jumped on the trucks and they took us out of the pocket. Thank God we were safe again! It was about 11 P.M. when the trucks finally got us to the town of Soufflenheim. We had some cold supper and went to sleep for about four hours.

Jan. 4

About three AM they woke us up and told us we were moving again. About 4 A.M. a convoy of trucks drove up. In case you don't know what a duck is, well it is a vehicle that can travel on land and water. There was no cover to keep out the wind like you have on trucks. We rode on three ducks about forty miles and we were all frozen solid. We were dreaming of a nice warm building that we would find in a town. To our disappointment the ducks stopped in the middle of Schneitzwald forest, and there wasn't a town in sight. When we got off the duck I was one piece of ice and when I tried to walk I almost fell down. The snow on the ground was about a foot deep. They told us we will stay here and we would have to dig in. We didn't feel like digging in but we were ordered to and we had to do it. That night we put a blanket in the hole and I slept in it. Of course I didn't sleep comfortable I was freezing all night.

Jan. 5

Thank God we moved again. We didn't mind moving from the woods because we thought we might get a better deal. This was a daylight move and we had to march to our destination. The roads were covered with ice and almost all the boys fell on their _____ more than once. It was a long cold march and by the time we got there it was dark. We stopped at a town named Offwiller. Thank God this was a town we had beds stoves and everything to make us comfortable. Company I was on the line and we were in reserve. We went to sleep as soon as we got in the buildings.

Jan. 6

Still cold outside, but we were in buildings so we didn't mind it to much.

Jan. 7

That evening we were sitting around taking life easy when we got a message that company I received a counter attack and we will be needed to help fight off the krauts. We all got our rifles and we started out. When we got about half way a messenger met us and told us that the attack was under control and it wasn't necessary for us to go on the line. You could imagine how good that made us feel. We went back to our warm houses and went to sleep.

Jan. 8

That evening we got another order to move. It was a very cold night, and there was snow and ice on the ground. We had to march from Offwiller to a town named Zinswiller. This was another cold hard march. The CP was in a house and the rest of the company had to dig defensive positions in the woods. Since C am in headquarters platoon I slept in the house. That night I thanked God for letting me sleep in a building instead of a foxhole.

Jan. 9

That evening we got another order to move. This time we marched to Niederbronn mountain. That was the hardest march I ever made in my life. The mountain was almost straight up and down and to make matters worse it was snowing and there was snow and ice on the ground. We started up the mountain about 4 P.M. and we got to our destination about 9 P.M. When we got there we thanked God that our positions were already dug in. I only had one blanket that I carried in my pack to sleep with that night. Raber and me fell in a hole and went to sleep. We were dead tired and cold.

Jan. 10

We woke up early that morning, and when I looked around and saw the hole we both slept in I couldn't believe it. The hole was so small that it would be uncomfortable for one person to sleep in and here we both slept in it. There wasn't much doing that day we were just getting used to our new home. We ate K rations because the kitchen couldn't get chow up to us. With the snow on the ground it was really cold so we built small fires to keep warm.

Jan. 11

We realized that our positions were too vulnerable to enemy artillery so we moved about 200 yds to our right where we had some pine trees to give us some protection. We dug our holes all morning and we put logs over the top to help stop shrapnel. As soon as we moved from our old positions they threw in a heavy barrage of artillery there. We all thanked God that we moved in time. Then they started throwing artillery on our new positions. That was the first artillery barrage that I was under and believe me I was scared. About five of us were sitting around a small fire trying to keep warm. We heard the shells coming toward us and we all jumped for the hole that was near us. Just as I jumped in the hole the shells exploded. I touched my forehead and I felt it was wet. I asked Poltack if I was bleeding and he said yes so I thought I was wounded. After the barrage was over I went to the medic and he told me it was only a scratch. It seems that when I jumped in the hole I scratched my head on one of the logs. I then said if that is the only wound I get I will be satisfied. After the barrage was over we all dug our holes deeper and put more logs on top of it. Well now I felt I was a combat soldier I was under enemy fire. I always wondered how I would react under enemy fire, and now I found out. I always thought I couldn't stand it but when I looked around I reacted as everyone else.

Jan. 12

We were having a little trouble on our left flank with the krauts. Our CO, Captain Thompson, decided to take a squad of men to outflank the krauts. While doing this he was shot through the shoulder and back by a kraut. When I saw the medics carry him away I really felt bad. Right there and then I got my hatred for the krauts and I was ready to kill any of them that I could. I saw then that this was no game it was either my life or theirs. I have so many wonderful things to come home to. That afternoon we really saw Hell and there were several boys that won't see their families again. That night we all realized that war was really Hell. None of us got any sleep that night we were thinking of what happened during the day. We got some more blankets that night but we were still freezing.

Jan. 13

When I got up this morning I couldn't put on my shoes. I left my shoes out in the snow and they were frozen solid. I had to thaw them out by a fire before I could put them on. From then on I always put them under my blanket so that they wouldn't get frozen again. Besides getting wounded we lost many men because of Trench Foot and Frost Bite. So you could imagine how cold it was there. That afternoon I was back at Bn. when they brought some kraut prisoners. We were on an open field with no foxholes in sight. I helped guard the prisoners while some of the other boys were searching them for weapons. All of a sudden an artillery barrage came in on us. I hit the ground still guarding the prisoners and prayed that I won't get hit. Thank God I didn't get hit and we shipped the prisoners out. That night the krauts sneaked up to our positions and took three men prisoners. Two of them tried to escape and the krauts shot one in the head and the other one got away safely. As far as we knew the third one was taken prisoner. From then on we had to keep on the alert because we knew that, they may come back.

Jan. 14

The weather was still freezing and artillery was coming in all day. We only had a few men left in headquarters platoon so we had to pull guard for 3 1/2 hours every night. I had to jump up and down to keep the blood circulating in my feet so that they won't freeze. It was dark that night and I saw something that looked like a man behind a tree. Believe me I was really scared. I had my rifle with my finger on the trigger and walked closer to the tree. When I got pretty close I called out; " Who's there?" There was no answer, but I still could see something that looked like a man behind a tree. I wanted to go back and forget about it, but I knew if I did that my mind wouldn't be at rest so I decided to find out who was there. I finally walked up to the tree and to my surprise I found it was a pack hanging there that one of the boys put up to keep it out of the snow I'm sure that anyone in our outfit would have reacted the same way if it had happened to them.

Jan. 15

Still cold as ever, artillery still coming in on our positions.

Jan. 16

Same as above.

Jan. 17

We were told that we would be relieved tonight by another outfit. We thanked God because now we could get off the cold mountain. That night we were told that our relief was canceled. This meant we would have to stay on this miserable mountain a little longer.

Jan. 18

Still cold as ever, artillery still coming in.

Jan. 19

Same as above.

Jan. 20

That night we received the order to withdraw. They started withdrawing about 11 P.M. and our company had to hold the Krauts back while they withdrew. About 2 A.M. we withdrew too. Now for the long march down the mountain. There was snow and plenty of ice on this narrow mountain path. To our left was a steep cliff and to our right was a steep drop. So that meant we had to stay on the path. That ice was really slippery and every step we took we fell on our __ __. The Krauts threw up flares and that made us still march faster. When we got down to the bottom of the mountain there were trucks waiting for us. These trucks took us to a town named Weikerswiller.

Jan. 21

We got to Weikerswiller about 9 A.M. and I was frozen solid from riding on those trucks. We got off the trucks and went into some buildings. It really felt good warming up by a nice hot stove. If you saw me then you wouldn't recognize me. I didn't shave in twelve days and my hands and face were black with dirt. The first thing I did was wash and shave and I felt like a new man. Being in that house was like heaven after being out in the cold for twelve days. I really slept warm that night.

Jan. 22

About 4 P.M. we got another order to move. This time we moved by trucks to Kohlutte Forest. When we got there we had to march up another mountain. There was snow on the ground and the weather was freezing. We were all sweating out digging new fox holes in the new positions. We left one mountain and now we were going into something similar. Our moral was really low, but that's the army for you. When we got to our destination we found out we were relieving the 103rd Inf. and they had nice defensive positions already dug in. We were all thankful that we didn't have to dig our own holes. They brought up our blankets and we slept pretty comfortable that night.

Jan. 23

We exchanged artillery and small arms fire with the krauts.

Jan. 24

That night the 35th Inf. relieved us. We rode by trucks part way and marched the rest of the way to a rear assembly area. It was very cold that night and we were told that we wouldn't have to dig in that night because we would leave the following morning. The snow was about a foot deep on the ground. We cleared away a little snow and laid down our blankets and went to sleep.

Jan. 25,27

We had a daylight march from the rear assembly area to Lichtenberg, where we relieved the engineers who were on the line. The company was dug in on a hillside and the CP was in a building. I was a company to Bn. messenger at the time. I stayed at Bn. and when there was a message for the company we rode with a jeep to company CP. I was in a nice hole at Bn. It was really comfortable. I had big paper sacks lined around the walls and on the floor. That was the most comfortable hole I ever had. There was only one road that we could take that wasn't under enemy observation when we had to deliver a message to the company. That was a very rough trail that we went through the woods over hill and dale.. Many times it was snowing and we couldn't see the trail and we didn't know where we were going. One day we rode over that trail to the company CP and when we came back of the trail we saw places where artillery shells had hit the trail. We thanked God that we weren't there when they landed. While we were out there we also learned how to make ice cream. Here is the menu: Take a canteen cup full of clean snow, add plenty of sugar, then add some synthetic lemon or orange juice powder that comes in K rations. Mix all that with a can of evaporated milk, stir well and put it in the snow to cool off. You would be surprised how good it tastes when you feel like eating ice cream.

Jan. 28

We moved back to the rear assembly area the place where we were before. It was cold as the other time and snow was still on the ground. We put our blankets on the snow and went to sleep.

Jan. 29

Made another daylight march to the town of Petersbach. It sure felt good being in a town again. We were all cold, hungry and tired. The CP was in a French civilians house. As soon as they saw how cold we were they made us some hot coffee and fresh milk. After we had our coffee we all wanted to go to sleep. Just then we heard somebody playing an accordion. We all walked in the room and there was a kid about 15 years old playing American songs: It's been so long since we heard music that we forgot about being tired. He played Beer Barrel Polka, Bless Them All, Wood Pecker Serenade, and others. One of the boys picked up a violin and another one started playing a harmonica. We were all so glad to hear music that we all had tears in our eyes. I can't explain it but that music was worth a million dollars to us. The people of the house said we were crazy, we were so tired and instead of going to sleep we listened to the music. We told them that listening to the music will do us more good than sleeping. To our disappointment we got an order that we will move in three hours. I sure hated to leave that wonderful music. We moved at night by trucks to the town of St. Louis.

Jan. 30 to Feb. 9

We got to St. Louis about 1 A.M. and went to sleep in nice warm buildings. We were in reserve for the 100 Division and it was really a nice set up. We stayed in this town and didn't have to do anything except a little guard duty. After living outdoors so long this was heaven. Every night all the boys would get together and sing songs. In fact we made up a song about one of our Lieutenants and when he heard that song he really got angry. Since we knew he didn't like the song we sang it whenever we got a chance. Well we had this wonderful set up for ten days just sitting back and taking life easy. By the way I also made P.F.C. while I was in this town. The Red Cross girls came down one day and gave us some coffee and doughnuts. I ate about twelve of them.

Feb. 9 to Feb. 16

That day we moved by trucks to the town of Theding. We sure hated to leave St. Louis but when the army says move you have to move. When we got to this town we saw it was another nice set up. We lived in

houses again and all we did was lay around and take life easy. I celebrated my birthday in this town. It didn't seem like a birthday in fact if someone didn't tell me it was Feb. 10 I wouldn't have known it was my birthday.

Feb. 17

We got up about 3 A.M. that morning had some breakfast. The zero hour was 0600 we were supposed to take the town of Behren. We had to march from Theding to Behren. It was a cold night and it was no fun marching in the mud. While we were marching we saw a sign on the road which said Roads Cleared of Mines. On either side of us was two great open fields. It was understood that these fields were full of mines and booby traps. All of a sudden we heard some enemy artillery coming towards us and without thinking we all ran for the fields. Sure enough these artillery rounds hit on the road. This barrage kept up for about a half hour. I was really praying all this time because I didn't have a hole to protect myself, all I could do is hug mother earth. After the barrage was over I realized that there were mines all around me and here I was about fifty yards from the road. I was really scared walking back to the road, because I was afraid of stepping on a mine. Thank God I got back to the road safe. When we all got back on the road we started to march again. When we finally got to the town of Behren we didn't come across any krauts. We cleared the first couple houses in town and got a little rest until the zero hour. At zero hour we started clearing all the houses in town but we didn't come across any Krauts. After we finished clearing the town we moved into the woods outside of Behren and dug our foxholes. That evening I went on a detail to help bring up blankets to our positions from Behren, so the boys could keep warm that night. Jonny the jeep driver was driving and I was sitting on top of all the blankets piled up in the trailer. All of a sudden Jonny got out of the jeep and laid down along the side of the road. I asked him what's wrong and he told me to jump off the trailer because he heard artillery coming our way. As soon as I jumped off the trailer and hit the ground about four shells hit right next to us. If I was on the trailer then I would have been wounded. Jonny asked me if I thought we should run for the building which was about 50 yards away. I said lets wait a minute and sure enough some shells came in and if we were running for the building we both would have been hit. After those shells hit I said lets go now and we both made a dash for the building and we got there safely. We went to the cellar and we could here those shells hitting all around us for about two hours. When we looked at the jeep the following morning there were several holes where shrapnel had hit. Again I thank God that I wasn't in the jeep when they hit.

Feb. 18

We attacked again this morning, the zero hour was 0800. We had to take about 1500 yards in front of us called Spichren Heights which would give us the high ground overlooking Styring Wendel and Forbach. We attacked all day and the only resistance was artillery we didn't have any trouble with the Krauts. It seem they must have withdrew before we got there. Since we didn't have any resistance we took our objective. Easy company to our right flank was held back by machine gun fire. Now that we got our objective the first thing we had to do was dig in. Artillery was coming in and every shell made us dig faster and deeper. Goodrich and me were digging our hole together. When we got down about three feet we hit water and we couldn't dig any deeper. We got some logs and put it over the top to keep out shrapnel. All that night artillery was coming in. We both couldn't sleep that night because of the water and we were also afraid of counterattack.

Feb. 19

Early that morning easy company was coming up to close up our right flank. They met a lot of resistance so they called our company to help them. Lt. Burmeyer our C.O. took a platoon to help out easy company. While doing this he was hit in the shoulder by shrapnel. Easy company finally came up to our flank but artillery was still coming in that day and all that night all around us. We could hear the shrapnel whistling over our heads.

Feb. 20

This morning Poltack and me were told to go to Bn. O.P. to work as messengers. We stayed in a German trench where we would be a little safe from artillery. I took out a can of C Rations and I was just to eat it when all of a sudden I heard artillery coming our way - I hit the ground when the shell hit. It landed about 15 feet away from the trench. It seemed as if they had this trench zeroed in. We decided to dig in the side of the trench so we would have a little covering over us. All this time shells were coming in all around us. I didn't have my shovel so I used my bayonet to dig, Poltack was using my empty K ration can, and one of the other boys were using my spoon. You would be surprised how fast I was digging with that bayonet. I really prayed that morning and I think God heard me because I was safe. Back in the states they used to tell us that when artillery comes in you dig with anything you have in your hands and I realized then that this was true. Dwight was using my hole that I had dug in the company area and when I came back I found out that he was hit with shrapnel while he was in my hole. A couple of the boys got battle fatigue that day. Battle fatigue is a fancy name for shell shock. I saw those boys lay down and start crying like babies. Thank God my mind was strong enough not to get shell shock. That was a hard day for all of us.

Feb. 21 to Mar. 2

We decided to move our C.P. to a rock quarry which was off to our right. When we got there we found two great big caves that the Krauts dug. Believe me they were really safe from artillery. They were lined with logs and there was about twenty feet of rock and sand over our heads and a thick steel door at the entrance. That is the first time I felt safe from the artillery while I was on the line. Artillery was still coming in but while we stayed in these caves we were safe. Of course when we went out for something we had to be careful. We had one hot meal a day and two meals of K rations. I received several packages while I was there and believe me they sure came in handy. Every day P 47s came over to bomb and strafe String Wendel. Every time these planes came over they made us all feel good. Every night we had to stand guard duty outside the caves and we really sweated out those 88s. We were told by intelligence that the Krauts were told to take our positions at all costs. Easy company to our right flank had counter attacks almost every day, but they were all taken care of. One night Poltack and me went with the artillery observers to the edge of the cliff overlooking Styring Wendel to see how artillery looked at night. They threw some mortar shells in on us but when they did we saw the flash of the mortar and we called for artillery fire to knock out their position. There was a big explosion. I t seems we hit a big ammunition dump and after that there wasn't anymore mortar fire. While we were in the caves the Krauts used a lot of screaming meemies when they go through the air they make a hell of a lot of noise enough to scare you to death and when they hit they cause a lot of concussion. One day while we were in the caves these screaming meemies blew out our candle about four times. So you could imagine how it would have been if we were outside at the time they hit. One morning the Chaplin came to the front line to give us church services. It was held in one of the caves and all religions attended. There were Catholics, Protestant, Jewish and all other religions that service was really wonderful and I will never forget it. That proved that no matter what your religion is we can all pray together for the same thing.

March 3

This is the morning we were supposed to take Styring Wendel. The zero hour was set for 0800. We got up about 5 A.M. that morning and had a K ration for breakfast. We made our combat packs and carried a D ration and two K rations. We got our ammo and hand grenades and waited for the zero hour. At 0800 we started the attack, we didn't lay down a barrage of artillery because we wanted this to be a surprise attack. We started down the mountain through the woods. The Krauts through in a hell of a barrage of artillery in on us they through everything including the kitchen sink. Right and left men were getting wounded and killed from shrapnel and small arms fire. As they moved on a little further we ran into a mine field and that's where Lt. Ryting got his leg blown off and died later from loss of blood. One of the medics also got his leg blown off but I think he is back in the states now. It seems that all the swell guys really get it bad. That's also where Lt. Cooper got hit with shrapnel in the knee and shoulder. He is the Lt. from Brooklyn and he sure was a swell guy. That evening the boys finally cleared the first couple of houses in town. Artillery, mortars, screaming meemies, were coming in all that day and all that night. Many of one men that were hit earlier in the day were still laying out there because the medics couldn't get out to them. That evening about 7 P.M. I was sent out as part of a ammo carrying party to help bring back ammo so that we can continue the attack the next morning. We had to carry these heavy boxes of ammo about 2

miles through thick wooded areas. While we carried the ammo artillery and mortar shell landed all around us. I was dead tired and the thick underbrush was slapping against my face and catching on my clothes. It was a dark night and you couldn't see to well. There were many foxholes that were dug during the day and each time we came to one the fellow in front of me told me to watch my step. Then we were about 50 yards from our destination the fellow in front of me didn't tell me about a foxhole that was there. The next step I took there I was in the bottom of the foxhole with the box of ammo on top of me. I t seems I didn't see the foxhole and stepped right into it. I tried to get up but I couldn't stand on my foot it seems as if it was broken. I tried to walk but I fell on the ground. I passed the word up to the Lt. that I had broken my leg and couldn't walk. He told me to stay there and he would send up a medic to got me out. I didn't want to stay out there all alone with all this artillery coming in. I was thinking of what would happen if I should get hit with shrapnel while I was out there all alone, and there wouldn't be anyone out there to give me first aid. I decided to crawl on my hands and knees because there was only about fifty yards to go. I crawled about twenty feet and I couldn't go any further so I went into a hole that was right next to me. Just then I heard a shell coming straight for us. One of the boys from the carrying party hit the ground right next to my hole. Just then the shell exploded and he screamed out that he was wounded. You have no idea how I thanked God that I was in the hole just then. He was laying so close to me that we were just about touching one another. One of the boys from the carrying party gave him first aid and they took off. Believe me I was really scared being out there all alone. A couple of minutes later I saw one of the boys from my company. I asked him what he was doing out here and he said he was taking care of some of the wounded boys that the medics couldn't get out during the day. I asked him where they were so at least I could be with some of the boys and not be all alone. He helped me and I hopped and dragged myself over to where they were. I fell in a hole and waited for the medics to come and take me out. I saw about seven of the boys that were hit during the day and they were still laying out there. The time now was about 10 P.M. and all I could do was make myself comfortable until the medics came. All the boys kept calling for medics and I kept telling them they would be here any minute. When I saw the condition they were in my broken leg didn't seem so bad. The wounded were out there all day and all that night. About 1 A.M. the medics came and I told them to take out the other boys first because they were in worse condition than me. They had to carry us about a half mile to where they had the jeep parked. They didn't have enough stretchers to carry us all out so one medic said he would carry me out on his back. I knew I was heavy so I asked him to let me hop on one foot. Sgt. Cohen the medic said it was alright and put me on his back. When we went a little way I heard someone yell halt, and in German he told us to put our hands over our heads and when I looked up I saw two machine guns staring me in the face. Since I speak a little German I tried to explain to him that I am hurt and this is a medic carrying me out. We went up closer to them and I said that it looks like we are prisoners to the medic. Then one of them said in a broken English are you Americans? We said yes , he said, I thought you were Germans I called out the password and you didn't answer so I talked German to get you here to see who you were. I t turned out to be that they were French soldiers on guard there. He told us to go ahead and believe me I really sweated that out. Sgt. Cohen put me on his back again and carried me to the jeep. I finally got to Bn. Aid station about 5 A.M. the doctor looked at my ankle and said he thought it was fractured, and put a splint on it. They evacuated me to a collecting company and I slept there until 11 A.M. I had some breakfast and then they took me back to an Evacuation hospital in the town of Duez, France. As soon as I got there the first thing they did was take and xray of my ankle. They told me it wasn't a fracture and that it was only a bad sprained ankle. They took of the splint and sent me up to the ward. The first thing I did was take of all my dirty clothes and put on some nice clean pajamas. I washed and shaved all the dirt that had accumulated on me while I was up on the line and then I felt better already. I laid in bed and took it easy there for about two weeks. The first thing that caught my eye was seeing electricity. This was the first time I saw it since I left the states. They had a movie or show almost every night, there was a radio in the room, and it was really good seeing American nurses again. They brought my meals in bed and I really had the life there. The doctor thought I had it easy too long so he sent me to convalescent hospital and I stayed there about three weeks. The hospital moved about three times while I was with them. At first the hospital was in the town of Epinal. We had movies here almost every night and a nice red cross where we had a lot of fun. Then we moved to a town named Sarburg we took over an nice modern hospital that the Germans had used. They had a nice Red Cross set up there too and we saw movies almost every night. The next place the hospital moved to was a town in Germany across the Rhine River. We lived in big tents there but it was still better than being on the front line. From the convalescent hospital I went to a Replacement Depot where they gave you new equipment and send you back to your outfit. We also stayed in tents

there and in about a week they finally got me back to my outfit. I thought my outfit was on the line but to my surprise they were transferred to the Third Army and they were doing M.P. work.

April 23

When I came back to my outfit they were in the town of Diez doing M.P. work. All the boys were glad to see me back and I really was glad to be back. They all thought I had a broken leg and that I was back in the states. The mail clerk gave me all the mail that he had held for me. I had over a hundred letters and about five packages. We lived in a nice big hotel and we really had the life out there. The next day they handed me an M.P. band and I had to check the passes of civilians going into and out of town. We stayed in this town till April 28.

April 29

We moved to a town named Langen. We also did M.P. work in this town. We lived in civilian houses and we really had a nice easy life there too. We kicked out the civilians from their houses and took them over. It was in this town that I heard that the war in Europe was over. We celebrated by drinking some champagne. I thanked God that I was doing this work at the time instead of being on the line. I don't know why but I didn't feel as happy as I thought I would feel when the war was over. If I was home then believe me I would have really celebrated.

May 11

Poltack and me were the advance party that came to the town of Idstein. We were sent here to find buildings for the company to live in. We picked out the nicest buildings in town and we took them over and kicked out the civilians. Believe me I really enjoyed kicking these civilians out. The Burgermeister of the town invited Poltack and me to have a delicious supper. We had a delicious steak and French fried potatoes at his expense. We have movies or shows here almost every night. We have a nice big swimming pool that we use during the day. We sleep in nice soft beds and really have the life out here. We do a little training during the day, but we don't mind it as long as we are not on the line and a little training can't hurt us. We have a nice radio in the house and have a nice comfortable life. Right now we are waiting for them to tell us what we will do now that the war is over. Until they tell us it seems we will just sit around and take life easy. Well now the story is up to the present time. I hope you like it. Everything I said in this story is true and nothing has been made up to make it sound good. I will try to keep notes on what happens to me from now on and I will continue the story.

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