



Johnny save this for me.

Marion

7/29/45

MY TRAVELS IN THE E.T.O.

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INTRODUCTION:

What I am about to write is all about my travels from Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky to a P.O.E. and to the E.T.O. for the finish of the war there. It may all not be included, much may have slipped my mind, but, I will try to remember as much as I can. I hope that it will not be boring to you readers. After all it's no picnic here. Here it is as far as I can remember.

CHAPTER I.

Hello Folks,

To start with I was in, no doubt, drafted like a few million more. I came into the Army, March 29, 1944. It was a miserable day for me; but, what could I do, but do my very best as a good young American lad can do.

From Devens after being there a few days, I finally started basic at Camp Breckinridge, Ky.. I took basic for a strenuous thirteen weeks. We finally finished with high qualifications, which stood up in second, and I believe looked good to high officials and hastened our trip overseas.

It was long after that and we were preparing our tools, clothes and taking final orders, when soon after a few weeks of night and long hours of labor we were fully equipped and ready for a long ride.

Just a very short while after this preparation we were given numbers and what-not, and away we were on trains heading toward the East Coast. After a couple days of riding and looking over the scenery as we traveled through parts of Indiana, Ohio, Penn., New York, we finally round up at Camp Shanks in New York, which is a P.O.E..

Camp Shanks is situated in a very pleasant spot just in a valley with the most beautiful hills around the camp and the city just on the other side of these hills.

There we stayed a week and during that time we were fed perfectly well; and moving pictures were shown, more clothes were given, entertainment of all kinds were given, and what-not. Finally, after the end of the week came the last examination. I went through it like a house a-fire. Two Medics, one on each side of me just waiting eagerly to jab me with the needle and if I could say "Ah, H.H.--" and walk I was fit for overseas.

I went through that Exam in less than one full minute. I was in for the E. T. O.. What a "sad sack" I was.

Well, a week had passed, we got ready and packed again to ship. That night we formed a formation as ordered and waited in that same formation for a couple of hours, while Officers inspected out Barracks before leaving. Then we moved out to the railroad where we boarded coaches. From there we left the camp area and off we rolled to the big city, New York, then to a Ferry and foot to a ship that was waiting to take us aboard some-place in New York harbor.

That began eleven miserable days for the entire voyage. I was not sea-sick, but, not far from being one real "Sad Sack." The ship was an American ship in which, the last day abroad, I met a fellow from my home town. He was manning a Gun and was in the U. S. NAVY.

SS MARINE RAVEN 22 OCT '44

I read many a book and sang many a song during the trip, all of the time trying to forget Home. It's ones biggest problem; but, I did a pretty good job of it.

After eleven days out at sea just looking at water and more water, I finally sighted land. The day was clear and the sun was shining. It didn't look bad from where I stood. We soon docked at BarreDocks on the Bristol Bay, England near Ardith, Wales.

Here, the day was spent looking at people and buildings who appeared to be somewhat different than Americans we had last seen. Every thing seems so different and even the seagulls would fly differently. The Cop was called a "bobby" and, what a uniform he wore. Oh, at the first glance he made me laugh, and most of them rode bicycles.

While on ship I received "guard duty" once during the trip. When night came we had to be below decks just before the Black out started in effect, and entertainment started then. We saw a few movies, read magazines, short stories and other books of mystery. We also, had a guitar which came all the way with us from Camp Buckinridge. One of the boys in my squad played it and still plays it to this very day, but, I am getting way a-head of my story. All of this time out at sea we still didn't know or have the slightest idea in where about we were headed for. About in the middle of the Atlantic more on this side we ran up against a little trouble. Subs were trying to get in and have some fun but, our boys who were always on the alert soon took that into consideration and in such short time every thing was under full control once again.

Coming closer to the end of the trip one morning, I came out on deck and looked around. I was more interesting in citing land than anything else, but, I just noticed that we had changed our course and most of the convoy was not with us. Later in the day we received word that we were to dock in England somewhere, instead of France as orders were when we left. All of this good news however, sounded very pleasant to us since we all wanted to see some of England before getting into the scrap.

It was just then a matter of a couple of days and we soon sighted part of Irland and then England. It was a beautiful day out and the sun was shining and from where I stood out off of the shore of Barre Docks, England in the Bristol Channel-it looked very queer and strange.

CHAPTER II

Here the day was spent looking at buildings and people who appeared to be somewhat different than those we had last seen. We soon got use to that and spent an enjoyable two months stay in England. But, just one moment please, I am getting ahead of myself again. That evening we marched down the gang plank and ofcourse with a little music to go with the strive. We soon boarded a train just around the corner for someplace we knew not where.

As we entered we were placed just where we were to be seated, than with the pack I had over my back I tried to sit down, but, no soap. I first had to remove all of my junk before being comfortable. No sooner that we were all set and ready to ride again, a girl, appeared at the train door call-

ing out--"Coffee and DoNuts". I happened to be seated just inside the door and for one time I was first in line. There was no sugar in the coffee but, it really tasted darn good.

We soon started on our way and during this short ride we learned to keep the windows blacked-out. We were also interested in the bullitons on "how to behave during Air-Attack".

Our next stop was Camp Delemere, which is situated just about thirty miles from a big industrial city of Manchester. Chester was only a little ways off in the opposite direction where one finds Historical buildings, Walls, Castles, and Cathedrals. It also, has the one and only double decker side walks I have mentioned to you. It's so old that the stairs are worn down a bit from being stepped upon for ages.

Delemere was a camp built for the British soldiers. A straw mattress was all that we had in a wooden bunk made of rough wood. Thirty two men to a Barrack and two stoves, the size of coal pails to warm up the place and keep the dampness out. We had a "Fire Guard" along with the regular guard out every night. The "Fire Guard" would guard the barracks at night while we would sleep and keep the fires going all the time.

I would receive this honor and privilege as the Army calls it every third day or so. It wasn't much but an hour a night until passes were given out more and more. I would stay in most of the time and most of them would go out on pass. They would leave just a hand full of us left for the night and I was then pulling guard most every night. This was beginning to be the old stuff. I finally smartened up and started to go out myself. I visited Manchester, Liverpool, Chester and a few other places about the camp. Manchester was the place most visited by the Yanks on pass and short leave.

Here in Delemere we trained and specialized in mines and Booby Traps. We also, had plenty of more infantry and exercising tactics. Even lessons in French and German were given. With all of the time and effort I put into trying to learn these languages I have found out that it didn't do much good when I reached those countries.

I had a swell time in England for the time I spent there. I was fortunate enough to receive both a twenty four and a forth eight hour pass. I really enjoyed myself and almost made it to London; but, I changed my mind in the end because of my finances being down below normal.

However, some of the boys in our outfit were so lucky that a certain group was picked for the construction to rebuilt homes for people in London. These boys stayed a long period of time and from what they tell me it was a picnic there. I just missed that deal.

It was almost about Christmas time when I missed guard. I was glad for that because I went out and had a swell time for myself; but, New Years I was caught and my name was on the guard list. What a "sad-sack" I was then. I had planned to make another good time out of New Years as I had Christmas but, I just stayed in. It was just a few days after New Year and a-packing we went. We had heard and followed the advance and finally the stopping of the Ardennes Offensive in Luxemburg and Belgium.

At England we also trained in many different types of Bailey Bridges and Floating Bailey. Fixed Bailey is what I liked the most.

The next move didn't take much preparation since we know how to move on the double after doing it so many times now. It was just like eating chow for most of us. We had but a few trucks that we had drawn in England and loaded most of the Companies stuff on. These trucks were sent by highway a couple of days ahead. We, then followed.

Jan. 6, 1945, we left Delemere and marched down to the train station. We loaded aboard and headed down South by London and right into Southhamton, another P. O. E.. This ride didn't take much time and before we knew it we were on the march again. Something went wrong. Trucks were to pick us up at the station and like all other times, they weren't there.

We marched. It was only three miles to the ship. What do we care about marching three miles with a hundred pounds on our backs and that is putting it very mild. Just the same we made it. All the time the guitar is with us. Of course I had my turn carrying it. Southhamton was more of a Sailors' town.

I walked around the P.O.E. there for a few hours, sneaking in line a few times for coffee and donuts at the Red Cross Clubmobile. There is one moment which I did not like very much there and that was when I was watching this certain ship coming in and it happen to be a Hospital ship. I saw so many boys on that ship hurt that it made me some what feel poor around the stomach. There were all sorts of casualties. Oh, it wasn't good to be on and I do hope that I don't go back home that way.

Soon after that we loaded into an old tub manned by East Indians. It was an English ship called the "Cheshire" and these Indians were the first I had ever seen. On board this ship we were fed some of the worst tasty food that I ever expected to eat. I'll tell you, I couldn't eat afraid that it would come back up and out again. I know how it was prepared. I was one of the K. P.s for two days on this ship. The food was so badly prepared that it smelt like something out of the garbage pail. The only good feature about the food was that they had a decent loaf of bread and that's what I really did eat. It made up the biggest item we ate. When the last man got aboard we then took off and sailed through the night across the Channel for the Coast of France. We traveled at night more for Blackout conditions and to insure safety.

Nothing of any importance happened during this short trip and we didn't see much because of a very dark night. Two days and nights were spent anchored off the shore of Le Harve, France.

CHAPTER III

Well, here we stayed out at sea just outside the Harbor of La Harve. From where we stood I could see sunken ships all around us. The harbor which seemed to me of one of the fanciest and that also was damaged to a great extent.

UK SHIP "CHESHIRE" 7 JAN '45

For two days we loaded out there, because a very few ships could be unloaded at anyone time. Then finally, came our turn. We pulled in, it was still daylight. It was then coming dark and just then, we started down the gang plank. It had snowed all of that day and night. When we reached the docks we had to watch where we were walking. It was only a floating dock which Army Engineers had built and still being constructed. I had a pack on my back again and then a duffle bag to go with it. It was so heavy that I could only drag it along. I, finally made the truck which was waiting for the boys and it sure was a relieve to get rid of that load. I didn't mention the depth of the snow by this time but, I will now. The storm was still going on and coming down dam hard. By this time the snow was four inches deep and pretty slippery. Guess what? After we all got to the dock and formed a formation we then, discovered that we again left the guitar back on the ship. Well, one of the boys took off and soon was back with the guitar. That makes it twice that we almost left that behind. It has been with the Third Squad most of the time since Hardy plays it almost every time he gets hold of the darn thing. Along with a friend of mine named "La Porto" also a member of my squad, who sings, it has helped us to spend lots of our spare time, that we might of spent thinking of things to make us feel homesick.

We were set again after Sgt. Gozds came back with the guitar and marched to the train station. It was just about a mile away, but, in that snow it seemed like five miles. At first, we couldn't make up our minds. We were lost for a moment, but, soon found our way to the station. I was wet almost to the skin while resting inside the battered station, of which, the U. S. Air Force had visited on "D-Day", and believe me the Boys did a wonderful job. Oh, it was beautiful.

It wasn't long after I was settled there when the call came to form and line up. We walked around the corner into the railroad yard by a Red Cross Clubmobile. We got coffee and donuts, then continued to the line. I looked back at the Girls and said to myself, "Those girls go through plenty themselves to get down to new, refreshed troops, like myself and feed us all hours of the day." Those girls took a lot of cold weather and lost many a good hour of sleep, just to feed guys like myself".

One o'clock we loaded up in box-cars about the size of Charlie Andrade's truck. One look at them and I really did loose courage. I hated very much to ride such a truck but, what could I do? We were counted off, and guess what, forty of us had to be placed in each one with full field packs on, at that. As it was there was not enough room to seat every one at a time. The train moved out at a very slow and weezy pace that took nine hours to go about thirty miles. Much of the time was spent standing still along the line. We never did find out why. We were all wet from the snow and the car certainly did not have any heat. Sleep was impossible because of the cold and due to no space.

Ten o'clock the next morning, we pulled into a small French town called "DuClair". Here we waited most of the day to find out where we were to go. We were lost and orders were changed. Here we waited most of the day to find out where we were to go.

Six of my squad, including myself, were picked out for the baggage detail. In other words we were to unload the Battalions baggage, all of it, and separate them into Companies, then load them on trucks. Altogether we counted over six hundred duffle bags plus the officers bags and luggage. This detail lasted all of that day and part of the next morning. We finally got on the last truck and into the camp where the boys had marched, while we were on detail. It was about three miles from the station and up on a plateau overlooking the great Scenic Seine River. It must be a beautiful place in the summer time.

Oh, the night, or rather morning we pulled in, we expected a nice cozy place; but, it was just the other way around. I couldn't find the outfit because there was no one around to ask. After a while I found out where and into a tent I went with four more to live with. It was just twenty below zero and I had to live in a tent. One stove in the middle of the tent to keep us warm and dry our equipment. Oh, I almost forgot to mention that we had a couple of blankets and a canvas cot. This, was not much cover so all the clothes we had on were not taken off. During the days that followed we spent most often getting wood to burn the next night. The forest looked as if a major logging operation had been through there in the two weeks that we spent there. Before I forget the name of this camp, in case you are interesting to know is-- "Camp Twenty Grand".

Here we learned that we may go into the war as Infantry. We who had been trained as Engineers did not take much fancy to this kind of goings on. Matter of fact was we did not like the idea one bit. It was winter and as Infantry we wouldn't do so hot. I had an idea that I might get very cold. The Ardennes bulge was beginning to get smaller and smaller. This we learned from the Army paper "Stars & Stripes". After making certain that everyone had proper clothing and another blanket, we were insured one clip of ammunition, just in case of trouble. Well again, we packed up all of our stuff and baggage and loaded them on trucks. We marched down to the same railroad station we came in and got into forty and eights again. The trip took a period of three days and nights. I slept on my duffle bag one night but, changed the next two nights. It was very cold and a draft was coming in from the door and I slept next to it. We ate ten in one rations all through the trip. This trip I assure you was plenty rough. I never knew how much I could stand until I actually did. During the day, the last couple of days on the train I fixed myself with a good bed between two of my buddies. The heat of their bodies plus a couple of blankets just did the job. My field jacket was rolled up and made a fair pillow for my dear soft and weary head to rest upon. We followed the Northern boundary most of the time and dismounted at the town of Thionville.

Here, we loaded on trucks that came in just a while later with fifty caliber machine guns mounted and loaded for any enemy air raids. Civilians were very few and what few were around and about we couldn't take chances to fraternize because most of them were pro-nazi. The land here happens to be very close to the German homeland.

We rode away again not knowing where we were to be put. It was bitterly cold and we rode for eight hours on that truck. We almost, believe it or not, were put on the front lines. Yes, it was just one mile away before we discovered the danger we were getting into so finally, we turned back a few miles.

After running around a while we soon came to a town called "Mondorf", where we stayed in a Hotel for a week or so. Here I found it comfortable, since I hadn't lived in a building for quite some time. I even took showers at a mineral bath house. Of course, we didn't have the minerals but, however, the water was real hot so, it just didn't matter much. Mondorf is in Luxemburg and this place was more of a tourist place for the summer season. Many French and pro-Germans lived here. It was just across the border from Germany.

At this time we were in the Third Army under the control of General Patten. The next move was to Montford, twelve miles away to a German Camp. Here, we were told that we were to hold down a flank position for the outfits that had been on line a long time. After getting this sort of news we were given more Infantry tactics and studied all weapons. We even fired all that we had and got acquainted with them. We only stayed here just two weeks and during that time in our spare time we had movies in the mess hall and even one day, the Red Cross wagon caught up with us with Coffee and Donuts.

One night, after this, I was told to pack up my stuff because all of the drivers were to leave the following morning to go into Belgium and draw trucks for the Battalion. I started to pack and had a few buddies helping me along. It wasn't long after that and I was set. Ready to go on a two and a half hundred mile ride.

CHAPTER IV

Morning came, I was ready and on the truck with what I was to carry with me. The remainder of my stuff, the fellows took charge of. We took off, a truck load of us, from my company and there were three more companies, making four trucks. We had, ten in one, Army rations for the whole trip and enough for the length of time which was estimated. About half way we stopped for a M. P.. The ground was covered with snow and just then, a truck coming around the corner with the speed close to forty, just missed us for an inch and on my side too. Oh, if he would of hit us, I guess I would still be counting stars. It wasn't long after that, when we reached the Third Army Ordinance Depot. We couldn't do business then because it was after working hours, and so, we slept in a tent without a fire that night. The next morning, early, we got down to work and started to draw and line up our trucks. We serviced them, checked them, and loaded a jeep on every big truck. I had one of those and was set to go, but, the officer in charge had lots of paper work to do so we stayed a couple of extra days there. Meanwhile, we received passes into town of "Brussel", and I had a wonderful time there since it was my first pass in Europe.

The next mornign we started back toward the Southern parts of Luxemburg and into France. At the time, they were still fighting in the bulge and fighting pretty roughly. Night fell and I had driven a hundred miles and stayed overnight in Bastogne, Belgium, where the Yanks had just taken over the place. The next morning, after changing a tire in the snow, I looked up and just then a truck passed by. I looked at it from where I stood and saw the back of it loaded up to the top with dead frozen Jerries. Oh, I just felt sick for the day. We counted a few more after that in such a short time. Soon after I left for my next place. We finally, after a long, weary and tiresome drive, arrived in Metz where we delivered the jeeps. Forty Eight of them. Metz is in France and is just about where we ended the last war, World War I. I believe

WAR

3rd Army

Here in Metz, we had a swell supper and a place to sleep. We even had a hot shower downstairs in the basement floor. Oh, they fed us until it came out of my ears. The next morning we had another good decent meal and later, unloaded the jeeps and checked our vehicles once again. After gasing and checking oil, water etc. we went for dinner which was our last meal here. We formed a convoy just after chow then, rolled away. It was but a couple of hours ride when we came into Luxemburg from Metz, France and right to our outfit. The outfit wasn't in the German Camp anymore. They had moved while we were away on the trip and I was anxious to meet the boys. I finally reached the outfit in a little country town named "Waldembédimus". When I inquired about my squad I found out from the second and third platoons that my platoon was up in the front lines by the Moselle River in a town called Ehnem. Germany was just across The River and we were holding that position. I had dinner here and packed for combat purposes for the front. No sooner I was about ready, than a jeep came to pick me up and also a couple of more drivers from my platoon. Away we went to meet the boys. The boys had been here already four days and going into the fifth. In a very short while I began to hear the noise of guns coming in a bit louder and louder until I was really in the midst of everything. I was glad and happy to see the boys and I guess it was the same with them. I stayed there only a short while until later, in the dark, a jeep picked me up again and said that I was to come back and get my truck set to take another big trip. I was back in no time. My truck was ready and that night I drove blackout into Ehnem, where the boys were, waited until they were relieved by another outfit and returned that morning into another town just up the river a little ways. There, we were to meet a Convoy of Company A and B, then follow them. I did, but, what a time I had driving in total darkness without a single light of even a cigarette. Believe me, even today, I don't know how I am still here and not down one of the hills where I almost did a few times. Oh, its been rough so far. All I know is that I have been fighting a war but, I also, found out that there is another war we are fighting and that is the tough living conditions here. That alone is a big problem here. *

Along the way were many Helmets, American and German, also many burnt tanks both ours and theirs. We soon met our Company already in Convoy formation waiting for us. We joined in, into our regular place in line.

CHAPTER V

After leaving, what is called today, the great "Ardennes Battle grounds" we wound up in a very small town called "Hoinger". This town here was within range of German field glass range and not only that but, also, within artillery fire. It was only the next day when traffic was a bit heavier than usual that shells were dropping in. I was out repairing tires which I had picked shrapnel with when a few just dropped but a few yards away. I soon got out of there in a very short time to take cover. One actually came too close for comfort and almost said "Hello" to the kitchen personal. That's how close they were coming in. This only happened when much activity would be around at any one time. Here, we lived in a house

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which half of it had been blown up by Artillery just a few days ago. At night we could also observe shells bouncing off a few Jerry pillboxes way over on the top of a hill. For two days all we did was clean and repair ordinance for our next fight for which we were told. Only this one was lots tougher than the last one.

To go to this place we carried along our personal weapons, the great M 1, M.G., hand grenades, two blankets and a days K Army Ration. Everything else we had, we packed into our duffle bags and put into trucks which stayed behind. We soon loaded into trucks for a very short ride-but, what a ride. The road was so rough that one of your trucks would never make it, but, we got there somehow. We then came to a stream where we dismounted and had to continue by marching up along the side of a hill by path.

Company C, our Company was the first of the Battalions to march down that morning. Just around a bend in the path in where I almost caught Hell. There was a "sniper" way up on the hill. From where he stood he could observe very well just where we were going or doing and then let us have it as we passed. The first platoon made it. Matter of fact, I am from the first platoon. The second platoon, was next and they suffered a few casualties. The third made it O-Kay. Company B came in after a while, they also suffered a few. Company A suffered a few. Altogether, the Medics really had some job even before we reached our placements and position. One boy had a bullet stopped very short of his heart due to a cigarette case in his left pocket. I guess he'll never forget that one incident.

Just as we came to the river we saw a very freshly dead G. I. . It was a reminder that the same could very easily happen to us if we weren't careful. The trap was made during a continual down pour of rain which didn't stop until a few days later. I must have traveled a total of ten miles or so back and forth just hauling supplies for the next three days for the boys. Then, the thing that will stick in my mind a very long time happened. First, I will tell you about what this front is like. It was the furthest point of the Third Army Advance in this sector. On both sides of the river, the hills rose very steeply for about a quarter of a mile, and in many places it was lined with impossible cliffs. The hills on the enemy side were by far the steepest. Engineers had already been here and constructed a footbridge across the stream. The river was at flood stage and even then was not over fifty feet wide at this point, but, what troubled us mostly was that it flowed at a terrific pace.

Now for the incident: We were all taking a rest and eating K Rations when a few shots were heard up on the hill in the direction of the line. Down came Captain Hueback followed by Lts. Poulous and Hochberger with the Capt., going as if the Devil was after him. He kept yelling to disperse and take up positions. He had something to say about the commanding post being taken. Automatically, the machine gun crews set up the weapons and a patrol was sent to investigate but, soon after we found out that it was only a "dry run". The soldier that happened to be walking around just at that time can thank his lucky stars that we were not trigger happy, because he was in for it if we were such. When we had advanced to the spot where the Commanding Post was we found the man from the Sixth Armored Division waiting for us & wanting to know what the hell the story was.

3rd ARMY

6th ARMORED DIV.

This is when we realized that it was just a big dry run. I doubt very much if he will ever forget the very sad state of his prestige for the next few days. We all felt the same way. If the enemy had attacked, the Captain would surely get us out if we followed him. He would be running away so fast that the enemy bullets could not catch up with us, with a mile head start.

The next three days I spent in a four by six fox-hole with a buddy of mine. His name is Billy Kirby and he is from Virginia. We were both drivers and our job was to be runners when needed and meanwhile guarding the Command Post just below the hill on the flank position. Night came, I was cold, wet to the skin and trembling so much for being wet and trying to go to sleep in a foxhole. I lived that night, but, I still don't know how. I didn't sleep a wink all night. The next morning I left my fox hole and went down for rations. When I returned I saw Kirby dressing the fox hole with pine needles and digging a little more out of the fox hole and of course, digging out a little rain water, which came in during the night. The second night, while heavy artillery came in, one shell hit a tree causing a "tree burst" and a piece of shrapnel shot right into my fox hole, between Kirby and I. It was so dark that I couldn't see my hand in front of me. I went feeling for the piece and soon rubbed my hand over it. It was so sharp that it nearly cut my hand as I passed it over it. I dug it out of the side of the fox hole and tried to tell Kirby about this but, he was asleep and I waited till the next morning to break the news to him. When I did, his face turned white. Could you blame him?

The third night we drivers received word that we were to pack up and leave by the ferry and were to meet a truck on the other side of the river, then go back and get set with our trucks because we were moving out. We did, and when we reached the other side of the river the truck to pick us up wasn't there. We only walked five miles back in the mud up to my knees practically, and I was a "sad sack" when I reached the rear of the outfit. Here, I had a hot meal again and some coffee. Really tasted good after being in a fox hole for a few days.

We drivers, again, checked all trucks and had them ready for the boys which were to return in very short order. On the way back, I lost my squad sargent, Sgt. Godzd. He was hit by shrapnel of an 88 shell and very badly at that, but, he is still living as far as I know. He happened to be from Connecticut. The artillery positions just outside the village here were still being shelled as we hauled out of that place as soon as all of the Company was able to load into the trucks.

We, now had orders to proceed to Walheim, Germany. Here, we were to be assigned as Combat Engineers with the Third Corp and with the First Army. We liked the idea very much, since the short time we spent with the front did not suit our fancy.

Driving thru the bulge for the second time for me, only this time, it really was cleaned out of Jerries. We passed Bastogne, Ettlebrook, Wiltz, Teige, and Aachen. I drove only a couple hundred miles easy with no rest to speak much about. I happened to have the "G. I. Runs" and stopped several times along the road to answer nature's call, but quick. Damn quick at times.

Night came and here I was still driving without rest. Blackout driving wasn't no job eight. However, in a short while, we finally came to a place where I looked at a pole on the side of the road. Here, it was a bit lighted and I could make it out. It said, "U ARE NOW ENTERING GERMANY".

3rd Army

III Corps, 1st Army

CHAPTER VI

Well, it was just a very short while after we passed this sign that we reached a stopping point. It was late and the Capt. couldn't make arrangements for us to get into a house to sleep so we slept in our trucks. The next morning, we were frozen. I happened to notice some of the boys from another outfit lining up for chow, so, I got up my mess gear and got into the same line. I, finally, came to the front and was served pancakes, cereal, coffee and plenty of the stuff. They really treated me fine. Here, I learned that we were transferred from the Third Army into the First. Already I could see it was going to be a Dam good deal. We picked up a guide and he showed us where we were to live and, at that, among German people. This place happens to be on the famous Dragon Teeth line. The name of this town was "Oberflaybach" just around the corner from Walheim.

Here, we were re-equipped with stuff that may have been lost in the hill on the Roer River and other places. Also, many of us were given cure to the "runs" we had developed from eating K Rations and mostly from sleeping on the wet grounds. The latrines had been visited many times a day by the same men over and over again. We got a good dose of Sulfa and it did the job right well.

We next moved to Bivaac in the Hurtgen Forest. That was a long and weary battle for the infantry. We found dead still lying in the forest where they had fallen. Most of them were Germans. A whole lot of G. I. stuff had been left behind when our boys made their advance to the Roer River which is only a few miles away.

Here in the forest, we had pitched a big tent of the top on my truck. We were told that we had a bridge to build, either this day or the next on the Roer River. The town was still being shelled heavily and that's the reason why we waited. So, that night I figured maybe the next day I would have to help build the bridge, so I tried to get some sleep. No sooner were we in bed, I myself, was removing my shoes, when the call came about nine o'clock that evening to build the bridge. We all rushed and in very short order we loaded on the trucks.

We built the "fixed Bailey" over the Roer River while the Infantry was taking the hills in the distance. This was at Winden. The bridge was in three sections and the only tactical bridge built up until that time with a device that makes each of the three spans a bridge in itself. It happens to be in all a total of 290 feet long. This included forty feet of ramp. Before getting to this point we had an awful time trying to get to bridge site where the bridge was to be built. Shells were still hitting about and we waited till three o'clock the next morning to start. I was cold and slept inside the truck. It took exactly thirteen hours to build it completely and no sooner we were finished then the Ninth Armor Division started to roar over the bridge and right straight for the Rhine, the next big river in Germany. This is where I, and a few others received the Bronze Star Medals and others the Certificate of Merit. We must have pushed a half dozen dead Jerries over the bank in order to get a clean spot to construct. Some of the boys started to go thru their pockets trying to find souvenirs. If they happened to have gold teeth, the boys would yank them out of their mouths. Yes, the Jerries caught Hell, even after being dead. Oh, we have a bunch of rough and rugged boys in the outfit.

Later, after repairing the roads leading to the bridge, we moved to Winden, the town in which the bridge was built. Then we moved to Techelich.

III Corps, 1st Army

(4)

BRIDGE

(5)

9th ARMORED DIV.

Here, we thought for a moment that we would get a chance to see "Cologne", but, we moved South to "Ahrweiles", where much fine wine and vineyards are located. (6)

Every place we stopped for a day or so we had to get out on the roads to make sure that traffic wouldn't jam and see that roads were clear at all times. The time we were in Techinech, we saw the Navy boats that helped the Army make its assaults over the Rhine. In Ahrweiler all we did was pull guard and drink some of the nice wine which I found down in a cellar stacked away. I got myself a whole case of this fine bottled wine and hid it in the truck. We had wine for quite some time after. Oh, it was really swell to get a nip or two after work each night. We didn't stay too long in Ahrweiler when we had to pull out and move into Remegen. *

The, now historical Ludendorf, bridge was taking traffic the day we moved in but, had to cease because of direct artillery hits that made it unsafe. There were at one time about a couple hundred Engineers on it working, when it collapsed. This all happened the same day a V2 Rocket hit Company B of our outfit and caused considerable amount of loss to us. *

We stayed in Remegen for a couple of weeks. We received as many as nine air-raids at one night for a time there. We built two big roads just outside Remegen which helped relieve traffic. The Bull-Dozer and Road Grader plus the trucks here really went to work and in no time we had a wonderful road built, that is still there today. Our Company received high honors on that certain job from Group Headquarters that we almost had to go giving lessons to other outfits. Can we help it if we know our job so well? *

From Remegan, we moved across the bridge into the next town and into the woods. Here we stayed but one day. Moved to Horhausen and stayed for three days, meanwhile, working on the great super Autobahn that the Jerries brag so much about. We cleaned a few bridges from the road which Jerry had blown up for road block. We then, moved into Meudt Forest for two days and again to Eversdorf for another couple of days until we came to Weimar and here we stayed a little longer. (8)

We lived in a little farm house where we went and raided the farmer's chicken houses for eggs. At the time we weren't getting much to eat, so we looked for some thing to eat. From there we went to a place called "Wemlighouser", where we stayed only one day, then later, moved to a much bigger town, or should I say city, named "Schmallenberg", we remained here for eleven days. At this time we were in support of the Seventh Armored Division. Here we spent most of our time sweeping for "road Mines" and repairing the road where needed. In this town I had a nice room to sleep and with only three of my buddies. We always hung together as one team, all the way through. They were as follows: Duch, Woody, and Kelly. Of course, our Sgt. tried to brown nose us once in a while but, didn't do him much good. However, we let him in what I called, and originated the "squad Headquarters group". This group consisted of Dubh, a carpenter; Woody-another carpenter; and Kelly-a jackhammer, now a utility repair man; and myself a truck driver. After being here about nine days, the 1st Sgt. came up to me and said, "do you know that you are going to rest camp for a pass?" I thought he was kidding, but to my surprise I discovered that he was telling the truth. I was to be ready the next morning at six, but, after supper I was again told to be ready at eight that same night, instead. I was to drive all the way into Huy, in Belgium. (9)

III CORPS, 1st ARMP

7th ARMORED DIV

We drove over the road almost three hundred miles away and I was to have a loaded truck of men from the Battalion. We were, sixteen, if I recall correctly, including an officer and myself.

I made the trip in twelve hours, and when we arrived it was just time for "chow". The boys hurried in while I was still pulling in my truck after checking it. I only had six flats on the way in. What Luck....

After getting set here, I washed and ate a good meal including a big dish of "ICE-CREAM", which was my first in the E. T. O.. I enjoyed it very much indeed and later changed my clothes to clean ones after taking a neat hot shower. Oh, for a moment it seemed as though I had entered the "gates of Heaven", it was so good here. I rested up here for three days and finally I had to return. Before leaving we got word that our outfit was no longer in the First Army and that we were again transferred back to the Third Army and also the Third Corp. We didn't know just where to head for because all Armies were changing. It was a big problem and away we rolled. We went back to "Schallemberg by Bonn", and a few big places. When we reached there the outfit was gone. We then, received word that the Third Corp had gone way South and away we went by the way of "Frankfurt" and continued along until we were attacked by air planes, then strafed, so we had to stop in that town and stayed there for the night. Here, after being on the road for a couple of days and eating nothing but K Rations we finally had a good hot meal. The next morning we were on our way again and I continued following corp signs all the way in. Finally, I ran across a sign which had our outfit code name on it and I follow that one. We hit a town, saw a few fellows from the outfit, then stopped.

The outfit had just left this place for the next town just ahead of us. I was beginning to feel better now, because I had seen some of the boys and getting closer all the time. For a time there I thought maybe the signs was sorta giving me a big wild goose chase.

No sooner was I on the highway again when I came up to a Convoy on the road. Guess what? Our outfit was just ahead of us. I could tell from the equipment we carry and I really stepped up my truck to a faster speed and caught up to them. I passed them until I came to the head vehicle and received orders where to go. I, by-passed the whole Convoy and went into the next spot where we were to live in the woods.

It was just a few minutes later and the gang arrived. It was a sight for sore eyes--no kidding.

CHAPTER VII

Now with the Third Army again, we wondered what we were going to do. After all everything seems to happen when you are with General Patten, believe me. "Blood and guts", that's him.

Hilpolstein was the closest town to our bivaac area, which was our next stop. From here, we left, one evening with the information that we were to bridge a river yet to be taken but, that the tanks were making a twenty mile push that same day. We were one platoon of Combat Engineers along with a platoon of tread-way bridge. That night we traveled over some almost impossible roads.

III CORPS, 1st ARMY

III CORPS, 3rd ARMY

14th ARMORED DIV

Some places had to be repaired before it would hold up the very heavy equipment. One truck fully loaded weighs thirty eight tons, including its own weight. At one spot they didn't make it and then the fun started. The trucks tried to pull each other with their tow cables. This only buried them deeper in the mud and snapped the cables. Finally, as a final gisture, all the trucks were put bumper to bumper and pushed and pushed until finally the majority rolled out. It seemed like a line of huge clumsy elephants with thousands of concentrated horse power from those trucks was the only way out. The problem now was --how in tarnation to get the last four trucks out of the mud. I was too busy in pulling out the trucks with the men aboard and getting too tired for work later. The only solution was lots of work from We combat engineers, but we cut out small trees for traction, along with the help of cables and wincher we have on the trucks, we soon pulled away together. They certainly do a good job for the trucks.

We only pity the dopes that tried to use the road after we got through with it. We parked a few miles from our objective that morning and waited till daylight and more dope on how the situation was down on the river. It was good. We drove into the town of "Beillengires" without any trouble. The road we came over had been shelled that morning, but was now clear. Infantry had been passing us during our stop on the hill. We were to see those boys in action all the day also how the artillery did its job. All this we saw while waiting for a time when it was safe to go near the site of the proposed bridge.

"Fanatic S.S. troopers" were holding the wooded area and hill on the other side of the river. They were very well dug in and the Infantry suffered many casualties that morning. They didn't make it on our sector but, another outfit outflanked them from the right.

The bridge was blown out by the retreating troops. Lts. Poulous, Sgts, Barr, Powers, and Busiga went to see what had to be done. We found out that the area was under observation for mortar fire. We couldn't make any attempt to put in our limited and very precious bridge material under those conditions. But, over the Thefar Bank were wounded Infantry men crying to be taken to an aid station. We went down to built a quick foot bridge, but as soon as we neared the place shells bobbed in, so we got out of there quick.

Sgt. Barr was hit quite badly by shrapnel. In a short ten minutes after he was getting plasma and in very short order was on his way back to a Field Hospital. That afternoon, we thought maybe we would try to get the job done. As we got to the site we were shooed to do any work. We found out later, that the observer and director of enemy artillery was right in the town we were in, and from where he stood he could see most everything. Did you ask, what happened to him? Well, I'll let you figure that one out. All we know is that he is resting in quiet peace now.

After we did away with him, the shelling gradually ceased. During the night we had an air-raid about ten O'clock. At 11:00 P.M. we had just found a house to take a rest in. The order to put up the bridge was then given. The boys went to work and put up a hundred feet of Threadway bridge by morning and had the Armor rolling over it at seven. We expected to be shelled during the night but to our surprise we weren't bothered.

III Corps, 3rd Army

(12)

BRIDGE

Not one round fell. Later we found out that the enemy had pulled out during the early part of the evening before. Our own artillery was pounding a town a few miles on the other side of the river. An important road intersection was here. The shells whirling through the air above gave us confidence that we had lots of support in case something went wrong. We were very tired and sleepy after two and a half days without any sleep. We went back to our bibaac area only to find our company had made another move and we had to move all our stuff that afternoon and catch up with them. We got lost on the way but found the company after a long trip around the country, it seemed. Sleepy and tired as we were we, now found out that the first platoon (that's us) was the only one in that night and someone had to pull guard duty. Were we a bunch of "sad sacks". No, I didn't pull guard, but I did stay up that night. I had to take the Third Platoon to where we first built the bridge in "Beillengires", to build another somewhere on the other side of this one. Well, we were out all of that night and couldn't find the location of the Bridge site. We returned the next morning early.

A few days after, we crossed the Blue Danube and went as far as a town called "Pfeffenhausen". From here we worked on the roads for a few days more. (13)

The PEACE rumors were spreading fast now. The end was in sight. Our Battalion had a detour to built in a city called "Landshurt". It's pretty large in size and has an airport to it. There had been a railroad yard here once, only the air-force had done such a good job of it that we had to go around it to get our goods into the town on the other side. We soon completed the detour then, we moved into the town. Large apartment buildings on the Main Street in town is where we stayed. Oh, it was a good deal too. Here we waited for the news to be made official. We already knew that the order to "cease firing" on the front lines were given. (14)

On the morning of "MAY 8, 1945", I will never forget, we were told very officially by Captain Henry Hueback, our Company Commander, that this was "V. E. DAY" in Europe.]

Just wait one minute. I guess you are going to ask me if we celebrated. Well, we didn't, because we couldn't. We still had a job to do and we did it.

That same day, we were informed that we were to be Garrison Soldiers once more and would have class order drills every morning, and regular inspection to maintain discipline in the outfit.

In a very few days we moved back North to "Nurenburg" and were to supervise the construction of P. W. cages for prisoners, the same prisoners that we were to occupy them. Many thousands of prisoners were crowded into open cages without shelter of any suitable means of sanitation. When the wind was blowing in the right direction you would think that you were near the receiving end of the city sewer system.

The new cages had seats made for the latrines, but still the smell was there. One meal a day was what the prisoners got, only if they worked. They would get more only if they worked. There were many volunteers for work in that hungry mob.

III CORPS, 3rd ARMY

A little road work and tearing down some two hundred flag poles in the famous "Hitler Stadium" in "Nurenborg" were the final jobs] at the time of this letter.

The Stadium and the surrounding grounds are very well planned and are beautifully arranged. The Army intends to hold an "All Allied Nations Olympics" here at some future date.

Folks, this is the story up until now "May 27, 1945". I am in "NURENBURG" and do not know what the score is on -- what or where we go from here. C.B.I., Occupation of Germany? or Shipment back to the "UNITED STATES"? You guess. As for me I'll just sweat it out as I have done before and try to get along with as little effort as possible.

↓
-VE-
DAY

PART II.

AFTER THE WAR -- IN EUROPE

CHAPTER VII.

It was just about 4:00 A.M. and the same as before was happening. We were loading for a long weary trip for some unknown place. We knew it wasn't for a picnic, but for hardship once again. We had just finished one big fight and maybe on to another.

I was ready and had my truck set to load both my squad, supplies and gear for a five day trip -- at least. We loaded with - out much fuss and difficulties and were soon ready to start. Meanwhile the German people were there at the starting point-- some crying and feeling bad for we use to feed them with our leftovers at chow time. Some happy for they would have their homes to live in again.

It was about 6:00 A.M. now and we were completely loaded and ready to move. The sign was given. We had our orders -- how to follow and travel -- how fast to move and we're on our way.

We passed several towns and places we had come through once before, only this time going through with the war won. We traveled for some time. The ride being interesting for the scenery was something new and different. We went in convoy fashion in the order of Headquarters A-B-and C Companies. The mechanics trucks in the end for repairs or break downs, in case of any.

The traveling was very slow, so I made it my business to break down a few times so I could rest and speed back to the convoy and this way breaking the monotony of long weary driving. My squad riding with me would sing, sleep and eat in the rear of the truck.

At mid-point of the days drive we would stop for a sandwich and coffee. This place was set up by the Army, special for the transit moving troupe headed for the port town waiting shipment for some forward shipping orders.

Our first over-night stop was at a town called "Kaiserslautern." We camped just outside of this town by the roadside, in a large open field. We had left Nuremburg on the morning of June 26, 1945 and arrived here the same day only at 6:00 in the evening, covering about 100 miles. It was the 1st. days stoping point. We slept and ate chow here and the next morning also.

We were still in Germany -- the food being the same, we did not eat much of anything. I was detailed to go out and fetch gas for the Company vehicles which consisted a full size load on my truck. This way I had an opportunity in looking over the town and getting more to eat. I always made good for myself, seeing that the Army didn't. It was always, "Hah Rah for me and the devil for the other guy."

The next morning we went through the same procedure all over again. Now it wasn't long before we were rolling again, on for another 100 miles or so. Our next stop was Nancy, France. A town a bit bigger than the last. It wasn't as far as the last ride but we had much better food. We also stopped at a mid-night point again for a light lunch.

This time I manage to apprehend more rations for myself on the Q. T., and was always on the feeding end. I was soft-hearted a bit and feed a few of my better buddies, so to keep friends in the family.

My sgt. sitting beside me would feed me as I would drive along. This way I would eat and not have to stop. It was very inconvenient for the boys riding in the back on hard seats over rough road, but they were tough and it meant nothing to them.

On from Nancy the following morning on the 25th of June 1945, our next stop was "Dijon." Here we stopped after the same mid-luncheon time as twice before where we stayed on an airfield which the Allies use to take off from. It was used for camping transit troupe.

By the way Nancy and Dijon are both French towns and we are now back to French territory. We could now talk to the French people without getting into trouble. The trip was as the one before and not quite as long, giving us more time for ourselves.

Some of the boys took off into the town, while we other fellows got ready for a good nites sleep. I also got my rations ready for a bit of black marketing. (I had a few cartons of cigarets.)

Chananac, France was our 4th stop -- the precedure the same, and here we had a much better place to stay. We saw movies, a play on the stag and had something to eat. Then for a good finish for the evening, I disposed of my black market.

The next stop was a problem now -- not knowing where and when we were to get there -- what we were going to do. We rode along wondering if we would board a ship right away and go to the Pacific or C.B.I. or the states. It was a good guess.

It wasn't long now, the air was getting warmer and the trees were different -- they were palm trees. We were hitting sunny southern France. Suddenly, we arrived on a hugly looking spot with tents all over the place. The wind was blowing hard, picking the dust and throwing it around into our eyes and mouth and making a mess of every thing in the path of it.

Here we were to stay for the night. Steping in the open, we

were in the midst of the whirling dust bowl, so we called it, and believe me it was h----. I slept with my driving glasses made especially for dust and in my sleeping bag.

We all hoped that we didn't have to stay here long, as it was suppose to be the last day of the tour.

Great news came and it was for a move out of this horrible spot. We traveled further down near the great city of Marseille, France.

CHAPTER VIII.

On July 2, 1945, the battalion stopped at another open field, not nearly as large as the one in Arles Staging Area, but large enough to put in the battalions for awhile.

The old man soon gave us the exact spot for our row of tents and we spent no time getting them up. The next thing we did was dig latrines, set up the mortar pool and fence the area. We then called it the 284th Area and that - it was called too. It stayed with that name for ever, at least until I left France.

This place was in Gignac, France, about 10 miles away from Marseille. The next great news we recieved was that we were to stay here for a while and work around and at the Calas Staging Area where troupes would pull in and leave for overseas again. Most of them for the Pacific or C. B. I. and not many to the states. So we took our chances here, until the war with Japan was ended.

We were also assigned to the 521 Engr. depot. It's about the size of Fall River here cut into 8 large zones.

Each zone having it's one group of items, one for point, another for hardware, etc. No. 8, especially for just lumber. Here I worked most of the time and more activity went on here then any other place at the depot.

We would draw our P.W's from the depot on the other side of the hill and march them down the street to the zone designated and make them work there 8 hours a day.

They would unload the frieght cars--at least 90 - 100 cars aday of lumber into our trucks. Then we would drive to the stock piles and dump--and the prisoners would stack the lumber in neat piles. This went on everday except Saturdays and Sundays. We worked 24 hours a day around the clock. For instance, the first day I worked from 8 A.M. to 4 P.M., the second day 4 P.M. to 12 mid-night, the third day 12 mid-night to 8 A.M. We would rotate in this fashion until further notice. All I did was drive.

I was soon transfered to another job and a much better one, hawling supplies down into Marseille at the pier right into the docks for the boat. I drove trailer here for a while, taking down heavy equipment. While on this job I had more time for myself as I worked for only a half dozen hours a day.

It wasn't but two days when we reached Marsaille. Passes were allowed and passed out to us. Most of us eager to see the 2nd biggest city in France were up for one. We were fished for knives and pistols before leaving and had to be dressed properly. I went on the first day and drove as usual. I came back early in order to have supper at camp, - later to return for the men some time in around eleven. It was ten when I got to the meeting place and still had a little time before all the fellows were to be there so I walked around the block to kill time.

Turning the corner I heard a few shots being fired in my direction. I eventually got to ducking away. I got into a door-way looked around and saw a fellow hit the ground. First I figured him to be ducking the fire and was on my way again, but suddenly I heard him calling for help. He had been hurt so I ran to him, He was one of our boys which had been shot through one leg. I picked him up and got back to the other side where I cared for him and later got him

to the hospital.

Our boys over this got into a "brawl" and cleaned out the whole block. We were warned about the trouble later at camp the next day.

I didn't get to town the next day or the day after. Later that week, I was fortunate to receive a pass and this time I went to another place called "Toulon, France." Toulon was the city where the French scuttled their fleet at the opening of the war. This town was an historical place and a very old one with market places out in the middle of the streets and people walking home with armfuls of fish, as one here would carry wood. Transportation here was like else-where, slow and poor.

The same day that I visited this here town and returning that night we had to pass through Marseille. We ran into a jamboree which soon we learned that two fellows of our outfit were killed by mistake just a few minutes from getting back to camp. This day I won't forget so easily because it happen to be the best lad we had in the Co., and the handsomest, and one of the youngest. A golly fellow he was. He was a great loss to us and going through combat without being hurt or scratched--having to go that way with a 30 caliber coming out between the eyes. The boy was from Boston too. The other fellow which got it too, was from B. Co. He lasted till he arrived at the hospital and failed. These boys didn't have anything to do with the argument either, - others got hurt.

We looked around for the negro which did the shooting, but failed in finding him. I guess if we had have found him, his parents would have had to pull down one star out of his window, for he would be feed to the dogs. He was court-martial and how he made out I never found out.

It was but the next morning and a call came through stating that one of B. Co.'s fellow who at the present moment was to be at his guard post-left without proper authority and with a jeep loaded with munition. He left for Marseille to where this negro was stationed and held. His intentions was to kill at first sight-but he was stopped on the road just before getting their. I guess his officer got wind of it and relayed the message to the Military Police and had him stopped. Incidentally, the B. Co. boy who died was his best pal--so you can see what set this guy like this. He was later court-martial and punished.

After these two day incidents we -- the whole of 284th were restricted from Marseille for quite some time. The only way I could get in was on business. I drove on detail and had more of an opportunity so at times I would pick up rations for the fellows and deliver them. This was done only for my best friends.

CHAPTER IX.

One change here at this new place of ours was that our food was a bit better and more of it was on hand. We received better news now saying that we were to stay here for awhile and to work up on the staging area and E.-521 Engr. Depot. This was exciting news, because we reared leaving for the Pacific or C. B. I. as the other outfits were doing daily. On my trips down with supply to the pier, I would wish the boys a "happy voyage and good luck." I could see the unenjoyable feeling on their eyes when leaving port. I didn't want to leave if it were for the good old states.

Because of staying now we drew loads of lumber from the depot and built floors for our tents, so to keep out most of the dust. Later we built a long and good size Mess Hall. I personally painted a big sign with our outfit number and company on it with a hugh looking bulldozer pushing back a big pile of dirt. The bulldozer being the 284th and the dirt being the Krouts.

Later we set up so that each tent had a light. The fortunate
Lights were

ones, not all--but most of them had radios, which we manage to apprehend some time or other in our collections here and there. I am not mentioning where!

An old "Jerry" generator provided the "juice", for the electric. It worked perfectly, too.

Our latrine was at the other end by itself and made with the utmost care so for the comfort of the fellows. It had enough room for quite a few of use and without being crowded. No showers of course, but considering it was comfortable. Literature was always within reach. Each company had its own latrine.

Now for showers, one had to prepare for a hike which was a bit away from camp. With soap, towel and fresh clothes, we would go up to the side of the mountain and catch the water running down. This way we would wash off the dust and refresh ourselves regularly. This was good during summer--but in winter it was different. We finally recieved a machine that heated the water as it ran. We would shower this way, but still out in the open, only with a tent to cover us. We managed.!

Little by little, we put in walks up and down the area and built a big out-door stage in which we held out door movies and stage shows. We also built a basket ball court--3 horseshoe courts--a Co. P. X. and a parking area. It was then known by everyone around as the 284th Cngr. Com. Bn. Area--one of the best around.

Our next big job was to build a good size "Quartermaster Bakery" for the Delta Base Section in which we belonged to. We were given this job due to past effectionacy in excitent workmanship. We looked the job over and talked things over abit. We had the project completed in one week. The building was 50' wide x 200' long and 15' high at crown peak, with two wing sections from mid centers on both sides measuring, 50' long x 25' wide, 15' at its peak. The other adjoining section opposite this one measures 25' long x 10' feet wide and 8' feet high, flat roof. What really took time, was laying in cement for the floor and foundation. We also with this, constructed 3 sheds, one 200' long and 15' high with a slight slope, another at 100' long with the same height, another 75' long with the same height. One platform standing 4 feet high from the ground strong enough to hold 3 big walk-in refriation coolers about 12' x 15' in at the other end of the field making the job complete. I worked on this job from beging to end and pulled in more than 25 loads of dirt a day. We also had a couple hundred P.W.'s with us on this job.

Our next job was to winterize the Staging Area for the winter. At its full peak the Area held about 75,000 troupes. The Battalion had it divided up into sections, so that we had a nice part of it and our average each day was winterizing about 1000 tents a day until our quota was finished. This seems imposible, but it was done and I was there to witness the job. Each platoon had fifty or more P.W.'s and each their job to do. All lumber was cut to size and all was to be assembly and set--placing into position. It's still hard work, but it was done. Some of them were on saws, others nailed, others assembled and the G. I.'s supervised the job.

This job didn't last long until before the next thing we knew, we were assigned to another. We ripped an old road, and rebuilt it over. This time with an hard finish.

We had but short time for this job and started on it quick. Everytime a new job came in, I was on the starting list. I houled tar mix for a week and after every load had my truck clean with cleaner by the P. W.'s. I wanted to give them something to do. I never left them idle a bit. I made my usual stops at the area around for coffee and donuts that were there for the boys, and soon un my sleep saw donuts rolling over the fence, instead of sheep.

During all this time back at the 284th area, the first 3 tents which belonged to H. & S. Co. with all the contents burned to the ground.

This was sometime on the 20th of July 1945.

CHAPTER X.

Now on the 25th of August 1945, we had an officer and quite a few men from our company transferred to the 360th Engr. General Service Regiment stationed in the Calcs Area. This outfit was scheduled to leave France for the Pacific through the States after a short furlough there.

I was hoping to be one of the men to be transferred, but according to my point bracket I was left out. I missed the boys very much, so that every opportunity I had, I drove up to see them at the Staging Area. It wasn't long when that outfit was down at the port ready for the boat until by surprise, an order came through, sending the boys back to the area, from there to wait further orders. It was a great disappointment and for some a great relief. Meanwhile just four days from then, Co. A's mess hall burned down completely, with everything in it. This was then a jamboree because we all ate together in our mess hall until a new one was rebuilt. They say: "share and share alike." Well one day I ate from one guy's head and the next day he ate from mine.

It wasn't long from here and another mess hall was set up and once more we were with compact again. Work was but little now and the question was when and where our next job was and where.

At last like a cloud burst, the most unexpected and welcome heap of news came --that the war with Japan was at a stand still and it was as good as over. We were stunned a bit and jumped around and about like crazy people. Now we knew we had a chance of getting home, to loved ones once again. The question now is time--and how were the higher ups going to figure it--by points and how--or by time overseas--or how. It was puzzling and amusing but troublesome. The system finally was fair to some and to others it wasn't. Some would gripe, no matter how it turned out so we always had a laugh. Others had or were having a good time here that it meant nothing to them, but another question of time. To me it couldn't be fast enough to get me back home.

CHAPTER XI.

Shortly after this big and supendice situation, the second group of men were to be transferred in which I was in. We spent no time in preparing for the transfer and soon were over with the others to greet us as they already had wind of the news. I was hoping and wishing that during our assortments into different companies I would be lucky in getting into Co. F... The officers and buddies of that Co. were great pals of mine from the beginning of my Army career.

Surprised and unaware of the insodent, my name was called and I was placed to Co. F., the Company of my desire. I hastenly picked up all of my gear and didn't spend time getting there for I knew where to go.

I later learned that my placing in Co. F. wasn't just a co-incident, but a picking out job. My officer of which my great desire was to be with, had spotted my name on the list and required me as one man for his platoon and Company. I was then in for a pretty good set-up.

Incidently, for further information not mentioned in the past, the 360th had a Football Team and was short of quite a few players. Knowing this I spent but no time getting to the C. P. and signing for a try out with the team.

I watched the bulletin board daily for my approval to the team and in two days I was called for a try out. I had played but little ball and at the try-out, I made 2nd team as a "tackle." Life now was beging to be great in the Army, for it was the first time I was really

enjoying myself.

The whole team staff, of about 30 of us went to live with H. S. Co. to one side with a couple of big tents for ourselves. This place was out of the Staging Area and fenced in for privacy. Food was a big difference here with plenty of it and much better prepared.

Training was an hour calisthenics in the morning--about 3 - 4 hours scrimmage or running plays in the noon after dinner.

We had a very successful and victorious season with 5 wins out of 5 games. Our coach was an all state champion of one of the 48. Very foxy and shruide at that. He new material when he saw it and made it when he didn't have it.

We played football until Thanksgiving and was schedule for a game at Christmas with a Port. Bn. of the same section here. The outcome of this game was another win with a bit of struggle for victory. We came out on top beautifully, with a win which ended the season of well trained boys. I hated to have the season come to a close, for it was great to participate in with a great bunch of swell sports--as every one was. We finally had to seperate from here and go back to our respected Companies.

Soon it was morning--and for another day ahead, we each as before boarded our vehicles headed to our next destination and waved good-bye to another--then rolled away until we were out of sight.

We had a long ride ahead of us, this time knowing where we were going. It was just about a hundred miles away from the starting point and it would take at least two hours.

The country through here was strange looking, with on both sides of us long rows of hills and mountains. It being cold and windy, kept our heads under the blankets we had out for keeping warm.

We made a few unscheduled stops making it late. These stops were miserable for us as we were cold and bitter now. The sun was going out of site behind the mountain--the darkness was setting as we the "sad sacks" in back were told that we were reaching our so called camp to be. By the way, this was in December and we're riding on open trucks.

It was shortly after the message from the sgt. in charge--we reached the camp where we rejoined the boys again that we seperated from way in the beginning. They were living in this good size hotel with windows out and part of it blown away, but just the same it looked welcomed. I was given my room, with only two more fellows to share it with me. I was comfortable here with two fire-places in this room to help break the dampness in the mornings. From the windows and looking out I could see most of the Mediterranean Sea and at a very clear day, I was told by the French people here that one could even see the island of "Corsica".

CHAPTER XII.

I was here but a few days when I was called down and assigned to driving the jeep for my officer who was one of my best friends. He started as my sgt. and was given an officer's commission during the time of war. He was a very decent soldier and well liked by all. It was always fair play with him and always a man of alertness. We both at one time received the Bronze Star Medal for a bridge built by our company in Germany. He supervised that job and I volunteered to help that day. As for my opinion he was tops and with this great buddy I would follow him through anything.

I had it nice and easy while I drove for him,--worked with him,--soon being made a sgt. by his recommendation. I wanted to remain a T/5, for it was a great deal less responsibility, but, as he intended for quite some time, as one of his greatest desires, I was made a sgt. and being told to "shut up."

He was just good and not just to me, or a few, but to all who

came in contact with him. His name and I am proud to mention is, Lt. Dyke D. Pou Jr. of Greenville, South Carolina.

Upon receiving my rating, I was then reassigned to the log detail. By the way, for your own information--here in St. Rapheal the Companies assignment was to cut logs at designated sizes, then haul down into the saw mills here. These logs were then cut into boards and loaded on trucks once again and from here hauled down by convoy with armed guards to the city of Marseille. All work was being done by P. W.'s and supervised by the G. I.'s over them--we four sgts. would take over the project under the officer in charge. We had to meet a quota and it had to be put out daily. It was hard work and tough going many a time.

My-self with seventy-five P. W.'s, a handful of G. I.'s and about a dozen trucks with drivers, were all assigned with this log detail in the woods, cutting and felling these trees. Once in awhile a man would get hurt but we never had a serious case with us. I also had a partner with the same rating as I with me. His name was Sgt. Hickson and was another swell guy too. We bunked in the same room back in the hotel together with one of our truck drivers making it a swell trio.

We had one week we were hauling for record. When we finished we fell and cut enough to sum up 1,500 logs for one day, making it twice as many as our quota called for. We were all granted a week end plus two days extra time off for splended work. I waited to take my time off at Christmas and it lasted till New Years with talking the officer into a couple more days and we were granted them.

CHAPTER XIII.

I stayed at St. Rapheal for Christmas where I attended a Christmas party and enjoyed it too. I went to Nice, France with a few of the fellows for New Years. Here I enjoyed myself even more. We took into the G. I.'s nite spots here,--watched stages shows--a great dramatized act on the stage of the famous Red Cross at Nice.

I had stayed in Nice at least three whole days, having a grand time because here we could walk the streets without ties, hats and with rolled sleeves. It was called the G. I.'s paradise and a resting center for us. No officers were admitted in Nice, except on business, and if one was on the streets we were not obliged to salute him. It was the closest place to heaven on this side of the sea. Here in Nice I went on tours looking over the great palace of "Monte Carlo" from the mountain on a bus and from the sea in a boat. It was a pretty site at nite with all its lights lit up.

The weather and climate here is wonderful being similar to the same as of Florida. I was greatly surprised to discover that many of the people here in Nice could speak our language well. I soon learned later it was because Nice was one place where all sorts of people, from all over the world came for the summer as for a well spent vacation. It was one of the greatest summer resorting place around there. Naturally, the people learning different languages.

Well like everything else,--all good things must come to an end and so it did. It was our last day here and we were to prepare to leave for camp early the next morning. As it was, it only cost me \$3.50 for room and board for four days - 3 good size meals every day on nice white sheets over the table - women serving the meals and an orchestra playing during dinner hour. I was completely satisfied with my pass and so were the others with me, that we hated so much to leave.

Later the next hour or so, we rejoined our buddies at camp, only to tell them of our splended stay at Nice. It was a bit strange getting back to work after a few days of "leasure". I soon was at full stride again with much more ability, for I then heard of the men with points as low as of my category, were getting ready to leave for shipment home.

Till that time I had 49 points and was expecting a callsoon. A bulletin came through not long after this news of such happening were talked about -- stating that we get ready and be prepared to leave within the next morning. I always kept my gear in order so I could be ready right then and there. I helped others and went around bidding good-bye to the others who were staying.

That night I couldn't sleep well with this on my mind - me leaving just in a matter of a few hours for my first step on my way home. It went on this way until I saw the break of dawn come up and then morning. I was up early to gather my gear so that I was first and not to be left. We were by this time now finished with chow and boarding the trucks to take us back to Marseille. The gang staying behind waved broken heartedly to us as we moved away and we with the exact feeling to them. Soon we were out of site.

CHAPTER XIV.

The drivers taking us into Marseille got lost for an hour or so on the back roads.

Later after getting back on the right road they just missed a couple of trees giving us the scare of our lives. For a moment we thought we would never reach Marseille, but with hope and faith we arrived safely only by a miracle.

Here we were put into groups and placed in different barracks for a few days. We were then separated again in order of the point system used as always - called out by our names. We boarded the trucks and then left to another place in Marseille. We were then placed into an outfit which we were to go sailing back to the states with.

We were then told here that we were not to have guard duties to perform and no K. P. here in this area. This then was a great bit of news for it was tiresome on guard duties.

We were then processed here in two days time and after being processed we could be allowed passes, if we desired, out to town. Soon after being processed we were told to stay around as close as possible due to expectation of leaving sooner than we expected. It was true for only a day afterward we were again loading, only this time on coaches - 5th Class. Some of these coaches were in very tough shape and were only wishing that I would get into a half decent one, -- I did!

After I was set in this train coach I recieved the last seat near the door with my friend beside me and my other two opposite me-- we all facing each other. We were to ride this uncomfortable 2 x 4^s for a five day ride to La. Harve, France.

Before we moved along I got out of the car and looked for a few pieces of boards which if I could find - I would rig up over my seat in the car a bed and sleep for the night while riding. This way giving the other two fellows more room down below. Of course the guy beside me slept up on top with me.

It was crowded just sitting down in the car, so you could imagine how it would be at nite when we were all asleep. After setting this so call G. I. pullman of ours, we then waited to start rolling. Meanwhile, looking out the window I noticed that I wasn't the only fellow with the brilliant idea and before I knew it - the whole gang in my car was out looking for lumber. Near by the train yard a fence was constructed there and not long after all this activity was going on, then at my next glance around the fence seem to disappear. It was like magic in the air.

A while after watching all of this going on - the whistle blew a few times for a warning and off with a jerk we started.

I was a squad leader and with my cpl. we were in charge of that car. While the car was moving and we all set in our places, I passed out the rations which I had recieved in the earlier part of the day,

to the men. It being 10 & 1 ration, I gave each group of five men one section to split among themselves. It turned out wonderful and I had their full cooperation. It made it easier for me also and every opportunity I had, I tried and got more rations for the guys.

That first night was the horrors, sleeping on these boards and again so close to the ceiling of the car. I would forget myself and try to sit up, then bang my head on the ceiling and this happened several times.

During the night it was cold, for it was then in January and we were moving north all the time. This train made several stops, I guess to wait on other trains to pass and sometimes these stops were for hours. We were on an unschedule run, so we hadn't priority. On these stops we would dismount and start fires of scrap wood to cook, and warm coffee. It was terrible and very uncomfortable all the way.

We were out riding for three days when we finally came within sight of Paris and stopped just outside of it. For a minute it seemed as though we were going to stop in it for a while, but it was only to change engines and off we went until we were away from the city.

During this trip I played many a card game until I cared not look at cards any more for awhile. The weather was really getting much colder with little snow on the ground. It was only a few miles to La-Harve now and we started packing some of our gear only to be less to do in the end. For awhile I rode up with the engineer of the engine and watched him operate the controls. One would believe it to be cold in that open cab where he stays, but you would be wrong for it was plenty warm.

Five days past--we were due in at La-Harve and when we did--it was mid-nite. It was just a coincidence, for I reached here in La-Harve just the same time of nite, exactly sixteen months ago from England. We dismounted, only again as usual to wait in formation until transportation arrived. After a good wait and tired like a bunch of sad sacks, the trucks arrived. It looked for a moment that we were going to sleep there on the ground of the train station.

We boarded these trailer trucks and after all were set, we started in convoy fashion to Camp Philip Morris. These trucks were driven by German P. W.'s and didn't hurry getting us up to our area in camp at all. It didn't stay this way too long, for the boys were desperate now and activities soon seemed to move faster. Upon reaching the entrance of the camp, it looked very becoming and comfortable, until as we penetrated deeper into this camp, we soon had different opinion about the place. It seemed the further in we traveled, the worst it looked. We finally stopped--dismounted and lined up quickly so to be placed by our tents and get some sleep. Our outfit must of had about a half dozen rows of tents. Some of these tents had wires running through the tops for electric lights, but no bulbs were in sight. I went to check on this and soon after reconnoitering the area I completed my mission successfully. I had picked up a couple of bulbs. That first nights stay in these tents were the coldest yet and horrible. The next day we recieved more blankets and a stove for our convenience.

Processing started now for until we finished and the sooner the better for us. It meant that our officers would put our outfit in to Camp Headquarters as complete, then we were put on the list for a boat. Just for our sake, the processing was complete in two and a half days without difficult. While waiting shipment back to the states now, we visited the Red Cross several times along with the Special Service Club. We took into the shows, not missing a new one, and hoping anytime now that some call would come through for us. It happened one afternoon when I and a few of my friends were in this show watching the picture--a call came calling all men from our outfit back to the area. We formed in short order just after the call and were told that the next day we were to board ship. I was never so happy in a long time. For the remaining of the day, I packed my gear just leaving my sleeping gear for the night. This same night I went for the last

time to the Service Club and later to a show. I didn't sleep much this night with the excitement and it seemed so long and dreary.

Finally the break of dawn came and breakfast was served. Later in the fore-noon we were again lined waiting by the side of the road for the trucks once again. Now for the first time of all I saw the port of La-Harve in the day light. The same floating pier with which we debarked onto the port was still here. This time we loaded from this same pier onto the ship. This same day we saw the French war brides boarding the ship next to ours. These women seemed to be as happy as we were. We left the same day and moved out very slowly.

CHAPTER XV.

There were still sunken ships lying on the bottom of the port and around the break waters that I saw on my way in. A while later as we waved to the people along the way, we soon got out of sight. The next question was how long was the trip to take? Where were we to dock? It was puzzling as before. I was on K. P. about three times during the trip and in the officers mess at that. I was officers mess sgt. and never went hungry while in this job. I had ten men working with me and a swell crew at that. Some of these men were in my squad to start with so I didn't have to push them at all. I fixed it so we had nothing but the best of hours and chow--plenty of it. Between meals we played cards with the officers. This trip was a very rough one as far as riding was concerned. We came through the Northern route and broke ice for twenty four hours one time. It was very cold out this day with a very strange site of huge pieces of ice floating on the water. Some of these pieces were big enough to hold a good size house on it and keep it a above water. The next site was the birds flying around and it meant that we were getting close to land. It was soon when we new we were traveling along the shores, out a few miles and were heading for New York. The next day we sight land. It was at the break of dawn when we did. The ship stayed out with its engines stoped until later at six A. M. a pilot came to take in the ship.

The motors again started, the ship began to move, and this time it was a matter of hours soon for us to set foot on good U. S. soil. The feeling in us was becoming greater now. As we neared the island (Staten Island), a smaller ship came toward us, and as he got closer we heard and saw a band on the roof of it's cabin playing and singing to welcome us home. This was it, some couldn't hold out much more and began to wet their eyes with joy. There was a little breeze to make it just a bit cool and so that we wore overcoats. Later that noon it warmed up some while the sun was out.

Unloading of the ship began at noon and we were not to leave until about four or five o'clock. Evidently the troops had to eat and our outfit being schedule for that day on K. P. made it hard on us and in very short order we made for the mess hall in the ship. We served a quick dinner and hurried in cleaning the place for the final inspection. It didn't take long for now we could see ourselves back to civilization. We spent the rest of our time that afternoon on deck of the ship watching different ships come and go out. We also watched people crowd to the gate to see if some of their boys had arrived. It wasn't long then when the signal was given for us--our outfit to form and by name and number we were headed down the gang plank. The officer down at the foot of the gang plank would call out our last name and we in reply called out our first, but this time the boys sounded off so loud that you could hear them for miles. As we walked off the plank, we formed over to the side a little until the whole group had disembarked. During the unloading the Red Cross women were passing out as the usual combination, their coffee and donuts, -- plus one great factor. This in my opinion was the best

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yet and it was my first glass of fresh milk which I had never had in all my time overseas. It tasted so good and holdsome that I asked for a refill and had no trouble in getting my desire. We stayed here but only a little while, then soon we marched over to the train. This time the trains were much better than those over there. Yes a great deal better. We were on our way.

CHAPTER XVI.

The train here moved much faster now and we knew that we were to go right to Camp Kilmer, N. J.. It was only a short ride, but on the way we saw most of New York City and people that spoke the same language we did. Now it would take more than a cannon to send us back from where we had just came from.

We were headed toward home and going the other way where boys of least experience headed toward overseas. I felt bad for them as I know what it was like. It was March 22, 1946 when we reached the states here just making it seventeen complete months to the day. Well it wasn't too long when we came within sight of Camp Kilmer. We could see now that we were in the states for sure now for the trucks were already waiting for us instead of us waiting for them. What a break -- we needed the trucks for our luggage, for we had plenty of it. From here we walked up the road to the theater where we recieved a bit of dope in how to become civilians once again. We stayed here listening to lectures about a whole hour and it was starting to get tiresome, then it really ended. Our next move from here was to walk over to our barracks assigned to us. When we reached here at the barracks we were given our places and a big chow ticket.

Now this here ticket entitled every man who had one to a big steak dinner. It the first one in a long while. Believe me when I say it was some thing out of this world. This chow was the very best I recieved in all of my Army career and with seconds and thirds and more if we could go it. To tell the truth I went as much as thirds. When I came out of the mess hall I was fit to lay down and rest for the remaining day. I didn't realize that the Army could so much as pass out such a magnificent platter of chow. I guess everyone was completely satisfied and this was the first time I did see all men being satisfied at any one time. From here we returned back to our barracks and made our beds so to sleep for the night. I went to the show that night and to the Service Club also.

The next morning the outfit broke up. Part of us seperated for Camp Devens, Mass., and the others to different sections of the country. I once again said good-bye to the rest of the boys and boarded a train for Camp Devens with quite a few more. We rode for a good seven or eight hours until we arrived at good old Camp Devens, Mass.

The last time I saw this camp was when I was drafted and started from here. Now I was going to be discharged from this same place. We reached here in Camp Devens a few minutes before midnight -- very sleepy and tired. Again as usual we formed out at the roadside until the train was unloaded and gone. We marched up the road into a building where we once more recieved more orders and dope of the manner in discharging we men. This time we didn't waste time and started right then and there at mid-nite processessing. This was Saturday night and we worked to Sunday morning going through this processing. We went to bed about six after getting a little chow and didn't have to do anything until Monday.

Not having to do anything this next day I and a couple of my buddies planned to go home without passes and took off. We made the gate and with a little of our technique we were out of the camp area without the least trouble. We got a ride in to Boston and from here

I got on the bus for home. Before we three departed we agreed to meet at a certain place early the next morning. On my way home the bus couldn't go fast enough. I soon saw the most desirable sight when I set eyes on good ole "Fall River" when we rode along the Taunton River on Summerset side. It was a few moments when the bus crossed the bridge into Fall River and up toward the center of the city. When I reached the center I couldn't wait for the bus so I walked home. Minutes later I was walking up the stairs to the house and opened the door when I saw my mother. My mother stayed dazed for a while, then with a little cry came running toward me, and me toward her, we met, and from here on you can figure it out for yourself.

I didn't spend much time here for I had to leave early the next morning for camp so not to be late. I got the bus back to Park Square and a sub way back to North Station. From here we went by train to camp and were there with a hour to spare.

We went through processing for the next two days. Here we recieved better clothes, had the discharged labels sewed to all of our clothes and fitted them for size. We went through more lectures just before closing of processing and finally for the final events we recieved our pay, then it was for the gravy. I entered this large room where I was seated with a great deal more fellows to recieve our discharge. It was just like recieving diplomas back at school, but in this case it meant much more to us. This exercise lasted but a short time along with a farewell message given to us from the camp's commander and good luck, etc. From here I was on my way to find a new way to life, -- a better one -- and one of peace and freedom of which I and a great deal more buddies and friends, no matter what religion or race have given to the world.

THE END

IN MEMORIAM

We were fortunate for almost the entire time we spent in the Army; for the simple reason we suffered very few fatalities. We completed many miles of travel and hours of combat and pulled through without the loss of life. After setting this sort of a record, we recieved one casualty in our misth in the city of Marseille, France, in the passing of P.F.C. Robert S. Larsen, of Boston, Mass. As I said before -- this soldier was one of the best and in his passing, we lost a fine, and grand G. I. -- to his family they lost both a son and brother of the best. Bob's ever-ready smile was contagious; his cooperation was inspirational. He was and will be sadly missed by all who came to know and acquainted his friendship. May the soil rest lightly on his grave.