

European Odyssey

October 1944 - June 1945

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Company A, 398th Infantry
100th Infantry Division

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Introduction

This rather abbreviated and stuttering account of my life en route to and in Europe as one member of the 1st Platoon, A Company, 398th Infantry Regiment, 100th Infantry Division, draws primarily from my memory. This rather fragile receptacle has benefitted from conversation and correspondence with old Army buddies over the years. The account is generally chronological but pauses now and then to amplify elements of my existence which might merit a more detailed examination.

Interspersed at points I consider appropriate will be found short descriptive passages written during the period 1946-1949. They are included because they add some flavor to the commentary. Also, reference is made to or quotes are drawn from the division histories of the 3rd and 103rd Infantry Divisions which shared geography, mission, and experience with us. I refer you to these fuller accounts as well as to the written histories of the 398th Infantry Regiment and the 100th Infantry Division.

I

The train ride from Fort Bragg, NC, to Camp Kilmer, NJ, right outside New Brunswick, NJ, was by Pullman and troop train sleeping car. Our platoon drew a Pullman and, as I lost a coin toss, I had to share a lower berth with Denny Raymer. I think "Abie" Thornton drew the favored spot above. I can imagine the time was spent in card and dice games, but I cannot recollect exactly what went on. Weather was fine and our train passed other railroad flat cars loaded with a division's impedimenta - vehicles, artillery, trailers, guns, etc. Each flat car also held a few GI's who were riding shotgun on their cargoes.

Camp Kilmer was laid out in much the same fashion as all Army camps but its specific role as a staging area for POE (Port of Embarkation) meant more buildings and less drill and parade ground area. Mess halls were set up to feed multitudes, not as at Fort Bragg where each company or battery had its own mess.

While at Camp Kilmer we had a chance to get into New York on pass a few times. The bus from camp led right into Manhattan. I remember Beefsteak Charley's on 7th Avenue and an interesting spot across from Madison Square Garden that featured around-the-clock entertainment above and behind the bar. I remember seeing the stage play, "Life with Father" at the Empire Theater, going to Radio City Music Hall to see the Rockettes, and having lunch with "Abie" Thornton at the Grill Room of the Hotel Taft to hear Vincent Lopez do his regular radio broadcast. We also went up to the top of the Empire State Building to gawk over the city.

I remember one 24 hour period when I was on guard duty at Camp Kilmer, also. It involved walking a stretch of the perimeter fence between entry gates which were manned by regular camp MP's. During the day, I could also listen to a World Series game which was broadcast throughout the camp over loudspeakers. In the late evening, the walk was lonelier. The perimeter fence paralleled a highway outside the camp, and dipped, near an entry gate, into a marshy area where a creek ran under the fence. Late that night, I heard some stirring in that area and I flushed a fellow who was trying to get into the camp the "wet" way. I put a round in the rifle chamber (we had been issued live ammunition) and told the fellow to go back out on the road and enter the camp the regular way. He heard my bolt snick and so assured me he would do just that. He clambered out of the ditch unto the shoulder of the road and walked up to the nearby gate. I don't know what happened to him after that.

Last moments at Camp Kilmer before moving to ships was taken up with packing again, getting a last "short arm," and being issued a second mattress cover (they're now called body bags) to include in our duffle bags. We took the train to Jersey City, NJ, walked

$\frac{1}{4}$ mile to the Communipaw Avenue ferry slip and ferried to a dock in midtown Manhattan where our ship was docked. We marched on to the ferry's vehicle deck, with full field packs, carrying M-1 rifles, AND duffle bag! What a load. We just sat down on the deck in place on our short voyage to Manhattan. Our ferry boat ride took place in the dark and we disembarked on a dimly lighted dock, the ship's side forming a dull gray barrier to our view of the night water. I'm not sure whether there were Red Cross types with goodies there or not. Probably not. Then we were checked off by name and clamored up the steep gangway into the ship. The 103rd Division history tells it well:

A yapping pack of guides took over, herding the panting troops (hurry up, hurry up!) along decks, through bulkheads, down companionways, down ladders, down, down, down. Last of the shooting party was a perspiring Second Lieutenant in the bowels of the transport.

"Throw your stuff on that bunk and get in with it. GET IN WITH IT! All right, next man!"

So this was a troop transport! Wedged tighter than a sardine in his bunk, his unfastened pack forcing him sideways, his legs tangled up with his duffle bag, his rifle and his overcoat, the doughboy craned his neck and looked around. A forest of bunks -- canvas threaded to a steel frame -- on four tiers. The lower bunk scraped the deck, the top hugged the ventilating tubes. Aisles between bunks so narrow that one man had to walk on the bias. Two men passing had to right angle and squeeze by. Storage space -- none. The duffle and pack and rifle would be permanent bed companions. Then there was the smell. Sort of a dry, musty B.O. The doughboy didn't know yet it would get worse. Seasickness and the greasy residue of salt water showers. Somewhere beyond the steel wall (in a couple of days he'd be calling it a bulkhead) he could hear the clanking of machinery.¹

I remember a pervading odor of diesel oil and exhaust even at dock-side. I think we were lucky where we were in the bowels of the ship because our bunks were in an area where there had been a hatch overhead. So we had more air space overhead. Our ship was the USS General William H. Gordon, a troop transport operated by the US Coast Guard with a Navy gun crew. This ship, by the way, was at Willamette Iron and Steel for a refit in the early 1950's.

¹ Mueller & Turk, Report After Action: The Story of the 103rd Infantry Division, p. 15.

The 103rd Division was a part of our convoy and their history describes the rough voyage. I remember being out on deck as we passed the darkened Statue of Liberty. Shortly after, we heard the "All troops lay below," on the loudspeaker. This was to be the regular call at dusk while under way.

We were fed two times a day. We formed long lines that snaked along the passageways. We ate standing up at waist high narrow counters. Food was Army-Navy institutional. We gathered at regular intervals for calisthenics on the deck and brief meetings of one sort or another. We noted that officers were housed in cabins with bunks and sheets! They also had a mess hall complete with waiters and table cloths. When the weather was good, we spent time on deck, always with our rubber inflatable belts, used as life-vests. They were inflated by two CO₂ cartridges, and one low comedy routine was to sneak up on some unsuspecting buddy and squeeze the appropriate spot on the belt to puncture the cartridges and blow up his belt. I also remember one poor lad in the battalion who was very "goosy." His buddies chased him up a mast with a broom to his backside!

The heads were at the bow of the ship and so using a seat was a gymnastic feat when weather was rough. Showers were salt water and one wound up feeling gummy rather than clean.

Days were spent in the chow line, meeting any unit calls to PE or lecture, watching the horizon go up and down, and generally chinning with buddies. There was a ship newspaper which was distributed at intervals with the late world news. We had to "lay below" at dusk and there was little to do when in the bunk area except sleep and chin.

The convoy was made up of about eleven ships. This included a small flat top which was ferrying planes to Europe. We had some 2 to 3 destroyer escorts along as well. The 103rd Division history mentions the following ships: General Brooks, Monticello, Santa Maria, Moormac Moon. The 100th Division history notes: George Washington, William H. Gordon, McAndrews, and Mooremac Moon. It also stated that the convoy carried the advance party of the 14th Armored Division as well.

The weather got worse a few days out of New York. Our convoy was headed to the mid Atlantic near the Azores and we found ourselves close to a fall hurricane. Things were not nice for several days. Troops could not go topside. Very few GI's made it to the mess hall. Most stayed close to head or bunk. I was miserable but ate little and lost nothing. The fellow in the bunk below me was SICK! He erupted once and I was heaved on from below!

Things eased off as we neared Africa. It was late in the game when we were informed that the convoy was headed for Marseilles.

I recall the first glimpse of North Africa and the tall radio towers on the dark headland. It was almost dusk, as I recall. This must have been Spanish Morocco. We stayed on deck as long as we were able to catch sight of the Rock of Gibraltar. We saw the lights of Ceuta and finally made out the darkened silhouette of the rock.

The Mediterranean was NOT nice. It blew up a rough sea shortly after we were well into it and the ride north was almost as bad as the hurricane. But I was more acclimated this time and could ride things out with more ease.

We entered the harbor at Marseilles in daylight on October 20, 1944, and moored next to a sunken freighter. The harbor looked battered indeed. We made out the Chateau d'If where the Count of Monte Cristo was imprisoned. We disemarked down the gangway to wooden walkways that had been built across the decks of the sunken ship and on to the harborside. At about that time, Mac, our Platoon Sgt., reminded me that the smoke generators started up to screen our disembarkation from the Jerry plane overhead.

II

We formed up and started out on our march from the dockside to our bivouac area outside of the city. The 100th Division history describes the march thusly:

Orders were that we move immediately to the Delta Base Section Staging Area, some 12 miles from the port and near the town of Septemes. The use of the word "move" was a deceitful misnomer. By the time we reached the huge plateau designated as the Staging Area, we were crawling.

Despite the burden of full-field packs with horse-shoe rolls, overcoats, helmets, rifles, and cartridge belts the first few miles of the "Death March of Marseilles" were interesting to the point of causing us to forget the uphill road. The cosmopolitan aspect of the great city, accentuated by the colorful uniforms of colonial troops, caused even sophisticated New Yorkers to gape in wonder. There were picturesque, beaded curtained bars patronized by turbaned Gurkhas and red-fezzed Sengalese. Dirty little children dogged our footsteps begging "cigarette pour papa" or "chung-gum." Charcoal-burning automobiles coughed up the steep, cobblestone streets to be overtaken by careening, bell-clanging triple trolley cars crammed to bursting

with civilians. Like soldiers the world over, we commented upon the women, taking note of their green, blue, orange, and white tinted hair, whistling softly when we passed a girl with a pretty face or trim figure, comparing them generally with American girls.

But a man even loses interest in women after he has walked ten miles up the side of a mountain with 85 pounds of equipment on his shoulders. It was dark now. From the harbor came the hum of a plane followed by the staccato pumpf of ack-ack. Those were the first shots we had heard fired at an enemy. The war was very real now. Flat-footed, we plodded forward on legs which had turned into knotted rubber bands. Men began to drop back. "Breaks" came more frequently.

Finally, after marching approximately twelve miles, we left the road and cut cross-country over plowed fields. Just as it seemed we could not take another step, the order to break ranks was given.² We had come to the end of the long march...

My memory tells me that the hike out of the harbor area was a real toughy. I remember the beaded curtains over doorways into boites. The cobblestone streets were a steep climb. When we got to the assembly and bivouac areas, we just flopped. I teamed up with Fred Hennig, the company clerk, and we put up our tent in the plowed field with the others. In the early morning, we woke to wet blankets. It had rained in the night and water had coursed down the plowed furrows, right through our tent. Yes, we spent the next morning ditching the tent so that any more rain would be directed away from it. And we tried to dry things out...not easy.

Days were cool. After all, this was late October. The mistral, a cold wind, blew regularly it seemed. Regular routines were soon established. KP was scheduled, guard was pulled, and the area was policed. Extra details were also pulled. Many went into the harbor area to load trucks and DUKW's. I did this once or twice. We hiked in the nearby area and one day, a small Citroen pooping along, ran into the second platoon Lieutenant and nudged him in the back of his legs. He was surprised to say the least.

In the evening, some were able to get passes into nearby towns. The story was that if you went, go armed. So, one night we were able to go into Septemes. I slipped my bayonet in my belt. I recall being approached by a Frenchman and asked something in rather hushed tones. I understood him to be asking the time and so I told him. Later, we agreed that it was one of the many pimps operating. He wasn't interested in the time!

²The Story of the Century, p. 44-45.

We bought and enjoyed almonds and sweet vermouth. What a combination! After one bout, I got the runs!

Church services were held at one end of the bivouac area. Chaplain LeCrone did the Protestant services, the backdrop the pine clad rocky hills of Southern France.

My New Testament, which remained with me throughout this adventure, has a terse notation: "October 24, 1944. 9 a.m. Rainy and cold."

The latrine was dug at another end of the area and was in open view of the road close by where the local inhabitants walked and gossiped as GI's handled their business. Later, a canvas fly was erected around a part of the latrine.

The trip north, begun on October 28, was by rail, about 18-20 men per 40 x 8. We were issued C and K rations for the trip. We made ourselves as comfortable as we could in the box cars and off we went through Aix. The train went in fits and starts. At one point, fellows were returning to their cars by crawling under the train. The train jerked to a start and we soon heard the cry, "Medic!" One fellow lost a leg as the train ran over him. The rail yard at Valence was a scene of destruction. Heaps of cars and equipment were scattered all over the place. Acres and acres of smashed railroad cars, wagons, AA guns, etc. I remember going through Dijon but little else about the area. I do recall seeing many local folk, dressed in Sunday best black, going to church on All Souls day, November 1.

We detrained (if that's a word) soon after and mounted trucks for the drive through Epinal to a wooded area near St. Gorgon. The forest was typically European in that most underbrush was cleared away and trees were growing plantation-style with plenty of distance between trees. We dug in and pitched tents. The weather continued cold and gray with occasional wet times. I remember doing something stupid. I had brought the CO₂ cartridges from the ship with me and one afternoon threw them into the fire. Yes, they blew up with a sharp report!

My role in the platoon was a platoon runner. This meant that I stayed close to the Lieutenant and Platoon Sgt. and took messages to the Company CP or to squads. I carried a "squirt gun," the nickname for a .45 caliber submachine gun that used 10 inch magazines.

Our platoon consisted of 41 men among whom were:

Platoon Leader	2nd Lt. Frank Bell
Platoon Sgt.	T/Sgt. Hugh MacDonald
Platoon Guide	S/Sgt. Freddie Tartaglione

Other buddies included:

Jerry Mulvaney	Harvey Nourse
Bob Norton	Al Taber

Bob Walton	Russ Wolfe
Lloyd Thornton	Peter Gomben
"Muscles" Perciful	Orville Barber
Russ O'Brien	Eddie Skocz
Eddie Smith	Ed Gogolin
John Canavan	E. C. Brown

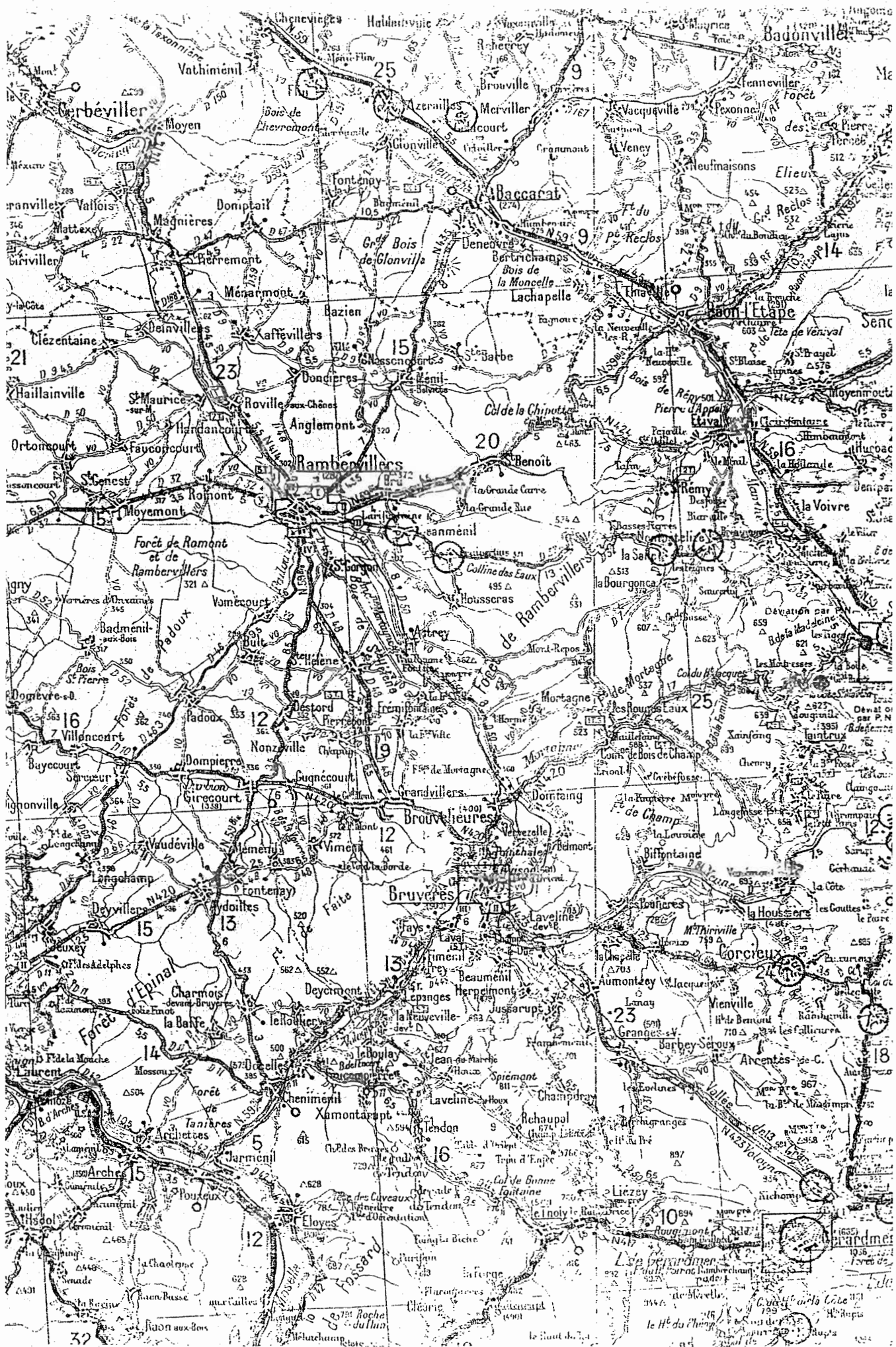
III

Our first move into the lines was to St. Remy in the Bois de Repy. We were to relieve the 2nd Bn., 157th Infantry, 45th Division. They had been in the lines continually from their August 15 landing in Southern France. But before describing this activity, let me digress by quoting from a couple of descriptions of the Vosges Mountains. First, from the 3rd Division history:

The granite massif of the Vosges rises steeply from the Plain of Alsace, lies northeast-southwest, and blocks easy entrance to the Rhine Valley from the west. The Vosges consist of low, generally rounded mountains from 1,000 to 4,000 feet in height, arranged in parallel ridges which individually tend more to the northeast than does the range as a whole.

This is an area of forested mountains forming the southern part of the Vosges chain which lies along the Franco-German frontier and reaches from Belfort in the south to Kaiserslautern in the north. The Saverne Gap divides the High Vosges from its northern extension, the Low Vosges. To the south, the High Vosges terminate abruptly in a series of summits towering above the Belfort Gap.

Average height of the Vosges eastern ridge line is about 3,000 feet, but many summits rise above 4,000 feet, with elevation increasing southward where the highest point is the Grand Ballon (over 4,600 feet), lying northeast of Belfort. The Hohneck, the highest point on the main watershed, rises 4,400 feet just north of Grand Ballon. The long ridge lines are usually flat topped, fairly level, and carry stretches of moor, coarse pasture, and peat bog, as well as large amounts of rock debris. Many granite tors rise above the level surface. The ground drops sharply to the east but slopes more gradually to the west, falling in a series of



plateaus toward the Lorraine Plain.

A feature of the Vosges is its number of valleys. Main valleys stand at right angles to the main ridges and tend to lie northwest on the western side and east or east-northeast on the eastern side. Tributary valleys parallel the ridges, lead far into the range, and terminate in a series of headstreams on the slopes of the main ridges. Valley bottoms within the Vosges itself are sometimes poorly drained and long narrow lakes and swampland areas often result.

In autumn, the evergreens are in sharp contrast with the changing colors of the deciduous trees and the yellow and brown of the stubble fields.

In winter, the reds of the sandstone rocks and some of the granite becomes more noticeable after the forest leaves have fallen. Forests remain green at higher levels, but on the lower slopes browns and russets predominate.

The road net in the Vosges is somewhat constricted by terrain. Main routes often bottleneck in narrow village streets. Sharp turns and steep gradients are common in the Vosges and very winding roads are found in the lake areas near Belfort. Secondary and local roads tend to be narrow and sometimes muddy. In wet weather, they are generally unsuited to military traffic. They are often bordered by ditches or embankments and the crown on old cobbled roads is often so great that vehicles are required to travel at reduced speeds.

Above moderate heights, winters, particularly in the Vosges, may be long and hard, with drastic and sudden changes in temperatures. At all seasons bad weather is more persistent over the mountains than in areas 300-400 miles north because there is a decided tendency for "fronts" to slow up as they approach the Alps barrier; frequently a "front" becomes stationary along the line of the Alps, creating a broad belt of rain and cloud³ over the foothills which lasts for a day or two.

³History of the Third Infantry Division in World War II.
pp. 237-238.

A second quote from "Die Wacht", the German Nineteenth Army newspaper for 9-13-44, says:

Dense clouds hang between the mountains of the lower Vosges. The roads glisten with⁴ rain and the wind sweeps cold over the plains.

Something I wrote after coming home:

A perpetual mist clings to the fir-bordered valley floor. It drizzles quietly through the needled limbs of the pines which cover the surrounding hills. It obscures the hilltops making them appear as pillars supporting the low-hanging, leaden sky. Narrow, winding tarmac roads snake canyon-like along the hillsides through dense forests.

In the small clearings on the valley floor, houses nestle closely together for warmth and protection against the chilling dampness. Small, swift rivers tumble out of the forest's obscurity and make their way hurriedly through the clearings and on down the valleys. On the forested hillsides, thick underbrush springs from the soggy ground. Moss-covered rocks jut angularly from the hillsides. Pines rear their proud heads skyward and lose themselves in the low-hanging mists. Small foresters' trails wind unendingly up the steep slopes and disappear into the green heights above.

Dawn is heralded only by distant noises of human activity emanating from the clustered buildings in the valley. Daylight brings a gradual lightening of the omnipresent gray overcast. The drizzling rain continues to slant downward, indifferent to time of day. Then, as indifferently as it came, the gray, cold day disappears into the settling gloom of night. Cold, gray, and damp; this is approaching winter in the Vosges.

Making our way into this area meant two columns of marchers, one on each side of the narrow tarmac roads, with sufficient distance between soldiers to obviate damage in the event of shelling. We hiked quietly, watching for any potential cover along the sides of the roads in case we needed to dive for it.

⁴Ibid., p. 237.

Everyone was wet from rain and perspiration. Rifles were usually slung muzzle down to keep them a bit drier. And at this point, too, field packs were on the heavier side. We started to shed all but bare necessities as we went along.

The First Platoon made its way into a wooded hillside and, as we approached a crown, we were to dig in along a general line of fire laid out by sergeants and the Lieutenant. The rain came down steadily as we dug 2-3 man slit trenches and tried to cover them with boughs and dirt as protection against tree bursts. Tree bursts occurred when shells hit treetops overhead, exploded, and rained steel shrapnel down on top of one.

The first night in that slit trench with two others (I think, Denny Raymer and another) with water streaming down the sides of the trench and collecting in pools where we sat and more water dripping from the attempt at a roof, was as cold and wet and miserable I ever was up to that point. I thought longingly of a warm bed, of home, of even the barracks at Fort Bragg!

An artillery battery was located in the general vicinity so we listened to 105 fire the whole evening as well.

I remember Col. Leigh, our Battalion commander, coming up to the area and trying to make some contact via radio with either his HQ or the artillery fire center. I recall one loud and irate comment to his listener, "...don't you know that there's a war on?"

We stayed in this area for several days. I don't recall there being any patrol activity or any mortaring or shelling by the Krauts. Life there was cold and wet and miserable. The only rations were K rations and, when one was limited to fires, the drink was water. It was during this time, too, that we were issued shoe pacs, the rubber soled, leather top boot pioneered by L. L. Bean. I also recall trying out the grease gun I carried by firing it into the adjacent woods.

We left this area in the black of night at around November 10 or 11. I had tied my shoe pacs to my field pack but, as it was so dark, we had to hang on to the man in front of us, my shoe pacs were torn off and lost during the hike out. I'm not sure if we hiked the whole way to our next position or got a ride in trucks part of the way. All the time we heard our own artillery firing missions and now and then we were alerted to incoming Kraut shells. We also early on could distinguish between our own machine gun fire (light or heavy) and the higher cyclical rate of the German Maschinengewehr. This we heard from time to time in the distance.

IV

The morning reports for that time tell of our marching some 4 hours to a new area near Etival. Again we were route marching on both sides of the road with scouts on the flanks. Etival lies on the Muerthe River and we approached the area through woods and then out on a narrow road leading across more open fields toward some houses on the edge of the town. Continuing on this road, one came to a more built-up area with roads swinging to the right and to the left. A large barn cum gas station at this crossroad was used by Captain Kiernesky as his company CP.

We entered the first of some houses on the right side of the road and were glad to be dry and warmer for a change. German artillery started in and landed in the general area. I recall a neighboring house toward town receiving a shell and the next day seeing a coffin being taken from the house to a hearse which was accompanied by family members and friends all dressed in mourning.

I was sent down to the company CP to be able to take messages to the platoon. I could hunker down in the hay in the adjacent barn between chores. I did have to stand guard on the road side of the gas station with a couple of others whose identities I don't recall. We were located on the main road and had to challenge patrol activity as it came through. The best part of the job was the bed with a feather tick in the room next to our guard post. This was the most heavenly rest I had had since arriving in France.

After getting home, I wrote:

It was dark. It was that special kind of darkness that drops quite suddenly out of leaden skies and fills every hollow and crack in the land. It was intense, and yet not close and smothering for one breathed easily in it. Fresh night winds sprang from nowhere and passed lightly and refreshingly over one's face. Yet the only sense of guidance was the sound and feel of the ground beneath your feet as you made your halting and uncertain way over unfamiliar terrain. Even the uncertain shuffling of others ahead of you was little beacon, for sounds were swallowed up and whisked away as soon as they were made. The muffled echo of an occasional oath could be heard but you couldn't tell if it emanated from the column ahead of you or from one of the many uncomfortable souls following in your footsteps. What for eighteen hours had been sky was now nothing more than endless walls of a deep, black pit.

Winking matches and glowing cigarettes, appearing at every break, supplanted Polaris and Orion. And as their orbits were consistent only with the depth of the ditches and the width of the tarmac road, they were of doubtful navigational value. Follow the labored breathing of the man ahead of you and let the man behind you do the same. As long as everyone could breathe, the battalion would go on and perhaps arrive, though the point of destination was known only unto the battalion commander's radium compass and a red-streaked map, illumined from time to time by the weak light of a pocket pen torch. One could sense a hill or rise in ground only by the subdued creaking of rifle slings and chafing of canteen on pack as loads were shifted to ease any discomfort in preparation for ascent. And in like manner, an almost unconscious quickening of pace heralded a slow descent. Minutes and hours seemed to race by but only the sudden jolt of your weight supplemented by pack and rifle at each step kept reality at hand.

The wind rose and shyly broke the silence with a soft, high pitched moan as it passed through the pine trees. This, in effect, muffled completely what sounds a myriad marching men can stir. You strained now to catch the beat of raw cord sole on tough, pliant tarmac. Increasingly sharpening gusts fondled your sweat soaked shirt and the ensuing chills edged what mental acuity that still existed, however. Things still compensated, you guessed. Fix your mind on a warm cot. That would ease the dull ache climbing up your legs. Fix your mind on a tall, cold beer. That should amply displace the warm, flat contents of your canteen. Fix your mind on the service club menu. That should satisfy the all to real gnawing 'neath your belt. To hell with the colonel's map. To hell with Polaris. To hell with the 900 others in the battalion. You know what you want. You know what's guiding you. Things do compensate after all.

The low purr of a jeep inching its way between the double columns strung along both sides of the road startled you. It startled even though you and the 900 others constantly wished and hoped for it. Cat eyes glowed dimly and disappeared ahead. Then, a distant shout was quickly carried back from throat to throat. You automatically passed it on to those behind you and shuffled steadily forward until rudely halted by a vicious slap from the angular cold bayonet handle on the pack in front of you. A crude im-

personal oath was flung for any to hear. Effects of the sudden closing up could be heard to your rear, now. Bitter remarks drifted from the other side of the road. They had trouble, too. Amid the dull thuds of rifle butts against tarmac could be discerned the quickened step of a responsible one hurrying down the road distributing vocal orders and information to those willing to listen. Shouts of "First Platoon over here! Second Platoon over here!" and so on injected a bit of life into the entities standing apathetically on the road and caused a general, though unseen, movement in the direction of the voices. Chaos soon degenerated out of comparative order and for several moments the vaunted Army organization seemed destined to defeat before the all-pervading and encompassing darkness.

Soon, flickering matches pointed out stacked K rations and water cans. Later, an almost eternal drowsiness pointed out that most stable of elements and conditions, the earth. The clatter of rifles, the thud of dropped packs served to overture a few hours of sought-after sleep. Enclosed only by darkness and raincoats, you slept as did 900 others. K rations, water, the earth. Well, maybe this will compensate!

Shelling in the general area was intermittent but sufficient to make my every $1\frac{1}{2}$ -2 block trip back to the platoon rather pulse quickening.

Within a day or two, the company was deployed back along the way it came into the wooded area. From there, we traversed right (I still don't know which direction) along some forest trails, past a sawmill. We were high on the wooded slopes of a long ridge line which overlooked the valley, the river, and a few clusters of farm homes and buildings. We were here from roughly November 12-13 to 16.

We dug in quietly, right into the bank of the steep hill some 150-200 feet above a road running along the base of the ridge which was again that distance from the river. A shallow ditch ran alongside the road. This ditch, by the way, was our sole source of water during our stay there. We took turns slipping quietly down the slope, across the road, to the ditch, with several canteens. We made sure this was a silent operation! Our fox holes were protected from above with what limbs we could gather as cutting down smaller trees was too noisy an operation. K rations were again the staple.

The weather turned sour here. It would snow at night so that the

evergreen boughs drooped under the weight of the snow. Then, as the temperature rose during the day, the snow melted and dripped on us continually. It was here that we found it even difficult to take a pee as one had to negotiate trousers, raincoat, long johns, and field jacket. Hence the response to the greeting, "How do you find it?" with "On the end of a string!" Here, too, Sgt. Ed Peschel left us. His story then was that his rheumatism or arthritis caught up with him and he couldn't get out of his fox hole. But Mac said in Washington, D. C., at the reunion I attended that Ed was a big baby and pain and that was why he was evacuated. Wish it would have worked for me!

In this position, patrols went out to make contact with units to the right of us. Sgt. Chavis led one patrol that came back after making no contact. Patrols along narrow forest tracks amid shoulder high brush were no sinecure. At about the same time, fellows wandering in the vicinity of the sawmill encountered a savage and unseen hazard, the "schu mine." This was a small wooden anti-personnel mine about 5" x 7" x 3" that contained no metal parts. Sgt. Celusniac, the Map Sgt., lost his foot there as did Lt. Pittman. We heard that the Jerries were issued these with rations to plant as they withdrew from a position. So, patrolling in the area was not fun.

I remember in the cold and snowy mornings, looking down across the valley to see small dark figures scurrying from one farm building to the other. This scene was recalled for me by Breughel's painting of the hunters. One look at that painting brings to mind all over again our stay on the high ridges overlooking Etival and the Muerthe River.

Mac reminded me that it was on the march to the Etival area that, as the road swung to the right, we saw, in an open area beside the road, a dead Kraut sitting down and leaning back with his hand raised as if to throw a hand grenade.

It was at about this time that the First Platoon was detached to take over for a unit of the 3rd Division on a flank position. We walked for ages through the woods into their spot, along the lower slope of a forested hill. We were in the midst of trees and our line of sight was no more than 25-30 feet in any direction. It was quiet. We did not have to dig as we just moved into their foxholes. I think the 3rd Division boys talked of mortar rounds being thrown in there when they first moved in. We were two men per foxhole and alternated guard duty. That is, one man was awake and one asleep during the night. The night was cold and wet and the only noise was wind through the pine trees. The next morning we checked to make contact with the rest of the unit and found no one else out there! We rejoined the rest of the company later that day.

John Canavan, in a letter to me, says that the two of us went

out scouting to find the rest of the company and that Captain Kiernesky said we deserved the Silver Star for this act of scouting bravery. I don't recall this nor did I feel more than the usual apprehension that goes with such an activity.

We were still living on K rations, the old variety. A small tin of either eggs and ham, pork loaf, or cheese, with a packet of crackers, powdered coffee or lemonade, D bar (cocoa), and a packet of OD toilet paper.

The company morning report says that on November 15 we left the position on the slopes by Clairfontaine (near Etival) and moved on foot about five miles to an area in the Bois de Repy. The next day we moved about seventeen miles by truck and four miles on foot to a new position NE of Bertrichamps. I think it was about here that we were taken in to Baccarat for a hot meal and a movie. This took place in one of the glass factories as there was crushed glass all over the floors of the factory where we were.

V

We moved again about three miles to a position in the Foret du Grand Reclos. Perhaps it was from here that we went into Baccarat for the meal and movie. I don't recall much about this position except when we were leaving it to move closer to La Trouche. This was about the time of Thanksgiving (the new FDR date) and we had been promised turkey and the trimmings. We moved out of our position to where the cooks met us with the old miramite cans and our mess gear. The kitchen kept mess tins as they rattled too much when we carried them and the kitchen cleaned them up between hot meals. We did get to hunker down along the road in the nearby trees to eat turkey dinner. After that, as we approached La Trouche, the Jerries knew where we were and pumped a barrage of shells into us. It was here that Sgt. Malavasi was killed and several others wounded. This must have occurred around November 19.

After our church at home had presented me with a New Testament on December 16, 1943, my Dad reminded me of the promise in Psalms 91. I remember referring to this several times during the ensuing months.

I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: My God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night: nor for the arrow that

flieth by day. Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.

I'm not sure where we spent the night as it seems to me we entered La Trouche in daylight. We approached La Trouche accompanied by artillery fire in the distance. We were in the approach march formation, spread out on both sides of the tarmac road sweeping to the left past a sawmill. It was about here that an M-10 tank destroyer was parked to lend support to the Battalion effort.

La Trouche lay along the Plaine River. Houses were strung along the main road through town which headed northeast. To the east, a large clearing swept up some 4-500 yards to the edge of a forested area which swiftly built into another range of hills. At the NE end of the town between buildings and more wooded area close by road and river, there was an open gap of a few hundred yards. Between the buildings along the main road and the river were walled and fenced yards set below the level of the road. A step further down were a few more houses and then the river.

We entered La Trouche at the end of the day and occupied several houses on the SE side of the road. It was dark but dry and relatively warm. After a while the local inhabitants brought an elderly Frenchman in who had suffered from some shrapnel or mine wounds. Our medic was asked to treat him. The old man lay on the floor in some blankets which had been used as a sort of stretcher to bring him there. He groaned quietly a few times and then lay still. Finally, our medic said he thought the fellow was dead.

Later that evening, while on guard duty outside, we heard the creaking of wagon wheels as they wended their way along forest trails on the steep hillsides to the east. We knew it was Krauts retreating or moving to new positions on the slopes overlooking the town and field to the east. This seemed rather ominous to me.

The next morning was to bring the Battalion assault across the field and our move along the road as flank protection. Artillery and mortar shells began falling in the area. B Company led the attack across the clearing. We started along the road with a four-to-five foot bank rising up on our right before the clearing began. Mortar shells dropped in our area and we started to dig in into the bank. It was about here that we heard Bob Walton had been hit by mortars as he was negotiating the yard area behind houses to our left. Earlier we had made our way through these yards



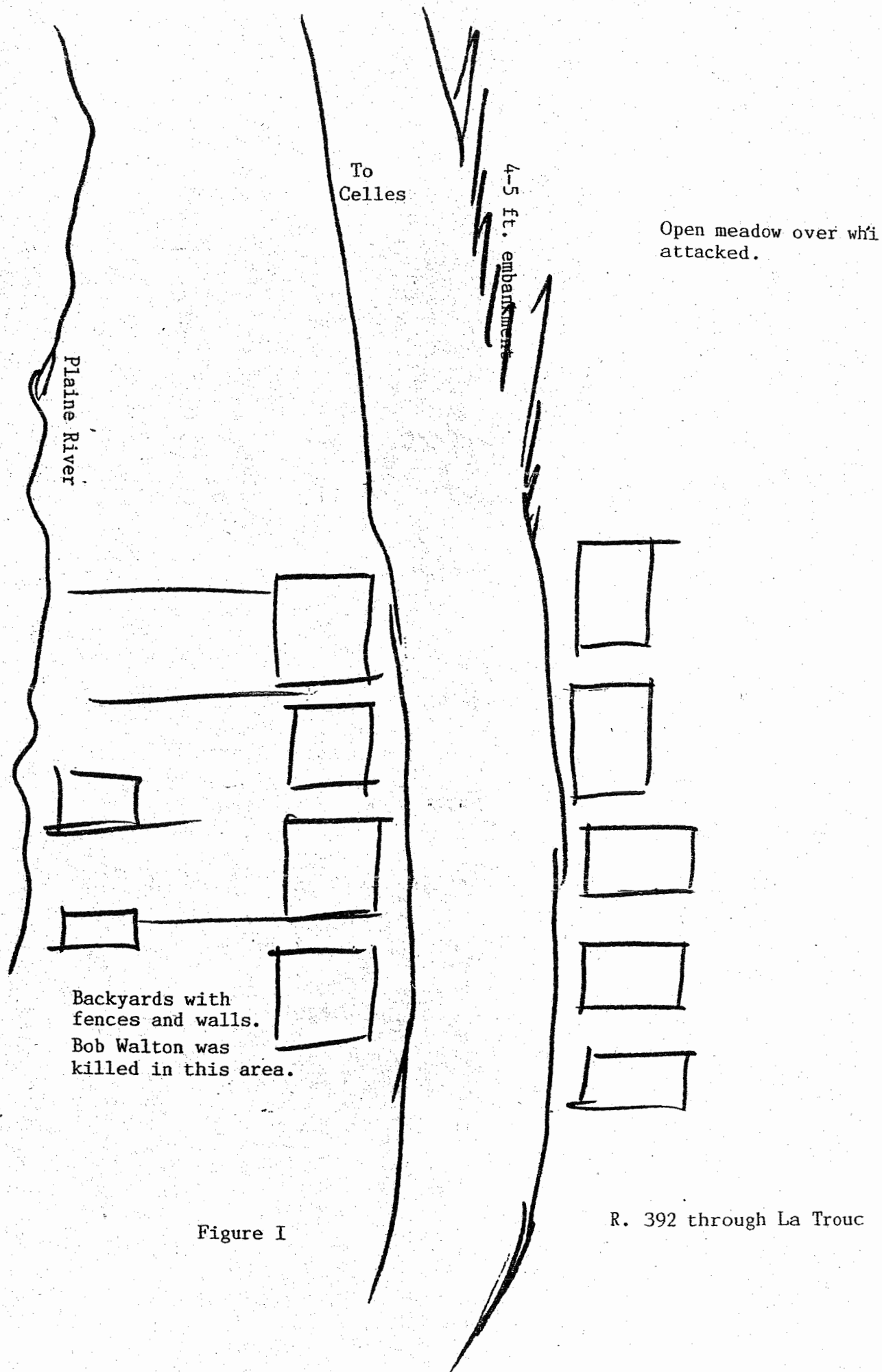


Figure I

and over walls and fences at intervals so as to avoid sniper fire.

After a time, with things banging all around us and B Company getting blitzed above us, we were ordered to withdraw back down the road through the town. There, we moved into a wooded and brushy wide draw that led SE toward the base of those same hills we observed from the town. Our move here was along an indifferent kind of trail and our visibility in any direction was limited. But we received no shelling. We must have been well screened from the Krauts. When we entered a wooded clearing at the base of the ridge of hills, we saw several Krauts being frisked for weapons by the leading elements of our company and then sent back to the town and Company CP with a couple of GI escorts. From here, we started our climb using trails some of the time and going right up through the trees and over rocky outcroppings. Our mission was the top of the hill. At one point we had to negotiate through a patch of timber that had been blown into jackstraws by artillery. This area must have been a couple of acres in size and clambering over stumps and felled trees and limbs was no easy task. But still no sign of Jerry.

After while, some felt that we had reached the military crest and should halt. But the Captain said onward and upward. It was getting darker all the while but no rain was falling. I suppose one reason our twilight came early was our latitude. Hadn't thought of it then. Following along another rudimentary forest trail, we drifted to the left as we climbed. The trail might have been a cattle trail at first because it was a more gradual switch-backing climb than the actual slope of the hillside. All at once, a Kraut machine gun erupted and wildly sprayed in our direction.

Bullets traveling directly overhead have a special sharp crack reminiscent of the infiltration course in basic training. There's no echo there. In addition in this case, splinters of bark and wood showered down where I lay, flat as I could get behind a tree trunk. The firing continued and I sensed that the machine gun was traversing in a limited area. I heard a few shots back and some shouts but was so busy being sure that no part of my body or helmet protruded in a Kraut's line of sight that I didn't notice others who had hit the ground in my area. The firing kept up in short bursts and longer pauses.

It was getting darker and I saw no one or heard no one. Finally, I started to slither down the hillside feet first, being sure that trees and the hill stayed between me and what was going on up there. I heard no one moving. It seemed that hours went by. I was still as frightened as I'd ever been. After being as quiet as I could in my backward descent, I crept into a thicket of brush and curled up, trying to stay hidden and safe. This is the way I spent the night. I didn't bother wrapping myself in my raincoat

because that would have meant taking my pack apart. It grew dark, as dark as I can remember. Now the only sounds were winds soughing in the trees...nothing more. A long night.

When it began to get light, I had a rough idea of where I was and knew that getting down the hills would line me up to try to find the platoon. So, I started down the hill carefully. Once at the bottom of the hill near the spot where we had picked up the Kraut prisoners, I saw some GI's coming from town and in the group I recognized Sgt. Goodlow and the rest of the company. I reported to him and he wanted me to take a message back to the town. Another GI went along. We retraced our steps through the brushy draw and weren't harassed by shelling or mortaring. We delivered the message (to, I believe, Battalion HQ, but I'm not sure). We sat a bit but were ordered to get right back to the Sgt. and so back we went. This time the trail led right up to the area on the NE-side of the ridge where Company A was dug in.

The platoon was dug into the downslope of the massif, deep in the forest still. The platoon CP was in a draw which led down the hill some distance to a tarmac road which led, I believe, to Senones. Apparently the previous evening the other end of the platoon had thrown some grenades in the direction of the Kraut gunners and then sideslipped around the NE side of the hill mass. Denny Raymer talked of firing at some Krauts who were infiltrating through the woods below them. Apparently, our company was in a blocking, or holding position while other elements of the Regiment continued a push toward St. Blaise.

The weather continued wet and cold here but with little snow for a change. After I had lost my shoe pacs, I was able to get hold of one of the first pairs of combat boots in the platoon. But feet were wet almost all the time and trying to change to dry sox was kind of a joke. Guys with the shoe pacs complained of aching arches as the pacs gave little support when hiking. Even with wet feet, I was the more fortunate.

It was during this brief spell that we were able to go, a few at a time, down to La Trouche where the engineers had set up a showering installation in what I think was a lumber mill by the river. So, we had a chance to take a real hot water shower and get a new change of clothing one day. While we were getting ready, we heard a shot, and a GI bent over and yelled. He had been the victim of someone else's failure to unload his carbine outside and he took a slug in the stomach. Not sure how he made out. The showers occurred on November 23, the morning report notes.

VI

On the 24th of November, we moved back down from our hill position and into La Trouche, this time continuing on road N. 392 toward Celles-sur-Plaine, Raon-sur-Plaine, and down to Schirmeck. We were working with elements of the 117th Recon and route marched at appropriate intervals along each side of the road NE toward Celles-sur-Plaine. The day was still gray and the road was wet underfoot. Rain fell intermittently throughout the march. Along the way, the Krauts had blasted tree trunks and felled the giants across the road. We made our way through them, letting any following vehicles solve the removal problem. No one was too worried about mines and yet they usually were a feature of this defensive Jerry action.

~~On the way,~~ two Frenchmen cycled toward us from Celles. As a kind of afterthought, the captain called for us to stop them. I stepped out in front of one and he was still moving. He wore some kind of uniform, forester, perhaps. I took hold of his handlebars and this spilled the cyclist on the road. He asked, "Un accident?" The captain chewed me out saying I didn't have to knock the man down to stop him.

The company morning report said we billeted in Celles that evening but my mind is a blank regarding that. We continued on the next morning, part way on foot and part way in vehicles. I think we rode through Raon-sur-Plaine before continuing on foot.

The road here hugs the side of steep hills and winds its way down a long draw which held a stream at its base. Uphill from the road, the slope was steep. And the ground fell away sharply from the road on the down slope. We had a few tanks with us at this point but I'm not sure now if they were 14th Armored or 117th Recon. It was cold and gray still and we huddled at the rear of the tanks when we could to warm ourselves by their motors. It was about this time that a few shots rang out down the line. Apparently a sniper was at work. One of the forward tanks unloaded a 75 shell and some machine gun fire joined in and shortly after, a medic jeep came down through our column and a bit later drove back up with a Kraut on a stretcher on the jeep.

I remember seeing the tankers with their bedrolls strapped to the sides of their tank and enjoying a brew up of coffee in china cups they had liberated along the way. Brewing up instant coffee in your aluminum canteen cup meant instant lip blisters when you wanted to drink coffee from that hot metal!

We continued down the road and hill until we came to a bridge across the stream that led to the small settlement of Grandfontaine. A barn or building by the bridge was aflame. We entered the town and made our way to housing for the night. As dusk came, so too did



Figure II

N. 392 down to Grandfontaine.
Kraut sniper was in hill ahead
above the turn in the road.

Krauts who had been hiding in the forested hills above the town. The company had collected a growing number as night descended. I heard later that more Krauts came out to our guard posts that evening. One of the Krauts who came down out of the hills was toting a baby's bathtub, I noted the next morning.

Towns in this area of Alsace had been given Germanic names once they had been occupied in 1940. Grandfontaine had the sign "Michelbrunn" at its edge.

We entered one house, the Lieutenant, Mac, Tag, and I. I saw a picture on a chest of drawers of a young man in German uniform. Shortly after, the picture disappeared. The family gave us their upstairs bedroom and I drew the short straw, the floor! That evening, also, the man of the house brought out a bottle of rum so we could have coffee royals. Mac enjoyed this. We slept, dry and warm!

The next morning, November 26, we made our way on foot along the road down to Schirmeck, a rather large city which had been taken the day before. Here we saw some recently killed Krauts on the road lying in pools of blood. Across the road was a large barn, and in the wide doorway a tank was parked. It was guarding a large group of prisoners inside. We made our way through the town to the railroad station and shortly after, retraced our steps to Grandfontaine, were loaded on trucks bound for St. Blaise. I think this was the truck ride that was so ghastly for poor Russ O'Brien. He had the GI's badly and messed his pants as well as had to go some more. So, he sat on the tailgate with buddies holding him while he let fly - all this in full illumination of headlights from the truck behind. The Russ sat there and cut out the seat of his long johns with a bayonet! Not pleasant for him but worth lots of laughs nonetheless.

One thing that struck me during this time was the odor that hung over French villages. It must have been a combination of wet fall and stove fuel, charcoal perhaps, that was so distinctive. I remember years later, down at our Oregon coast, I think, where a similar smell struck me forcefully. Deja vu via the nose!

The morning reports stated that we left St. Blaise at 3 p.m. on November 27 and traveled northerly about thirty-five miles to Vallerysthal by truck. The weather was clear and cold. We were still eating K rations. It was here that some replacements joined the company. We were billeted in some houses and, for the first time in ages it seemed, we ate hot meals. I recall finding some apples in the attic of the house we were in. They were small and a bit shrunken but very sweet. Vallerysthal was a small place and out of the forests for a change. The hills to the north and east were rolling and agricultural with stands of trees on their rounded peaks.

We spent the next several days here. The morning report says we did some demolitions and fortified position attack training but I don't remember it.

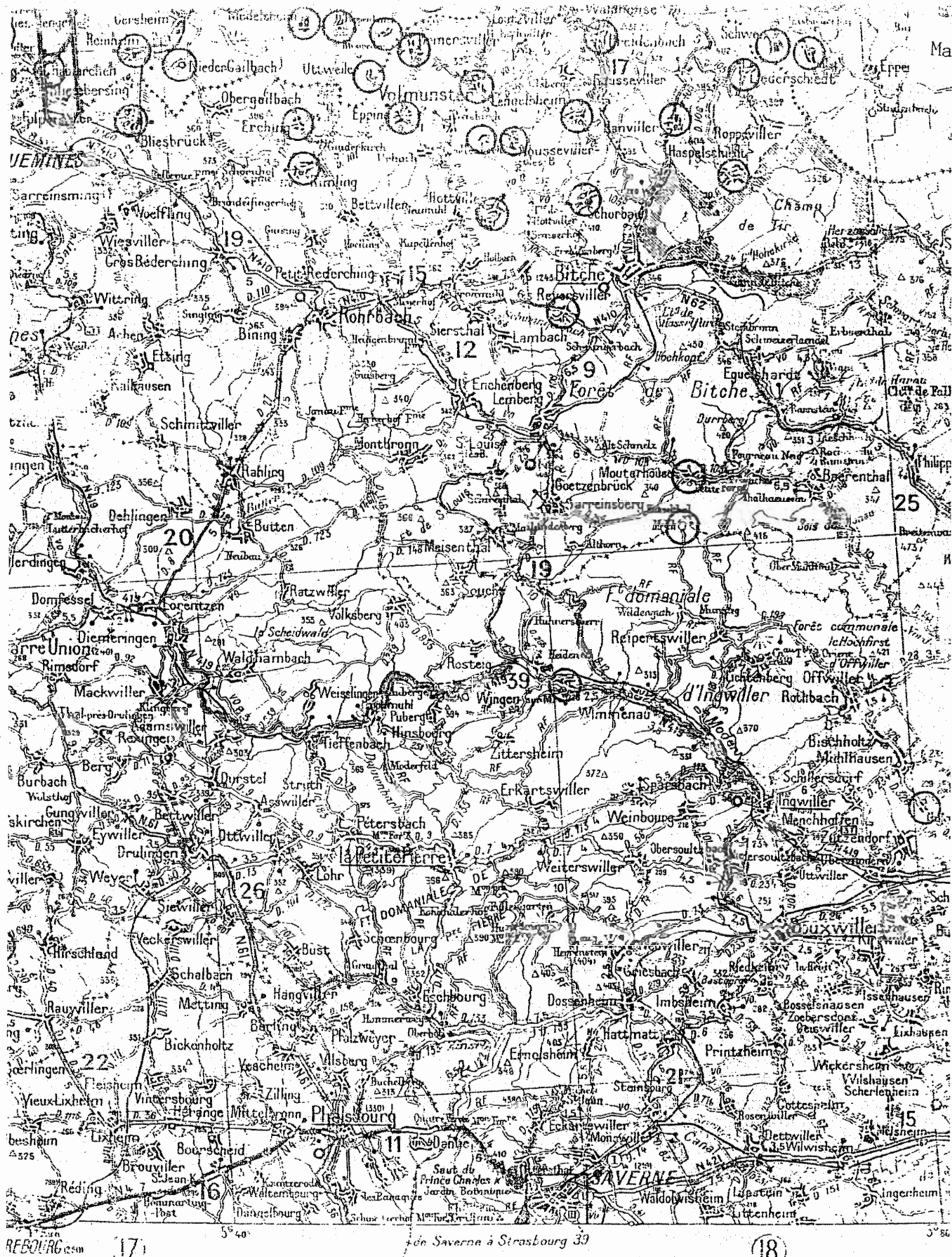
VII

On the second of December we were trucked to a small town of Lohr, some twenty miles away. We hiked a further seven miles to a "forward assembly area," the morning report says. This in preparation for an attack toward Wingen.

On December 3rd, we were up and away early. The weather was clear and cold. We advanced generally north and east along a long series of ridge lines. The valley was below us on the left, at one point about one-half mile away. Either B or C Company was down there moving in the same direction toward Wingen. The new replacements were with us. The ground was rather open with brush and tree lines close to the tops of the ridges. Visibility was good. We heard shelling now and then but none of it was directed at us. In addition, we had with us some units from the heavy weapons D Company as well as an artillery observer officer and his communications team. I don't recall our stopping any time on the way to eat. There were no tanks with us as we were approach marching along trails and through fields.

In the late afternoon, we arrived at the nose of the ridge. It was forested and the sides of the ridge were encrusted with rocky outcroppings. At the base of the ridge nose there was a little clearing - less brush - and one could make out buildings through the trees. They were some two to three hundred yards away. We were held up some here and then artillery and mortar shells started falling among us. Another fellow, a replacement, and I sought shelter on the side of the hill beneath some rock outcroppings. We dug in there for more protection from any tree bursts. Then we were told to form in the lower area and dug in again as mortar shells kept coming. This is tough, heavy, fearsome work! I hit a big rock some ways down in my digging and squeezed myself in by the rock until I could dig around it for more protection. As it grew dark, the shells still came and cries for medic were heard now and then. Bob Norton was hit here as were several others. This was a frightening time of quickened pulse and true anxiety. One feels so helpless being shelled like this. Someone else controls your safety, your life!

Now darkness had descended. The word passed back was that we were to move in to the edge of the town in single file. We waited and then started again. We were supposed to be as quiet as we could. Because it was so dark, we were to hold on to the man ahead of us. Then the line stopped for a time and we heard from ahead that



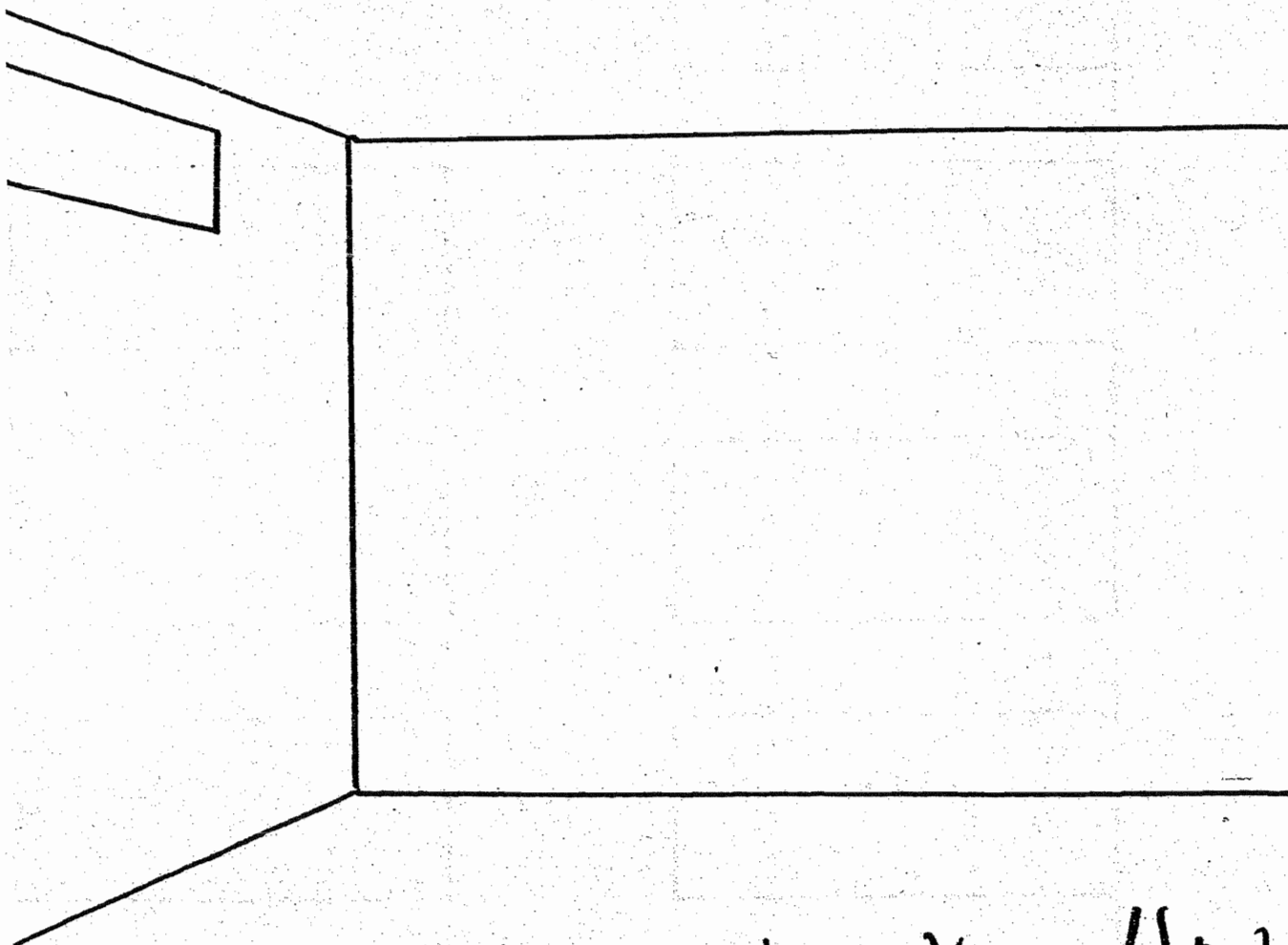
contact had not been maintained. Here, I was separated from the First Platoon and was with the Fourth Platoon fellows. We moved through some back yards and forded an irrigation ditch or small stream, still in pitch blackness. We walked past a dead GI lying beside our path who, I later found out, was a fellow from another platoon named Shue. We came upon some houses and I entered one with the Fourth Platoon, knowing I would rejoin the First Platoon in the morning. I believe the captain was in the same house upstairs. A group of us went down into the basement of the house to one of several rooms down there. This room had an open basement window high on the wall that led to the outside.

The Fourth Platoon was in here with some .30 cal. light machine guns. Their platoon sgt. was here as well. Then we arranged ourselves on the cellar floor, believing that items like guard duty and all were being arranged topside. No one had sleeping bags so we just stretched out in the dark to catch a few winks.

A short time after, there were voices heard outside and the sounds of running around. Someone ran up to the basement window overhead and fired a rifle through it into our basement room. It must not have hit anyone as no one made a sound. Then, something was tossed into the basement. I heard it bounce but wasn't sure what it was or where it was. Pebley was lying next to me. Then the grenade exploded.

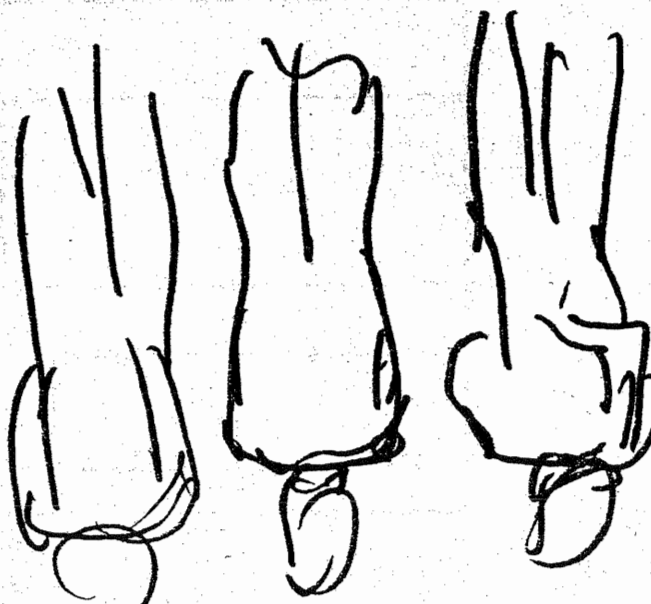
I was lying kind of on my side and the blast blew my legs up and wide apart. I felt a burning and stinging and numbness. I was scared to death! Then it seemed that everyone got up and started for the door. There was shouting outside, upstairs, and from those in the room. I shouted for help and heard the Fourth Platoon Sgt. work with someone else removing the firing pins from the mg's. I remember him saying that this business of dying for your country was lots of BS. And he was regular Army! Someone came over to me and helped me get the sulfa pills out of the first aid pack attached to my web belt. I wrestled my canteen out, too, as I knew that sulfa should be taken with lots of water. I then called again for help amid all the confusion. My legs and backside still burned and stung. Things were very confused and hazy for me. I think the medic might have given me a morphine shot at some time. It was still dark as pitch and artillery could be heard in the distance. Then GI's were being herded out of the house. Finally, I was carried outside. I remember hearing Denny Raymer's voice. I heard Captain Kiernesky as well. There were Krauts all around us. Mac recalled a Kraut wanting to take a wristwatch and a Kraut officer was made aware of this and he hit the Gefreiter and had him return the watch.

Pete Gomben recalled hearing several explosions when the advancing Krauts used panzerfausts on several of the houses. He said he couldn't understand why Captain Kiernesky was wondering aloud where the First Platoon was! As if he wanted to be sure all of us were caught!



Basement room in the
house in Wingen.
Fateful window.
I was second from right.

Figure III



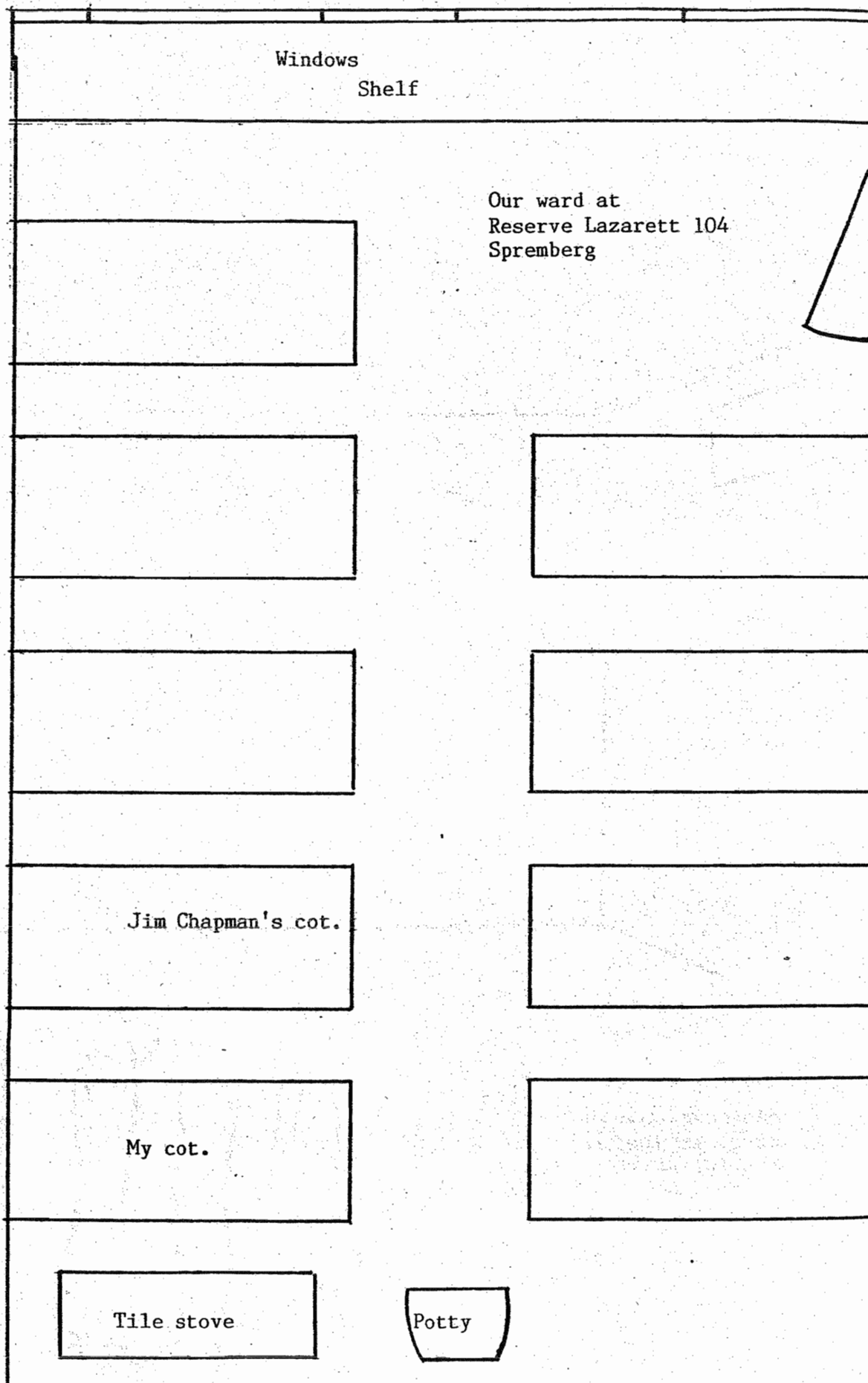


Figure IV

Mac says he can't understand why the company didn't resist even though caught with its pants down. He feels we could have made the Krauts pay dearly. We would have too, of course.

Then the Krauts formed the GI's up and started marching them away. Some GI's took a door off the house and put me on it to carry me out of there. Mac and Percy Streater were two who helped to carry me. I think Pete Gomben helped as well. The ride was rough and the bearers had to stop now and again to shift weight and get better grips. In retrospect, I am certainly grateful for true buddies.

VIII

I was carried for some distance to what I assumed to be a Battalion aid station in a barn. I was laid out on the straw. The Kraut Sanit ter examined me cursorily, took down my pants, tattered as they were, and told me and the GI's still there that my balls seemed to be intact. The GI's were taken away and later I was loaded into an ambulance and taken to a town. A house there was being used as a collection station. I was placed on an examining table and my pants were cut off me and discarded. I remember thinking of my wallet but I didn't communicate this. As I mused about this, trying to reconstruct it in my mind, I think I was still hazy from whatever shot was administered to me. So, my wallet went with my pants. The Kraut doctor (Arzt) had a deep, resonant voice and he worked quickly, giving directions in his rich baritone. I was bandaged with paper bandages and laid out on a rude mattress in a main floor room of a collecting area. Here, a Kraut in limited English, asked me my name and he also brought out a form purportedly from the International Red Cross. I can't recall how I responded to this. Then I was taken via another ambulance to a hospital in Zweibrucken. In a larger room in what was either a hospital or a large schoolhouse, I was laid out on a hospital cot among a ward full of wounded Krauts. I don't recall what I was given to eat here. I think I stayed overnight. I do remember the high ceilings and rather limited light. And it was gray and rainy outside. But in here I was warm and dry and hurting.

My next move, shortly thereafter, was via ambulance with other wounded Germans to the railroad station. The weather was about the same. I recall planes overhead swooping down over the railroad station and rail yards area. Concern was apparent in the voices of the Sanit tskorps who were moving us. I was loaded on to a hospital train, with stretcher cots three high on each side. I recall the German beneath me was in bad shape and was about my age. He was in real pain.

I don't remember much of the train trip. I recall hearing that the train was crossing the Rhine at Worms. I recall seeing bridge girders pass by as we crossed. Our meal was a bowl of hot cabbage soup. This was my first food in ages, it seemed. But the cabbage worked! I heard one of the German wounded ask a Sanit ter for "die Flasche." He brought a urinal. I asked for one and the "Sani" (the German colloquialism) growled and pointed to the end of the car where, I assumed, the latrine to be located. I made my way out of the stretcher bed to the "abort." I shat through the paper bandages and tore them off and put them down the toilet. I knew I had messed myself as well. But, what a relief!

The train stopped now and then and some wounded were off-loaded. Then, late in the evening at one stop I heard an American voice at the end of the car asking if there were any GI's in there. I responded with a "Yes!" and a GI in a wool knitted cap and OD's came down the aisle to me and supervised my off-loading. I don't remember if I was transported in an ambulance or a truck but I was joined by another GI on this ride to Reserve Lazarett 104. He had been on the train as well but in another car. He was ambulatory, having been injured in the mouth.

IX

At the Lazarett, a collection of buildings that had once served either as a children's or old folks home, I was helped into a room serving as a ward. The room was high ceilinged and about 15 feet by 30 feet in dimension. Some eleven beds were arranged, head to wall and foot to aisle, on both sides of the room. The cots were iron and sheets were blue gingham checked with gray service blankets. I am guessing that I arrived around December 9, 1944.

I was in the bed by the tile stove. It was fed with bricks of compressed coal. Its principle was the same as ornate tile stoves, a feature of Central European heating and interiors, but this one was purely utilitarian with a rough exterior. It exuded heat, however, which was welcome this time of year and in this kind of weather.

The GI's in charge were Kenneth Saylor and Paul Kellson who were from Stalag IIIB at Fl rstenberg near Frankfurt on der Oder. Spremberg was a satellite installation. Ken and Paul had been in the 34th Division and were captured at Faid Pass in North Africa. They were both from Iowa.

Our ward was in a building separate from the other Americans there. The installation held some 20-25 Americans in addition to

a larger group of Frenchmen and a few Russians.

The next morning, Paul supervised my cleaning up in a big bath tub in an adjacent bathroom. There, he noted my right foot had been hit as well. I recalled then some stiffness when I had walked on it on the hospital train. More shrapnel was there as well as in the backs of my legs and butt. Later, I was examined by Oberstabsarzt Dussa and his right hand Sanit ter Fritz Besarius. The doctor picked at some bits of metal on my backside, used a black ointment called Ichthyol, and applied more paper bandages. I was supplied with pajamas of sorts, long, gray underwear, and returned to the ward.

What does my memory tell me of the fellows with whom I was cooped up? Next to me, in the adjacent cot was Jim Chapman. He was from the 44th Division and had been hit in the upper back. His back was a large raw area. He was in school at Amherst when drafted. He lived in Greenwich, Conn., and his father was an executive with GE. He was literate, intelligent, witty, and a bit lazy and spoiled, I felt. He was the only one in that room with whom I could chat about numberless topics.

Guido Colucci. He had a sad wound. Shrapnel through the shaft of his penis. When the catheter was removed, he had to hold his fingers over the holes so he wouldn't leak three ways! He had dark, curly hair, and was from Pennsylvania, I think.

"Babe" Tetrault was from Westboro, Mass. I think he was from the 26th Division. He was older, in his early 30's perhaps. A B Ser but pleasant.

Percy Leastman from Wisconsin and the 5th Division. He had been hit badly and was in a body cast. He moaned a good deal. He wanted to be moved and turned (it broke the cast). He swore a lot and chewed tobacco and wanted a bed pan to spit in.

Loy Hanby, a Georgia boy from Blairsville. Tall, pleasant, cheerful, and in his early 20's. He had a strange wound. He was lying on his stomach when he was shot. The bullet entered his left shoulder and was removed in the middle of his back by his spine! I think he was 26th Division.

The young fellow on the hospital train with me had a superficial wound around his mouth. He had been in the boys training school at Red Wing, Minnesota, before being drafted. He left for Stalag IIIIB after not too long.

Another fellow from Tennessee and, I think, the 5th Division, was a character. I don't recall his name. He had been picked up for bootlegging and the judge gave him a choice; jail or the Army. He told stories and laughed a lot.

A guy nicknamed "Red" was from a tank destroyer outfit. He was most handy and helpful and left shortly after I arrived to go to the main camp, Stalag IIIB.

In the other area was a young Texan from the 45th Division. He had been a jeep driver which ran over a mine. He lost both feet just below the knee. He had a most positive attitude throughout the time.

"Punchy" Brandon was in the other area as well. He was another 34th Division man who had been caught in North Africa. He had escaped several times and each time was recaptured. He was from Portland originally.

Two other medics who arrived around the time I did were Jim Caporel from Queens, NY (Woodhaven). He had lots of stories and was an expert on most things. But he was pleasant, nonetheless. Ed Plauff from Seattle, also was caught in North Africa. He was from the 1st Armored Division.

Besides the regular medical checks, life settled into a regular routine. We were locked into our ward at all times. In the morning, breakfast would be brought over from the main American area in the Lazarett. This consisted of hot water for coffee, which we had from Red Cross parcels, and two pieces of German bread and their jam. As far as daily chores are concerned, the room was swept daily by those able to be up and about. The "pot" was emptied in the adjacent abort.

The medical staff would check with us regularly. Ken Saylor was present to interpret and to assist. The chief Sanit ter, Fritz, was an Unteroffizier. He was originally from Berlin. He had a sense of humor and used a variety of English swear words and phrases with relish. He was also a realist about the war even though he didn't share much in this vein.

Dr. Dussa would check periodically. His medical specialty was thoracic, I was told, and he was a bit out of his field with purely surgical cases. I recall at one time his examining me and, in response to his questions as to how I was doing, I mentioned the "picking" around on earlier occasions by Fritz. Later, Ken said I almost got them into trouble as a Sanit ter under no circumstances was to do what Fritz had done; that is, to try to remove some shrapnel. I was chastened. My foot was left to heal over. No effort was made to remove the shrapnel there.

Perhaps one reason why my right foot was giving me no more trouble than its stiffness, numbness, and limited flexibility was that I really didn't get back normal feeling in either foot until long after my arrival. My feet were just plain numb with little apparent feeling in them. This was certainly a result of their being wet and cold so long. Trench foot, or immersion foot, has

other bad effects down the line. Maybe this was checked when I "came in from the cold."

There were a limited number of books available for us. They came from the International YMCA. I read The Face in the Aspic, a story of chefs in a private London club. It was hard to read all about food! I read a college biology text as well. No wonder I never took the subject later on in college.

Lunch was the German offering from their kitchen. The routine was most predictable. One day we had oatmeal. The next days were soups. In addition, we had rutabegas and steamed potatoes in this rotation. In the evening, we had more German bread and this was supplemented by items from the Red Cross parcels. Ken took the tinned food items from the parcels and pooled them and added them to the evening menu.

Now and then added items would appear with the bread ration. These were a fish paste and sometimes a semi-hard cheese. Ken couldn't stand the fish paste and often didn't bother to distribute it. I think he gave it to the Russians.

Ken brought the rest of the Red Cross parcel items over for us. The Germans would not permit canned foods to be distributed without their being opened in front of them or at least pierced. This was to prevent their being saved and used as escape rations. So, the items we received included coffee, KLIM (dried milk), chocolate, cocoa, tea, cigarettes, and pipe tobacco.

We had a home made immersion-type water heater in a "dixie", a large German mess tin. We had to be careful using this as, if removed from water when plugged in, it would blow fuses. But, with this device, we had ample supplies of hot water for "brewing up."

In the evenings, the "Posten" on duty would often look in. One older fellow was from nearby Cottbus. He was quiet and pleasant and often brought newspapers to Ken, who would then share the contents with us. Another guard was a young German with a speech impediment named Horst Ganser. He was our age, about 19-20. At lights out, another Sanitäter, one Ken called a real nazi, would come in to get us all in bed. He was balding, had a figure like a bowling pin, and had a moustache. Lights went out at around 10 p.m.

Besides the daily routines amid much BSing, we played cards provided in Red Cross parcels.

One continual interruption was air raids. First, the "vier alarm" would sound. This was four ascending and descending sirens.

This alarm indicated planes approaching the general area. This was often followed by the "flieger alarm," a constantly rising and falling siren. This meant planes were close by. Then, in the evening, all lights were doused. We could feel and hear the ground shake when bombs were dropped on Berlin, Dresden, Leipzig, Merseberg, Halle, and closer. Once, in late January/early February, planes bombed Cottbus. This time we could hear the bombs whistling as they fell. The door rattled, the windows rattled, and the blackout curtain leaped over the water bucket on the shelf by the window. This was the closest bombs came.

The guard would bring newspapers to Ken; the Zwölf Uhr Blatt and the B. Z. am Mittag. We also received the English language paper prepared by the Germans, The Alert. Hungry as we were for written material, we even read that!

One day shortly after I arrived, a Posten came through to search our things. I had totally forgotten about a GI compass I had in my upper left field jacket pocket. He found it and took it away. Ken Saylor was disgusted as he said it could be sold for many cigarettes in the main camp. I did keep my Parker fountain pen all the time, along with my Testament.

The winter weather here was most generally gray and damp. This was characteristic of the area. But it did get cold and snow on occasion.

After a time, I was healed up enough to get dressed. Ken found a pair of OD trousers for me. My boots were still with me but the heel on the right boot had been peeled back by the force of the explosion. So I used the stove poker to beat it back in shape. The right boot was well perforated and was nothing to wear in bad weather. Once dressed, I took part in the daily chores and was able to visit the other American area to carry food and parcels.

I remember Christmas as it was the occasion when we each received a Red Cross Christmas parcel. It contained the usual items plus a pipe and a plum pudding. It also contained a tin of turkey. Ken and his crew then mashed the potato ration and made a gravy and turkey combination to spoon over the potatoes. My, what a delicacy!

Ken was able to swap cigarettes for a German egg. It had the state stamp on it - swastika and all! I think he also got his hands on some schnapps - just a taste for him.

Ken shared the newspaper news with us and, he said, after sort of puzzling out the German double talk, he felt he had a respectable grasp of events. After a bit, the general truth came out. We were all amazed at the news of the Ardennes

offensive and were inclined to disbelief at first. But we accepted it later as news continued. We had no radio to check against as they did in the main camp.

Ken, Ed, Paul, and Jim were able to take "walkabouts" with a German Posten now and then. I don't know if they had to give their parole or not. But they came back with stories of refugees coming through Spremberg. One day, February 1, Ken came back from a walk and he had come across a whole column of Air Force boys being marched out of Sagan, Stalag Luft III. They stayed overnight in Spremberg. Much later (1978), I talked with a visiting professor, Richard Wynn, from Pittsburgh, who had been on that march and he remembered Spremberg. I remember it was snowy and cold. Dick Wynn, in his letter to me, said:

...I kept a log of my prison camp experience, some of it in code for security reasons. I lugged that log all the way on that forced march and even on an escape.

The log shows that we entered Spremberg on February 1, 1945, and were housed in a big panzer warehouse for the night. We left the next day on a short march to the railroad where we were packed into freight cars for the ride to Nurnberg. We were billeted there until April 3rd when the Germans moved us again to Moosberg.

My pilot and I had a tunnel at Nurnberg and we escaped from there. I would never have remembered the exact date so am thankful for the log and glad I could respond to your question.

The guard from Cottbus came back with stories of trainloads of refugees from the east being transported in boxcars and flat cars and open gondolas. He told of the dead being piled by the railroad tracks in Cottbus.

All of these events were occurring before a backdrop of news from the Eastern Front. I recall hearing of the towns of Görlitz, Gubin, and Forst, as places the Russians were headed for. Germans were flooding west as well and their miseries have been chronicled in many stories. At the same time, news of our imminent departure was rife. We also talked of the possibilities of remaining behind, but apparently this was to be no option.

We were rather close to a training air base. One day we heard a Stuka coming over low and noisily. Its engine noise quit abruptly. Later, Ken said you could see clouds of black, oily smoke billowing up from where it had crashed nearby.

Now and again, fellows who had regained decent health were returned or went on to Stalag IIIIB at Fürstenberg. The young fellow who came to Spremberg with me left, as did "Red", the tank destroyer.

The air raids on Dresden seemed to occur nightly. We also heard planes overhead during the day en route to Dresden but, as we were inside, we didn't get a glimpse of them. The room door and windows shook each evening.

Transportation in Germany was under much pressure from the air raids. Consequently, there were no more deliveries of Red Cross parcels from Stalag IIIIB. So we shared those we had in order to make them last longer.

There was a French doctor here at Spremberg as well. He wore a French Army uniform, complete with kepi. He was a small and nice looking man, well turned out. He tried his one or two words of English on us now and again. Ken said he had volunteered to go into Germany to treat French PW's. I remember he wore leather puttees.

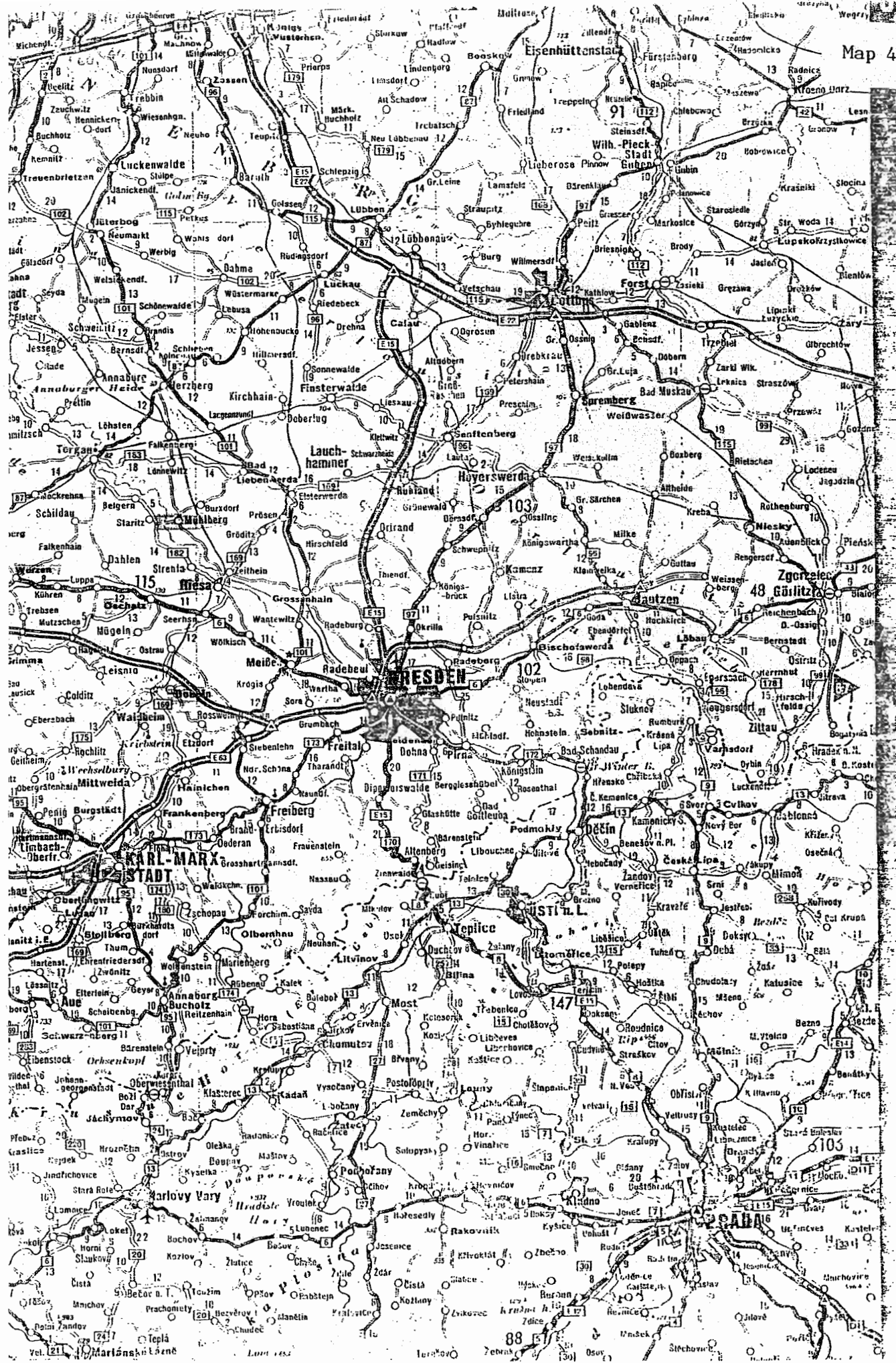
X

The time for our evacuation drew near. This must have been early in February, 1945. One group of ambulatories left for IIIIB or parts north. Ken Saylor and Jim the Greek went with this group. One guy from Kansas, I heard later, was killed in an air raid in a small town on the way. Ken Saylor got through things OK, as I saw and talked to him at Camp Lucky Strike in France.

We left in open trucks bound south on February 18. Percy Leastman was lying on a stretcher but was loaded in the truck with the rest of us. He was in bad shape. His wounds had apparently healed over but some deep ones were still draining. And he coughed a great deal. The days were overcast and dull. We were wrapped in all the clothing we could muster. We also carried a blanket and Red Cross parcels. Paul Kellson and Ed Plauf went with us, I recall.

We had new guards and escorting officers with us. One checked roll and verbally fell all over Butchbaker's name. He remarked on Norman, "Zat is a good name." I guess this was because he could pronounce it.

We stopped later on the first day of travel at Ruhland. We pulled off the road by a large barn where we were to spend the night. We had no hot food, just a chunk of army bread. This was a coarse, sour bread that was covered with flecks of chaff or sawdust. This led to many believing that the bread was made of sawdust. Actually, it was stored in it or baked on it, much like cornmeal. A loaf was heavy and dense. It usually was issued as one loaf per so many men.



Then we had to divide it into chunks.

Some fifty yards away, some concentration camp inmates were building a tank barricade across the main road. They were dressed in the striped pants and jacket and wore wooden clogs. I recall seeing an SS German guard strike one inmate and knock him down with his rifle butt. The inmate rose and stood at attention and clicked the heels of his clogs together. The guard did lots of shouting. At the same time, some Wehrmacht soldiers involved with our escorts stood around and talked to Paul. They said the inmates were Czech Jews. And some remarked that the guards weren't such worthy fellows. One German soldier talked films with Paul and asked about "Clark Gables." We spent the night in the hay. Our guard did permit one or two of the concentration camp inmates to sneak around the back of the barn to beg for food. Paul gave them some chunks of bread and cigarettes, I believe.

Soon after we left Ruhland, we were put aboard a box car and we headed south. The several train trips kind of overlap in my memory but I recall seeing on several occasions the flak railroad wagons on trains going by. The guns looked like the German equivalent of our quad mounted .50 caliber machine guns. The guns were mounted on gondola cars with sandbag revetments and Luftwaffe gun crews. Many of the crew looked even younger than I.

We stopped in the railroad yards at Dresden and the guards wouldn't let us go into or near the station for water or the lavatory. They said the city had been hard hit by bombs and they feared a reaction against American uniforms by the citizenry. I recall gray skies in Dresden as well.

I believe we walked from a rail stop to Hohenstein-Ernstthal, a suburb of Chemnitz. The hospital destination was a collection of buildings in a wooded area. It was some sort of gathering Lazarett that sent candidates for repatriation on to Annaberg, south of Chemnitz. The PW's were examined there for possible repatriation. I recall Indians from the British Army as well as many British soldiers there. I went into the wrong abort one evening and saw an Indian soldier squatting on top of the 3-4 holer. The place was filthy. I didn't make that mistake again.

On our way to Hohenstein-Ernstthal, we stopped on one occasion at a Gasthaus to get in out of the weather and to eat from our rations and Red Cross parcels. An older SS man was present and he talked with our guards. We were able to get hot water for coffee here as well. After leaving, one of the guards asked a lad the way to the Bahnhof. His reply still rings in my memory, "Herunter!"

It was at Hohenstein-Ernstthal where Percy Leastman died. Paul told us this one morning. In his letter to me, Jim Chapman said

he was the American representative at the burial. The German guards fired a two-gun salute at the grave.

My memory suggests that the stay here at Hohenstein-Ernstthal was from February 22 to 27. After those few days, and a medical examination or two, several of us, American and English, were assembled for another transfer. The Americans included Punchy Brandon, Loy Hanby, Stan Haines, and myself. We traveled by passenger train through Chemnitz to Hartmannsdorf and Stalag IVF. It was on this trip, if I remember correctly, that the train was crowded and when we stopped, German civilians would often attempt to enter our compartments (third class, old fashioned compartments with doors to the outside and to an inside aisle). The guards would not permit anyone to enter. I believe there were two or three guards with rifles and one non-com in charge. At one stop a German entered the compartment, was told he could not stay, and, as he left, gave us the "thumbs up" sign.

We changed trains in Chemnitz and went on to Hartmannsdorf. It was somewhere in this area either on the way to or from Hartmannsdorf that we traveled in the evening. Train travel was always slow with many stops and starts and transfers. Much of this was due to the air raids. Suddenly, we heard the "vier alarm" and the train ground to a halt and all the lights went out. Then bombers could be heard overhead and soon their loads were falling on Chemnitz. Flashes of light danced on the horizon and distant rumbles shook the train. This time there were civilians in our compartment along with us (all trains were very crowded) and the women sobbed and shivered as we GI PW's tried to comfort them.

Stalag IVF at Hartmannsdorf was a four or five story building in the center of town. It must have been some sort of warehouse or factory. I think the only GI there was the man of confidence. All of the others were English, French, Italian, Yugoslav, and perhaps some Russians as they were ubiquitous. This camp was a center from which arbeitskommandos were sent. I think this was the camp that sent Jerry Mulvaney and Pete Gomben to nearby towns to work.

We stayed at Hartmannsdorf for less than a week, from February 28 to March 3. I recall watching Italian officers playing cards and counting, "uno, duo, tre." One afternoon, the PA system connected to a radio in an office somewhere in the building skipped across the BBC broadcasting in English. We heard twenty five to thirty seconds of it before it went on to music.

I think it was at Hartmannsdorf where the LSR (Luftschutzraum) was in the cellar. Some British soldiers introduced us to a song as the all clear sounded after an air raid. "Oh, the air raid's passed, kiss my ass, fuck Mussolini!"

I remember seeing groups of Hitler Jugend practicing tactics with the panzerfaust in the streets near the stalag. They would march, signals would be given, they'd scatter into firing positions!

When it was time to move on, those of us going were moved one afternoon to a meat packing kommando so we could get an early start to the train the next morning. The eight to nine of us settled in to a rather large room where the British workers were kept. Before we left, the IVF man of confidence gave us each a carton of cigarettes and a Red Cross parcel.

I have no recollection of the morning train ride. I do recall having to change trains at Döbeln. This was a rather common occurrence in the midst of the railroad disruption. When we were in the station, the "vier alarm" sounded and the German policeman hollered, "Alles weg von Bahnhof!" We couldn't get into the local LSR so we left the area and walked some blocks away. No bombs fell and afterwards we returned to the station and the train and continued north.

XI

We left the train at Mühlberg (Elbe) on March 4 and walked to the nearby camp, Stalag IVB. It was a vast place and the road ran along the fence for a bit. English PW's called to us as there were some English folk in our party. We moved first into a vorlager where we were deloused, showered, photographed, and registered in. The next day we moved into the regular part of the stalag. The barracks were long, large buildings. Floors were tile or concrete, walls and roofs of wood. Long racks of bunks, three high, were along one side and some tables and benches along the other. The barracks leader was a British Sgt. who lived with his "muckers" in a room separated from the main barracks area. Several large brick tile stoves were also in the central barracks area. These were fired by wood and men cooked on the sheet iron top of the stoves.

I remember getting bitten by fleas from the straw palliasses we used for mattresses. It seems some Poles had been in this area before we arrived. But, strange to say, the itching and bites quickly subsided and I wasn't bothered anymore. There was an evening-use-only toilet at the end of the barracks. Because, when night came, everyone was confined to the barracks and no one could leave to the wash house-lavatory a short distance away.

Food again was minimal. No wonder we spent so much time daydreaming about kitchens and cooking. GI's made up imaginary menus and told of great banqueting plans for the days when they were home.

Work parties from each barrack went to a central kitchen and carried things back each day. In the morning, one received a mug of hot mint tea and a chunk of bread for the day. This amounted to a piece of army bread about one inch thick. I have described the bread heretofore. At noon, one received a hot item. This was usually a soup

or cereal-gruel. I recall finding one day a cow's tooth in my portion of soup - no meat attached! In the evening, tea was again provided with rarely, some jam made of sugar beets, artificial sweetener and coloring.

The camp had a separate compound for Russian PW's who were a most pathetic group to observe. They were the workers in the camp doing the most menial work. They were dressed in castoffs, sometimes with only a fragment of a Russian Army uniform. They were ill-treated. One day the story went round that one Russki was shot by a guard for some offense.

The Russians were traders. Several sold items made of wood or metal they had fabricated from food tins or wood scraps. There was some straw art and the kinds of designs chipped into blocks of wood. Russians also sold, or tried to, tins of food, labels and all, which had been filled with sand and then glued back together to appear new. There was a regular market area in the camp for such deals.

The camp also held Jugoslavs, Poles, British and Commonwealth RAF and Army, Indians (before Pakistan), Dutch and Danish policemen, and some Italians and French. I recall visiting in some British barracks and now and then hearing someone sing out, "Jerry up!" This was echoed along the barracks and was the sign that the German Posten had entered the barrack.

It was at IVB where I saw the many survivors of the Bulge. Lots of GI's from the 106th Division. Here, I saw some black GI's as well. They were primarily service and artillery troops caught in the Bulge. I also met some British paratroopers from the 6th Airborne who had been dropped at Arnhem and were caught. One, Walter Padden, "mucked" in with Punchy Brandon, Loy Hanby, and me. He was from Brixton, an area of greater London.

A camp theater, located in one of the barracks, featured productions now and then. I recall seeing a few but can't remember the specific play or event. This area was also used for church services, led usually by the British Anglican chaplain.

Periodically we were sent for showers and delousing. That facility was located in another compound. Clothing was bundled and sent through a heat autoclave while we entered a large tile-floored room with shower heads above. An attendant reminded when water would be turned on and off. It was here that a young man looked at my dog tag and pronounced my name with trilled "r's." He, smiling, indicated that he was "Russki."

Air raids occurred regularly. At night, lights went out. Often, we heard and felt the distant explosions. During the day when the USAF was coming to Leipzig, Halle, Merseberg, and other central German targets, the sky seemed filled with contrails and glinting echelons of Forts or Liberators. Often, contrails stretched from horizon to

horizon. And, too, the P-51's would be bobbing and weaving all over sky as they accompanied the bombers. Flack was the prime threat to the bombers then and it splattered black puffs against the distant sky. I think we saw one of the Jerry jets once.

I recall one day near the end of the war when P-51's strafed a work gang of PW's out fetching wood some distance from the stalag. A bit later, P-51's strafed the stalag and killed a GI who was asleep on his bunk. The barrack was four or five away from ours.

Another feature of the stalag was the "honey wagon" which regularly pumped out the cesspools under the latrines. This was a horse drawn wagon with a long, cylindrical tank mounted on it. The fertilizer was used on neighboring fields and was treasured by the German farmers. Stories abound about PW's who attempted escapes by hiding in the "honey wagons."

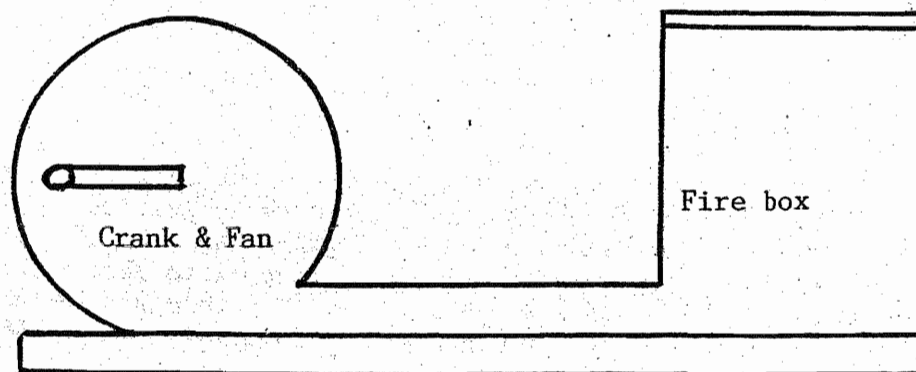
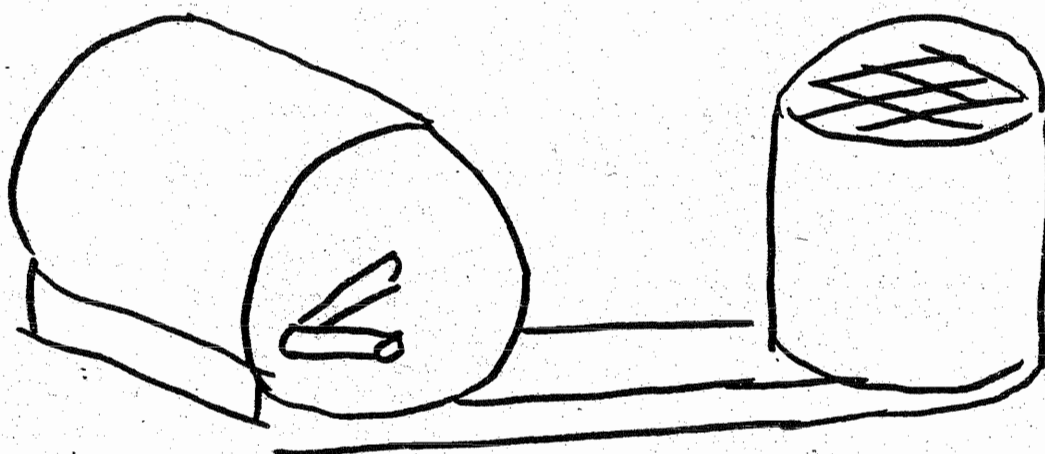
PW's crafted "blowers" to help with the cooking. These were devices fashioned from tin cans and mounted on a board that held a fire box and a forced air fan to generate lots of draft and heat from minimal fuel. One cranked the fan which forced a stream of air to the fire box. These blowers smoked and smelled up the areas where they were used. Alternatives to their use meant queueing up to use a portion of the larger stoves in the barracks.

Each evening the British Sgt. read a synopsis of the BBC news that had been received by hidden radios and then distributed to the barracks. Everyone always checked to see if Kraut Postens were in the vicinity before the news was read. High MacDonald said that carrying the news from barrack to barrack at Luckenwalde was his job.

Punchy Brandon was our trader. he flogged our cigarettes for items now and then. Red Cross parcels were few and far between but we saved and were careful so we were able to supplement the German ration with some bits of meat or cheese almost daily. This was not much, but better than nothing. I recall taking the peelings from some potatoes we had cooked and being asked by a rather quiet, tall, older GI from the 106th Division if he could have them.

Red Cross parcels found their way to us only intermittently at IVB. Usually a distribution would be one parcel for more than one PW. I recall during April that a caravan of trucks all painted white with red cross markings came to the camp with a distribution. This was during the time German rail and road transport was constantly harassed by our Air Force planes.

Red Cross parcels from Canada and Britain were different and often were prized for the variety they offered. Canadian parcels came in large wooden crates which were turned into items of furniture, shelves, or fuel.



Kriegie blower.

Figure V

Around the end of March, I reported to the Reviere, the "sick call" station in the stalag. It was operated by medics from both the British and American armies. Doctors were from both armies as well. My right foot was still numb and I knew there was shrapnel in there. The staff x-rayed my foot and decided to go ahead with shrapnel removal. I reported to the hospital which was outside the main gate in its own compound. A note in my Testament says:

April 1, 1945. Easter Sunday. Lazarett, Stalag IVB, Mühlberg (Elbe).

The operation was in primitive surroundings. I lay on a pair of benches which had been pulled together. The anaesthesia procedure consisted of a wad of cotton placed over my nose and ether being dropped on the cotton. I was asked to count. I think I heard myself say five or six. I woke after a bit, my foot was bandaged, and I was moved to an upper bunk in a ward of the hospital.

There were about twelve to fourteen men in this ward. Most were Frenchmen, but there was one Pole and one Belgian. They were interesting folk. One was a short, wide-faced, and expansive Breton from Brest. Another was a tall, shambling quiet farmer from Brittany, I think. One was a noisy, humorous Parisien. The Belgian had had a cholostomy and his daily toilet smelled the ward up. There was one American, Walter Eckman from New York. He had an injured hand. I don't recall his unit.

XII

The news still came round to the wards but this time it was in French. So, we were less in touch with activities on the fronts and in the immediate area. One night a man came around and told us that the Poles who wanted to could go with some departing Germans as the Russians were close. Our Pole elected to go and he immediately packed up and left. This was some proof of the animosity between Poles and Russians.

In 1948, I wrote:

Spring was definitely here now. The damp, penetrating cold and perpetual rain of late winter had almost disappeared. Daylight sprang earlier from the east and lorded it over the evil earth long after man's toil ceased. Light green winter wheat carpeted the surrounding countryside. Tractors chugged in distant fields, leaving in their wake ripples of freshly-turned earth. Trees tried desperately to hide their

winter nakedness beneath a cloak of fuzzy verdant buds. The grass, not to be outdone, bravely flaunted its new spring splendor. Each spring evening, the sun crept begrudgingly westward, and in a last assertion of its new glory, splashed the sky with livid reds and oranges and purples. Lengthening shadows soon dissolved in the dewy twilight and cool evening settled silently over the countryside. Spring had come to Germany. Spring, 1945, had come to Stalag IVB.

I woke slowly to this lush spring. April sunshine streamed through the window and tumbled over my bed. Wooden shoes and raised voices echoed noisily down the halls of the hospital and jarred my sleep-fogged mind into a semblance of consciousness. I stretched, yawned, sat upright in bed, and looked bleary-eyed around the ward. A few of my dozen-odd French comrades repeated this performance. One of them managed a drowsy smile in my direction. I summoned all my energy and belatedly returned his silent greeting. Across the room a tousled head peered over blankets at me. It blinked owlishly in the brilliant daylight, then swore hoarsely for my edification. I grinned at Wally, the only other American in this ward, and returned his epithet.

To the filthy inhabitants of this filthy, sprawling corner of our earth, separated from April's blessings by row upon insurmountable row of barbed wire, this was a special season. To this polyglot heterogeneity of European and American and Asiatic, this season, for the first time in months and even years, spelled Freedom. Spring, with its revival of winter dormant life, with its lush blooming and budding of nature, induced a rebirth of prison-dampened spirits, a new awakening of man's ideals and hopes. Spring, 1945, heralded the return of Freedom.

We dressed quickly and made our way to the washroom at the end of the building. After our daily cold-water baptism, we returned to the ward and, following the well-defined pattern of prison life, brewed up, British style. The morning medical check amounted to a swift thrust of the thermometer by Louis, the French Sanitaire. Formalities over, we adjourned to the compound yard and settled comfortably on the only patch of grass in the area, that atop the air raid shelters.

The sun beat down upon us, industriously dispelling the remains of a cool, damp evening. Faint traces of clouds were smeared here and there across the sky. I produced a cigarette, one of my last few, and Wally split a wooden match. We smoked and reflected on the

one important topic of discussion to all of us. The Russians had taken Cottbus, fifth kilometers to the north. They had also entered the suburbs of Berlin, but Berlin was some one hundred kilometers farther north, so we disregarded this as we would if told that St. Peter was wearing light blue this spring. Our life was material; we lived from day to day, from rumor to rumor. What we were interested in was Russian progress at Cottbus. For if the Russians had been fifty kilometers away yesterday, today they would be but twenty, and tomorrow....God, we hoped!

All morning and all afternoon we watched strenuous activity in the German barracks across the road. Groups of soldiers were taking to the roads. They departed a few squads at a time. The lucky ones who owned bicycles pedaled unsteadily away under their loads. The unfortunate ones loaded their belongings in wagons and trundled off down the highway. The few guards yet on duty jabbered excitedly to their comrades, wishing them well, and expressing the hope that they, too, might have time to get away. The anxiety and excitement of their fear spread over the camp. We had experienced it once; and now some of us almost felt sorry for them. But our compassion was heavily overbalanced by the feeling of impending Freedom. We gloried in their discomfort.

Each evening for the past week, we had witnessed a general withdrawal. Taking full advantage of the rapidly shortening hours of darkness, German panzer and artillery units had clanked by on the highway running along the camp. They spewed unto the roads at sunset and snaked slowly through the night. Then, when the first grey streaks of dawn shouldered their way over the horizon, these nocturnal creatures crept into the dark woods bordering the roads. Now, our garrison was to join in the retreat.

The sun was stifling its last yawn when Wally and I abandoned our perch and turned toward the barrack. Like a spent match, the sun glowed and sputtered and died. Whisps of clouds raced to the horizon to hover over its smoky remains. From the barrack door, we watched and likened the clouds to birds of prey circling the rotting remains of a once proud and haughty state.

High overhead, rhinestone stars spangled the velvet black skies. Tall pines in the close-by groves whispered back and forth through the opaqueness. Warm air smothered all human sound. Nature itself was waiting

breathlessly. At midnight, sharp flashes of light stabbed the northern horizon and muffled shots echoed across the fields. Ears, months separated from sounds of combat, were cocked for every sound. Eyes, sharpened by the excitement, scanned the black countryside for signs of fighting. The firing grew in intensity. Karping artillery was punctuated by the sharp bark of small arms fire. Distant flares exploded, illuminating the earth with a brilliant and garish light. Slowly and irresistibly the flashes and rumblings moved across the horizon to the south, and just as slowly, they abated. Night breezes sprang up and skitted, as if sighing with relief, through the trees. Stars blazed in expression of their joy.

Dawn broke gloriously the next morning. The sun gazed arrogantly about the new firmament, and, in slow, measured strides, swaggered Heavenward. The green winter wheat stirred imperceptibly in the morning air. The grass-covered air raid shelters sparkled like huge emeralds. The sky was cloudless and the fields laying prostrate before its azure splendor, bore no sign of human activity.

The Russians came during daylight, as I recall. They came through the hospital, ward by ward. A colonel, dark-haired, with a wide face and pleasant smile, greeted us all with a handshake. This was on April 23. Apparently the German guards had left the previous day and others of the German staff had left earlier.

My reading since that time has suggested that the Russian units in our area were in the First Ukrainian Front, commanded by Marshall Koniev. The Fifth Guards Army linked up with the 69th Division at Torgau, just to the north of us.

The first days after our liberation were much like the others. Several of the French went scrounging in the surround and one day brought back a pig which they proceeded to dress out in our ward! We had pork chops that evening. This was the first meat I had had except for canned items from Red Cross parcels in months. I remember one French fellow telling of his amorous conquests with some foreign workers in the area.

Things were in a state of flux. We heard little and sort of watched the world (our ward) go by. After a few days, Wally and I, starved for news, made our way to the main camp. I made the distance on crutches. We were greeted by an American effort to bring about some military order and were taken before a Lieutenant who sternly asked us what we had been doing hiding out in the hospital, shirking our duty as US soldiers. Walter became

very irritated by this and said as much. I think I let it slide by. I had done nothing for which to be ashamed or worried and their suggesting otherwise made no difference to me. So, back into the main camp we went. I returned to my old barrack and rejoined Punchy, Loy, and Walter Padden.

Food was some better these days but news of a returning to Allied lines was scarce. We heard lots of stories of GI's who slipped away and were making their own way back to the Americans who were north of us on the Elbe at Torgau. We also heard stories of German army stragglers, still armed, and determined to resist. This was before V-E Day, remember. I do recall hearing that the Russian PW's were moved out en masse shortly after our liberation. Off they marched to the east and to a questionable fate as subsequent writings and reportings have suggested.

Within a relatively short while, the news came that Americans were to move to Riesa, a city on the Elbe, south of us. I still had difficulty walking without crutches and so joined Punchy and Loy and Stan and some others but this time sitting in a wagon they had found. At the main gate, the American officers said, no, I couldn't go that way. I would have to wait until adequate transportation was laid on for those of us who had difficulty walking. So the boys left without me and I returned to the barracks and to Walter Padden who would wait for the British to move. I remember one day Walter had scrounged a rabbit which he killed and dressed out for dinner. Tasty!

A few days later, trucks were laid on for the "kranken" and we started the ride to Riesa. Parts of the city were damaged and the bridge over the Elbe was gone but much of the city was as it had been. We were trucked to a kaserne now used to house our ilk. It differed from US Army camps in that the barracks were multi-storied and were permanent structures of concrete and stucco. There must have been eight to twelve such buildings along with warehouses and shops and garage buildings as well. The kaserne was situated in what I would call the central part of the city.

I soon found Punchy and Loy and they showed me their rooms on the second or third floor of one of the barracks buildings. They had been joined by Jack Fountain from Georgia and another fellow from the same state. I don't recall his name. These fellows had liberated some food, dishes, a camera (which we used), and a table cloth which I insisted we not leave behind when we exited. I brought it home as a souvenir. Russian soldiers were at the gate but they were no problem during the day. We were free to leave the camp and wander the town which we did. There was little to see there. I have some pictures taken of Russian soldiers driving wagon loads of booty out of the town. We used the film to snap pictures of each other. Each of us took a roll to be developed and sent on to each other. This we did!

One morning at an irregular formation at which time news and information was shared, I turned absently to look over those in adjacent ranks and saw a lean, blonde figure with a rather ashen face and prison-short haircut. I let out an epithet and stepped over to greet Gordy Hansen with whom I had been in school at Edina and then in high school.

Gordy soon joined us and he told a frightening story. He had been caught while serving with the paratroops up in the First or Ninth Army area. He had escaped from the Germans in Gerolstein (?) and, when on the run, had broken into a German store to find food. When caught again, he was charged with theft among other things, was tried by court martial, and sentenced to be hanged. Gordy was in the "cooler" at IVB when we were liberated.

XIII

Stories were rife about GI's slipping away to rejoin the US Army. We heard that Army trucks drove to Oschatz and picked up fellows trying to get back to their units. We heard that trucks were coming to Riesa tomorrow, Friday, Sunday, any day (!) to take us back to US lines. And each day, nothing happened except more stories. So, we gathered what intelligence we could muster and decided to leave Riesa and get to the Americans if they weren't coming to us. This would be difficult as the main gate was closed and guarded at night and no one received permission to depart Riesa at any other time. But, Punchy, Loy, and the others had found a back way out of the kaserne through a break in the barbed wire fence which was hidden in some brush. That was our chance!

The spring-like weather beamed on our planning. One of our bunch had procured a baby carriage, the ultimate vehicle for refugees in this part of the world. We assembled what food and personal items we wanted to take and planned a late night departure so as to be cloaked in darkness as we tried to break out through the fence. Earlier scouting of routes to the highway toward Oschatz paid off and we silently slipped through the break in the fence with the baby buggy, filled with blanket rolls and sundries, and made our way to the road west. It was black as coal; no moon, not even star light, as I recall.

The seven of us grouped closely so we would not lose contact and were guided more by the sound of our footsteps on the tarmac as we had difficulty seeing the edge of the road. This was of particular interest to me as I had been without my glasses from the night of December 3, 1944. We walked past seeming miles of destroyed vehicles along the road. Wagons, cars, trucks of every description, abandoned, burned, blown apart, lined the road. We could hazard their description through the blackness. Shortly after finding the road, we encountered a couple of Russian soldiers

who were drunk, friendly, and had just left some women. We "tovaritched" a good deal and then continued on our way. As we entered a small hamlet and walked along the road among the shadowy outlines of houses and barns, we sensed the presence of a Russian sentry. One of us raised a voice identifying us as Americans and asking, I think, directions. For an answer, we heard the snick of a rifle bolt being drawn back and so we moved on, quickly and quietly.

By daylight, we were near the outskirts of Oschatz and sought the shelter of a barn which lay close to the road. Others, too, had sought such shelter including a threesome, one young man in Wehrmacht uniform, another a young lady. I still remember her turning to us asking, "Haben Sie eine Zigaretten?" I turned her down. It seems to me we slept for a couple of hours before starting out again.

Once on our way, good fortune smiled and a Russian truck offered us a lift toward Würzen. We all piled on the open truck bed and made good time. We watched the countryside slide by. Fields were more flat than rolling and clusters of farm houses and out buildings appeared at regular intervals along the road and down lanes toward the horizon. I don't recall seeing many of the inhabitants. There were few, if any, other vehicles on the road.

Once at Würzen, a town damaged as others were, we had to negotiate the Mulde River. The bridge was blown but there was enough of it still usable so that a footbridge of sorts had been thrown up among the twisted and broken girders. We crossed in single file, clambering over parts of the wreckage now and then. I remember a tall, red-headed GI from the 69th Division directing traffic unto the bridge. He was most emphatic in giving German civilians a hard time as they apparently were not permitted to cross. Once over, we were directed by Army folk to a gathering area where trucks would take us on the next leg of our journey. A group of Poles was gathered beneath the shade of some trees at one end of the bridge. They were under guard. Apparently they had gotten hold of both booze and guns and had been tearing up the countryside.

My Testament records:

May 16. 2:00 p.m. In GI hands. First white bread.

Big, dependable, and familiar GI 6 x 6 trucks arrived and we climbed aboard for a drive through Leipzig and Halle to an airstrip. The ride through the streets of Leipzig was sobering. I had seen shattered villages and ruined farm buildings but this was a large city laid to ruin. Multi-storied buildings, one after the other, one street after the other, were simply shells with vacant windows and doors grinning mindlessly out at us. One could note patterns of wallpaper on walls denuded of floors and ceilings. One saw plumbing of infinite sorts just hanging in mid air. One passed acres of piled rubble on all sides. One saw few people. This was

the same in Halle. Because we had not seen Dresden except from the rail yards, this was my first exposure to general urban catastrophe. It gave new meaning to the German phrase, all too often heard those days, "Alles kaputt!"

C-47's took us from the airfield at Halle to Rheims in France. This was my first ride in this craft. Several GI's on this load were not able to handle the air motion and were sadly sick. The trip took a couple of hours, it seemed, until we landed in France. Our only baggage was the blanket and slim bag of personal effects we wanted to retain.

Trucks took us to a building in Rheims where we were fed and were bunked down for the night. I think we drove close to the famed cathedral, at least I was looking for it. The next morning we were trucked to the railroad station and we boarded a hospital train for the trip to the channel coast. It seems to me we were on the train for one night. The cars were comfortable with sheets on beds mounted along the car walls. Food was also top rate for Army chow. I recall our stopping in one city, asking a Frenchman in the rail yards where we were, and hearing, "Amiens."

We detrained at St. Valery en Caux, on the channel coast, near Le Havre. Trucks took us to Camp Lucky Strike where we were assigned four to six man tents. The weather continued to be good as we were situated out on a broad field that could easily have become a muddy quagmire. We saw German PW's doing the work of the camp, in the mess hall and on various "police-ing" duties. It was here that I ran into Denny Raymer who was serving as an interpreter with the German PW's. He was his exuberant self but was concerned that there was an attitude afoot among those who had been with him in Germany that his knowledge of the language had made him a bit compromised in their eyes.

During the time there, I ran into Ken Saylor who briefed us on his adventures since leaving us. I also saw Don Ford, another Southwest High School student from our neighborhood, who was in a class after me. I didn't talk with him but we talked later back in Minneapolis. I think he had been swept up in the Bulge.

One afternoon, a USO show brought Alec Templeton to the camp and I spent a fine hour or two enjoying his musical artistry. The rest of our time was spent in waiting for transport home. Passes were available to Paris and other places but with the caveat that if you missed your call to the ships, you were S O L. So, most of us just stayed close to Lucky Strike. The adjacent town, St. Valery is mentioned in writings about the Canadians' Dieppe raid. It was a part of the action there.

On June 6, 1945, we drew the short straw and were taken in to Le Havre to be loaded on a ship bound for home. The city was a shambles, still, The dock area was a ruin. I remember seeing Le

Havre again in the summer of 1947 and it was cleaner, but still not built up to its previous appearance. We boarded the USS Explorer, a Moore McCormack ship. Some 1300 of us were aboard, about 40-50% overloaded from the point of view of bed space. But we sailed that day, one year after D-Day, 1944.

The Atlantic was like Lake Harriet on a warm, calm summer day. Lots of GI's slept on deck. The only routine was chow time. I met a sgt. from our Second Platoon but don't recall his name. He had been caught with the rest of us at Wingen. For three days, we wallowed in the Atlantic while engine repairs were made. We ran lights all the way, too, even though the Pacific war was still going on. It took us eleven days to make Newport News, Va. and to be deposited at Camp Patrick Henry in the swampy countryside near there and Norfolk. We stayed there a short time. I remember finding a phone and calling home. Mother was at Aunt Florence's and so I talked to her there for almost one-half-hour. The bill was some \$26, an unheard of sum for that those days!

The train ride home was not much. We were assigned the woven wicker seats of the "colored" section of a rail car. It took up about two-thirds of the car and had a couple of windows on each side. The remaining one-third of the car was fitted out for "whites" and had the regular complement of upholstered seats with a window for each! In our section, we took the seats apart so as to spread out on the floor for sleeping. The train was broken up in Chicago and one poor GI soul was separated from his duffle bag and shoes as he departed on another car.

The call from Fort Snelling and the ride home was as one would expect. Gordy came along and his dad picked him up at our house. I settled into a summer of about 74 days leave and with little to do but enjoy friends as they, too, returned home.

POSTSCRIPT

My subsequent reading has suggested that the grenade was an Italian "egg" concussion grenade roughly two to three inches in diameter and about six inches long. In talking with Pebley at Camp Lucky Strike he said his upper arm, which was next to the grenade blast, was not lacerated but stayed numb for several months afterward.

After returning home I have had the opportunity to see and to talk with several Army buddies. I saw Jerry Mulvaney soon after the war as we both enrolled back at the University of Minnesota. We were in a class or two together, as I recall. I made a trip to the Bay area in the spring of 1950, my first teaching year out on the Coast. I spent an evening over dinner with Russ O'Brien and his wife in San Jose. I spent many an hour refighting the war with Hugh MacDonald at the division reunion I attended back in Washington, D. C. in September, 1984. Norma and I had dinner with Bob Norton and friend in Boston in the fall of 1986. Pete Gomben visited us here in Portland in the summer of 1987.

I have corresponded with Frank Bell, John Canavan, John Goodlow (our First Sgt.), as well as with Jerry, Russ, and Bob. My brother, Paul, tells of meeting Percy Reader at Williams Hardware in Minneapolis in the early 1970's. Percy was one of my "door carriers" that fateful night.

I have chatted with Fred Spiegelberg in Medford, Oregon. Fred was a Platoon Lieutenant and later Company Commander of B Company, 398th Infantry.

Research over the past few years has revealed the deaths of E. C. Brown, then a practicing plastic surgeon in San Francisco; Harvey Nourse, and Lloyd Thornton.

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PRESIDENT

1201

SYMBOLS

DL = Day Letter

NL = Night Letter

LC = Deferred Cable

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Ship Radiogram

Time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination

38 38 GOVT=WUX WASHINGTON DC 5 424P

8:5 APR 5 PM 5 05

ELVERA H NORMAN=

5245 WASHBURN AVE SOUTH MPLS=

SECRETARY OF WAR DESIRES ME TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR SON
IAN CALDON R IS A PRISONER OF WAR OF GERMAN GOVERNMENT
RT WAS RECEIVED THROUGH INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS LETTER OF
FORMATION FOLLOWS FROM PROVOST MARSHAL GENERAL=

J A ULIO THE ADJUTANT GENERAL.

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

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WESTERN UNION (29)

A. N. WILLIAMS
PRESIDENT

SYMBOLS

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NL = Night Letter
LC = Deferred Cable
NLT = Cable Night Letter
Ship Radiogram

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150

WMUH135 20 GOVT=WUX WASHINGTON DC 30 528 1945 MAY 30 PM 4:41

ELVERA H NORMAN=

5243 WASHBURN AVE SOUTH MPLS=

E SECRETARY OF WAR DESIRES ME TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR SON
C NORMAN CALDON R RETURNED TO MILITARY CONTROL=

J A ULIO THE ADJUTANT GENERAL.

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

OF SERVICE

a full-rate
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WESTERN⁽³⁴⁾ UNION

A. N. WILLIAMS
PRESIDENT

SYMBOLS

DL=Day Letter

NL=Night Letter

LC=Deferred Cable

NLT=Cable Night Letter

Ship Radiogram

as shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination.

GOVT= WASHINGTON DC 17 1213A

LVERA H NORMAN=

5243 WASHBURN AVE SOUTH MPLS=

✓ 17 7 56--

CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMY DIRECTS ME TO INFORM YOU YOUR
PFC NORMAN R CALDON IS BEING RETURNED TO THE UNITED
ES WITHIN THE NEAR FUTURE HE WILL BE GIVEN AN
ORTUNITY TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOU UPON ARRIVAL=
J A ULIO THE ADJUTANT GENERAL.

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

Reported Missing, Is Nazi Prisoner

Pvt. Caldon Norman, son of Mr. and Mrs. Clifford R. Norman of Minneapolis, former Willmar residents, who was reported missing in action in Germany, has been definitely located as being a German prisoner of war, according to the International Red Cross. He was reported missing on December 4.

His mother is the former Elvera Swenson and he is a nephew of Mrs. Andrew Eastlund.

Private First Class Caldon R. Norman, 19, son of Mr. and Mrs. C. R. Norman, 5052 Thomas Av. S., and recently moved from 5243 Washburn Av., S., was taken prisoner of war by the Germans, December 4, while serving in France with the Seventh army infantry. A graduate of Southwest high school, he joined the service on his eighteenth birthday in September, 1943, and went overseas last October.

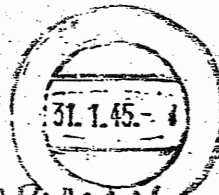
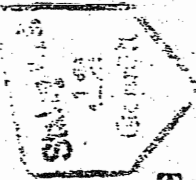
Pfc. Caldon R. Norman, 19, son of Mr. and Mrs. C. R. Norman, 5052 Thomas avenue S., captured last December and freed by the Russians May 16.

ARMY PRISONERS OF WAR

Ebersviller, Germany
Ebersviller, Sgt. Rodney S.—Son of William F. Ebersviller, Fergus Falls.
Edwards, Cpl. George J.—Son of Mrs. Amelia Edwards, Marshall.
Greenwaldt, T3 Emil F.—Son of Mrs. Ida Greenwaldt, Rochester.
Gunderson, Sgt. Kenneth—Husband of Mrs. Clea M. Gunderson, Duluth.
Irgens, S-Sgt. Edmund M.—Son of Mrs. Elizabeth Irgens, 2743 Fifteenth Av. S., Minneapolis.
Kilmer, Cpl. Detmar N.—Husband of Mrs. Evelyn M. Kilmer, Bazley.
Lonchar, Pfc. Milan—Son of Mrs. Stella Lonchar, Chisholm.
Mellin, Cpl. Willard N.—Son of Mrs. Alfred Mellin, Minneapolis.
Noethe, T3 Raymond B.—Son of Mrs. Angelina Noethe, Iona Lake.
Norman, Pfc. Caldon R.—Son of Mrs. Elvera H. Norman, 5243 Washburn Av. S., Minneapolis.
Willmar, Pfc. Jerome G.—Husband of Mrs. Margaret V. Willmar, 3208 Earthon Av., St. Louis Park.
Wolak, S-Sgt. Alphonse A.—Son of Mrs. Frances Wolak, Polk.

Pfc. Caldon R. Norman, 19, son of Mr. and Mrs. C. R. Norman, 5052 Thomas avenue S., was liberated by the Russian army May 16. He was captured last December while serving with the American Seventh army. A graduate of Southwest high school and former University of Minnesota student, Norman joined the army in December, 1942.

Kriegsgefangenenpost



AN

MRS. CLIFFORD NORMAN

Empfangsort: MINNEAPOLIS MINNESOTA

Straße: 5052 THOMAS AVE. So.

Kreis: _____

Land: U. S. A

Landesteil: [Provinz usw.] _____

Gebührenfrei

Deutschland (Allemagne)

Lager-Bezeichnung: M.-Stamm-lager III B

Gefangenennummer: 250199

Vor- und Zuname: CLIFFORD NORMAN

Absender:

Dear Mom, - Jan 17, 1945

This is the first opportunity I've had to write you since I've been in Germany. I will be able to write you a card or letter each week from now on. So that letter will have to be to everyone at home besides yourself. I was wounded in the legs and feet just before my capture, and I've spent the past month and a half in hospital. I'm getting along swell and am feeling fine and will be up and around very soon. Otherwise I'm just as healthy and happy as ever. Then a special Christmas Eve we received, we had a nice little dinner. We had turkey and plum pudding even! I sure thought hard of you for the Christmas Eve. May be I'll be helping celebrate next

year with you after. Please write often and tell everyone how I am. Tell me all about your Christmas. Also send a photograph of the family if you can. I got my first letter with all my pictures. Guy kept in everyone for me and I'll be writing you soon. Love Mom
P.S. Please send "The Girl" paper to me.

Wundzettel

Für Verwundete und andere chirurgisch zu Behandelnde

Trägt elastische Binde (Schlauch)?

Seit
Wo?

Uhr vorm./nachm.

Sonstige Hilfeleistung:

(Zeit)

Nächste Wundversorgung usw.

erforderlich:

(Art, Zeit)

Besonders zu achten auf:

Wird (sitzend, liegend) entsendet nach:

zu { Verbandplatz

sammel

Lazarett Nr.

Name des Arztes:

Dienstgrad:

Truppenteil:

Ausgestellt am

Uhr

vorm.
nachm.



Wundzettel

Für Verwundete und andere chirurgisch zu Behandelnde

Nichttransportfähig: zwei rote Streifen
Transportfähig: ein roter Streifen
Marschfähig: kein roter Streifen

Name: *Caldon, Hermann*
Dienstgrad: *Prost*
Truppenteil: *USA*

Verletzung: *Amputiert*
am rechten Bein
unterhalb der Kniekehle

Knochenverletzung?
Sonstiges Leiden: *2. 4. 41*

Erhielt an starkwirkenden Arzneien:		
innerlich?	Gabe	Zeit
Eingespritzt?		
Wundstarrkrampfserum?		

Wundzettel	Wound Tag
Für Verwundete und andere chirurgisch zu behandelnde	For wounded and other surgical cases to treat

Nichttransportfähig: zwei rote Streifen	Not transportable: two red strips
-----------------------------------------	-----------------------------------

Transportfähig: ein roter Streifen	Able to be transported one red strip
------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------

Marschfähig: kein roter Streifen	Able to march: no red strip
----------------------------------	-----------------------------

Name	Rank
Dienstgrad	Army unit
Truppenteil	Injury
Verletzung	bone injury
Knochenverletzung	Given strong medicine
Erhielt starkwirkenden Arzneien:	internal
innerlich	injection
Eingespritzt?	tetanus inoculation
Wundstarrkrampfserum:	given
Gabe	time
Zeit	

Traägt elastische Binde (tube)	wears elastic bandage (tube)
Seit	since
Wo:	where
Uhr vorm/nachm.	time: am/pm
Sonstige Hilfeleistung:	Other assistance rendered
Zeit	time
Nächste Wundversorgung usw.	
erforderlich	next necessary wound maintenance, etc.
art	kind
zeit	time
Besonders zu achten auf:	pay special attention to
Wird (sitzend, liegend)	
entsendet nach:	will be sent off (sitting or laying) to
zu Verbandplatz	to dressing station
sammel	collecting point
Lazarett	hospital
Name des Arztes	physician's name
Dienstgrad	rank
Truppenteil	Army unit
Ausgestellt am	set out on:

