

“SHOULD WE HAVE TURNED BACK”

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In the spring of 1943, the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) was formed. I took a written test at Lincoln College on April 26, 1943, and got a score of 125. A score above 115 was required, and a score of 110 was required to become eligible for officer candidate school. This made me eligible to be sent to college and become an officer in the combat engineers. Most able bodied men were in the war effort with few attending college, guaranteeing a shortage of college-educated men in the near future. I think it was General McNair, or possibly General George Marshall, who came up with the idea of feeding qualified men into college. The end result was that the army provided me with two semesters of basic engineering at the Citadel located in Charleston, South Carolina.

The draft board at Lincoln, Illinois, included me in the next group of inductees. For some reason, I was given the papers for the group and told to deliver both the men and papers to Camp Grant, Illinois. This happened with no undesirable results. We were inducted into the Army of the United States on May 26, 1943. I still have the group photo. When we said our good-byes, and I boarded the train to Chicago, my mother said, “We will not see Jack again for quite a while!” She was correct for I could not stand the emotional strain of saying goodbye, and refused to take advantage of the customary one week leave after induction.

The induction ceremony was conventional, routine, and not very impressive. I was now in the Army. The main things that remain in my memory are: trying to adjust to walking around nude with a group to get our physical exams; the man in front of me and the man behind me both passed out upon getting their shots; and walking through a doorway and getting hit in both arms by corporals with needles.

I was detained at Camp Grant for over one week because they did not have army combat boots of my size (14AA) in stock at that time. This created a lot of trouble for me as all the officers I met gave me a ‘dressing-down’ for being out of uniform. My big feet were always a source of trouble. Later, I was shipped overseas without combat boots, although I had canvas leggings and regular army shoes. One day a member of our platoon came in from patrol duty and told me to hurry down to the Medical Aid Station because he saw a big pair of combat boots in the pile where they threw the shoes that were cut off the injured. I went with great speed, only to find that the boots were size 13 medium and my feet are 14AA! I never was issued combat boots that fit until just before I shipped home from Bremerhaven, Germany, when I finally received two pair.

Once you hit combat, there is no such thing as ‘being out of uniform.’ Sergeant. Robert H. Munz, of Kearny, New Jersey, of the motor maintenance crew was issued two left foot shoe-paks (no right shoe-pak). One day, as the company was advancing through France, a little French boy observed Sergeant Munz with the shoe-pak problem, pointed to the left shoe-pak on the right

foot, and laughed. His mother promptly admonished him for laughing and said, "That brave American soldier was probably crippled as he attempted to save the French population." Little did she know that the only action Sergeant Munz saw was that of changing the oil in an army truck!

I did not accept the customary one week furlough and asked to be included in the next group to be sent to Army Specialized Training Program basic training. My Irish mother proved to be correct. My family did not see me again for three years. I am not good at saying goodbye.

From Camp Grant, I was sent to Fort Benning, Georgia, the home of the infantry school. I was in the first group (the 4th Regiment) of ASTP candidates to be given basic training at Fort Benning. Most of them were fresh from college and in miserable physical condition. We were located in the Harmony Church area. Our average day consisted of reveille, breakfast, followed by one hour of calisthenics, a half hour of hand to hand combat and a half hour of close order drill. We then had about two hours of basic training. Following lunch there was additional basic training, including indoctrination, and the cleaning and care of weapons. Marching, of various types, was also a part of basic training, despite the hot June weather in Georgia.

Officer Candidate School (OCS) for infantry was located at Fort Benning and a full class of 2nd lieutenants was graduated each and every day. Since ASTP trainees were 'the cream of the crop' and destined to be future officers, the top two 2nd lieutenants from each class were chosen to train us. They were excellent officers and good role models. The non commissioned officers (non-coms), or cadre, were all regular army and did not take too kindly to the college boys. The cadre were all good soldiers and hand-picked for the assignment of the difficult mission of converting these citizen soldiers to hardened infantry. I owe my life and gratitude to the drill sergeants' training.

We were the first group to fire on the Martin (or Marlin) Rifle Range. At the end of the day many trees had been cut down from rifle fire because they were in direct line behind the targets, and the 30 caliber bullets went through the tree trunks, cutting them in two. Later, at Fort Bragg, everyone had to qualify with the Garand M-1 rifle and, amazingly, all participants scored well. Failure to qualify as marksman would require your return until the minimum requirement was met. The very generous men in the pits had 'magic' pencils and helped everyone make marksman by poking holes in the right places.

The infantry basic training was the usual with one exception - we went on a forced march on a very hot day. Only about one-fifth of us completed the march. I just made it by lying in a stream and cooling off at the last break time. One of the men died of heat exhaustion. Following that march, I heard that our colonel was later 'transferred.'

Two items of interest here: (1) I remember a young father from South Carolina, James Windham, who was the most homesick person I had ever met. He was a Southern boy from Greenville, South Carolina, who had never been away from home and, to top that off, he was a recent father of a son who he loved and greatly missed. (2) I recall a soldier who was the typical misfit. He liked to sleep late, was fat and sloppy, and feared that the Army was going to cause him to lose his individuality.

It may be of interest to know that since only two of us candidates were married, I asked the colonel for, and received, a cadre pass. This meant I could go on pass every night that we did not have a night problem, to be with my wife who was in Columbus, Georgia. I have never heard of any other soldier getting to be with his wife during basic training. Lou Ann came to Columbus and rented a closed-in back porch from a Rev. Davis and his family. He was a Methodist minister. How I lived through all that heat and sand I will never know, but it was delightful since Lou Ann was there. She always managed to be with me in case I needed her.

Upon completion of basic training, I was offered a chance to go to Infantry OCS because I was a good soldier and received no demerits during training. After a conference with my platoon lieutenant, I took his sound advice to refuse the infantry assignment because I was supposed to get some college education in engineering and become an officer in the Combat Engineers, which would be a much preferred assignment.

Many of us were then sent to Charleston, South Carolina, to attend the Citadel to study Basic Engineering. We arrived October 11, 1943. My aptitude tests clearly showed that I was weak in biological sciences and should not be a dentist. Their assessment of the results indicated that I should pursue an education in engineering.

Lou Ann went to Charleston and found a room to rent, which was only a block from the campus, from a Lieutenant Commander John Colter and his wife - very nice people from Boston. He worked at the Naval Yard in the de-gauzing department. I never quite understood why he was only a Lieutenant Commander with all those years of service, until I realized that he was under cover for Naval Intelligence. The climate in Charleston is warm and pleasant. The people are friendly and I was certain that this was my kind of life. We were extremely inconvenienced by my confinement to barracks during the week but oh, what wonderful weekends! As always, Lou Ann was self-sufficient and procured a job working for the bus lines, which were owned by the city. While stationed in Charleston, there happened a little snow storm - the first snow to fall in 25 years. Lou Ann was the only employee who showed up for work but, remember, she grew up in Elgin, North Dakota! Some of the employees damaged the windshields of their vehicles by putting hot water on them to melt the ice!

The main drawback to the Citadel teaching engineering was that, as a military college, they were weak in instructors qualified to teach engineering. Our freshman chemistry instructor was a German language instructor, who had taken a course in chemistry 15 years previous.

Another student and I helped him teach the course.

Army life at the Citadel was wonderful. There were three quadrangles which held about 500 men each. Two were occupied by the Army and the third was occupied by Citadel cadets. There was the usual rivalry between different groups. We lived by both Army and cadet rules: stand and sit at a brace or attention, walk only at right angles, two men to a room, white glove inspection weekly, and march to and from classes. I liked military life! Classes were accelerated and scheduled to cover one semester of college training every three months. There was a lot of homework in order to try to keep up with the pace. It was said that, 'drop your pencil and you are one week behind when you pick it up.'

We were" restricted to barracks" except on weekends. This is accomplished by shutting and locking the gates at night. One very good soldier by the name of Saul Saila did a very

disturbing thing. He and his roommate would remove the iron grating from their first floor window and go "A.W.O.L" most every night. They never got caught yet I pondered over this activity. Later on during combat, I asked Saul about this action and he explained that he was under orders to accompany his roommate at all times. It seems that his roommate's father was under surveillance as a communist.

While at the Citadel, I went out for the boxing team and would spar with the cadets. I thought that I was pretty good until the boxing coach put me in the ring with a short redhead. He would feign a left jab and when I would reach to counter it, he would give me a left hook to the head. After about the fifth time, and since I was having trouble seeing, I dropped my gloves and he quit hitting me. The coach laughed and said, "Brownie, you were getting a little too cocky, so I put you up against Red. He whipped everybody at the marine base at Paris Island last year." Some joke! That weekend as I was lying on the bed talking to Lou Ann she said, "I thought you promised me not to box anymore." I said, "You are right." Her reply was for me to close one eye and look in the mirror. Both eyelids were black and blue! This was the end of my boxing career. I had been a sparring partner for the golden glove aspirants while I was in high school.

At this time the Army high command realized that 20 additional infantry divisions would be required if we were to win the war. The soldiers needed to fill the 20 divisions were obtained in the following manner. The Army Specialized Training Program and Air Force cadets were 'washed-out' or disbanded. Examinations were given to those of us who wanted to become physicians or dentists. Those who failed were shipped to Fort Bragg, near Fayetteville, North Carolina. There were a few wives who wanted to follow their husbands to Fort Bragg, so they attached a train car to the end of our troop train and Lou Ann traveled with the troops. While stationed at Fort Bragg, Lou Ann rented a room with the Skeels family in Fayetteville, and worked at the Army Main Post.

We arrived to join the Century, or 100th Infantry Division, about March 25, 1944. I was assigned to D Company, 397th Infantry Regiment. I trained a few weeks with the heavy weapons platoon's water cooled 30 caliber machine guns and 80 millimeter mortars. The division was being prepared to be a combat division and no longer a replacement training division. They provided 15,000 replacements for combat divisions before this time, which is almost enough to staff a division. (The Century Division probably had the highest intelligence quotient of any infantry division ever formed, due to the large number of college kids.)

One day an officer came by and stated they needed volunteers to be trained in intelligence and reconnaissance. This Intelligence and Reconnaissance (I & R) Platoon was being formed for Regimental Headquarters Company 397th Infantry. I decided that I did not want to carry a water cooled machine gun or an 80 millimeter mortar around, so I volunteered. I do not know why they accepted me since most of the others were fluent in at least one foreign language. After transfer to Headquarters Company, I specialized in Scouting & Patrolling and had extensive training in map reading and interpretation. Technical Sergeant Pfeiffer, a regular Army man, was our trainer. His expression of "gather round the map board men" soon was known to mean 'give me your attention.' We received lots of training about getting from one place to another with a map and compass as our only guide. We had many day and night training programs and this was great preparation for our jobs in combat.

While at Fort Bragg, I was one of the six-footers chosen to form the New York Battalion to participate in a parade and demonstrate and help in the Fifth War Loan Drive. I would drive a jeep to a gathering of civilians where we would fire a few blank rounds into the air for effect and then the battalion would parade. After the crowd had gathered, the speaker would auction off the spent rounds to the highest war bond bidder, claiming it was a souvenir of some sniper who had killed a German with it. (Of course we let the rounds cool off first.) I had a great time in New York City and enjoyed my free time. Many things were free to soldiers in uniform and very few civilians would let a soldier spend any money for anything. I saw Radio City Music Hall, the Rockettes, the Empire State Building and Times Square, where I enjoyed the company of New York girls at the USO. You did not need a formal introduction to meet nice girls. They were really fun to talk to and were anxious to dance with us cowboys from the mid-west.

After a fun time in New York, it was back to Fort Bragg for more training and then to the demarcation area at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, by September 30, 1944. Lou Ann, in her usual self-reliant manner, returned by way of Washington, DC, and Chicago, to her parents' house in Lincoln, Illinois. She lived with them and her younger sister, Beverly Jean, until after the war ended. She was then employed by the Logan County Selective Service Bureau. Her social life consisted of friendships with other war widows. I never doubted her faithfulness or had any fear of receiving a 'Dear John' letter. She was always gorgeous and I am certain she turned the head of many 4-Fs. Men who could not pass the physical exam and worked as civilians toward the war effort were called 4-Fs.

We boarded the ship USTT George Washington for the trip. (This was the same ship that President Woodrow Wilson took over to Europe to sign the League of Nations charter.)

My version might be a little different from that of the Division of the Century. Boarding the ship, you walked up the gangplank carrying a full field pack, rifle and duffle bag. A boarding officer called your name and you responded with your rank and serial number. I guess you are supposed to salute and then board. How you do that with such a load I do not know! Leaving the Statue of Liberty and New York Harbor under our conditions was not pleasant. We were on D Deck - that means four floors below the water line.

I need to explain that infantrymen, especially in reconnaissance, need to bond with another infantryman. This is someone with whom you can trust your life. He is your buddy. At some point in my training this man, Bernard E. Brauer, of Olney, Illinois and I chose one another.

After we got out to sea, we were lying in our bunks and I was next to the bulkhead, or wall, so I said, "Brauer, if I were a submarine captain, I would aim right about here," and I slapped the bulkhead. You should have seen the guys climb the ladder to topside! For two weeks we were aboard ship, so we did many things. Card games were great and, after I lost what money I had, (two soldiers ended up with all the money aboard ship), Bob Teitz and Bernard Brauer taught me three handed pinochle. Everyone read a lot and wrote letters home. Brauer and I would do 'other things,' such as stand in front of a soldier; Brauer would lean out one direction and I would lean out the other. We would continue doing this, back and forth, until the poor soldier would run for the rail to be sick. Some sense of humor!

I was one of the lucky ones for I do not remember much trouble with sea sickness. Those of us who did not get sea sick were assigned to kitchen police or to help in serving the food. All personnel stood at long tables to eat. The ship would pitch to and fro and your food would slide back and forth on the table.

We did, however, run into a terrible hurricane and I understood it was one of the most powerful in many years. I understand that the rudder of the USTT George Washington was damaged by the storm. It fell back from the convoy to complete repairs. It almost collided with one of the smaller ships during the night. We were not aware of this act and just tried to maintain some degree of balance.

We had all been warned about keeping our location a secret, so I was a little surprised when Berlin Sally greeted us as we arrived at Marseilles with “Welcome to General Burrell and the 100th Infantry Division to Marseilles, France.” We all listened to her on the radio. She played good music and provided stupid propaganda. Sally would attempt to play on your lonesomeness and suspicion. Her favorite topic was the 4-Fs who were sleeping with our wives and girlfriends while we were fighting a losing war. What a joke!

We were the first troops to disembark at Marseilles, France, after it was taken from the German occupation troops. They had scuttled and otherwise damaged ships and docks before being thrown out. It was a mess. We did get to shore with our equipment but it was difficult.

The invasion of Southern France was titled Dragoon and later Anvil. The American Generals and Stalin were in favor of this maneuver but Churchill did all he could to avoid it. He preferred a landing in the Balkans or more troops to Italy. Three American divisions plus three French divisions attacked Toulon and Marseilles. It was very successful and they penetrated 20 miles before being relieved. The 3rd, 36th, and 45th. American divisions were involved in the invasion. We relieved the 45th in November.

Since I was officially a jeep driver, I had the pleasure of removing a jeep from its’ shipping crate and assembling it. Of course, the motor sergeant was a great help! I named my jeep *Ambrose* and carried a horse shoe on the front of the radiator for good luck. This was in honor of the 1928 Chevrolet coupe that I had at Lincoln College. I was designated as the jeep driver for Corporal John Burbank. He was a quiet sort of soldier who knew his business and how to get it done.

When we arrived at the staging area, we proceeded to build a very long ‘slit-trench,’ and a many-holed latrine which provided no privacy. The French used to come by and marvel at this. There was no enclosure at all - just sit there and be admired! In return, we thought it very strange to see a couple out for a romantic stroll and then for the man to step over to the curbing to urinate, while holding his lovers hand.

We learned very early to dig a trench around our pup-tent to guide the water and muck away from our sleeping area. I assumed that I would be living in a tent much of the time, but that was not the case. Seldom did I have the misfortune of lying in a slit-trench or foxhole and sweating out a mortar or artillery barrage. I usually, at least, had a roof or some kind of protection over my head as I attempted to get some sleep.

Our platoon had seven jeeps. Two had a 50 caliber machine gun mounted between and behind the front seats. We added, or mounted, a 30 caliber air cooled machine gun, which Bernard Brauer brought back from Paris, on the right front of our scout jeep. It could be fired by the person seated in the right front seat. It was very effective on 'jeep patrol.' Our platoon consisted of one officer who was a 1st lieutenant, (and who reported directly to a Major Barkley, or S-2, for the 397th Infantry Regiment), one Technical Sergeant (Sergeant Pfeiffer) and two squads of nine men each. Our squad leader non-coms were Buck Sergeants (Sergeants Leccese and Sweeney) and two Buck Corporals (Corporals Burbank and Grogan). The privates were divided up as jeep drivers, radio operators and scouts. The platoon acquired a jeep trailer, which I believe was once issued to division. We accumulated a variety of weapons which we carried in this trailer. We had a 'Bazooka,' a Browning automatic rifle, two Thompson submachine guns, an M-3 'Grease Gun,' or 45 caliber submachine gun, a 31 millimeter mortar, a couple of 30 caliber carbines, and ammunition for all of them. When you were assigned to a patrol, you just helped yourself to weapons from the trailer.

I was trained to get information or deliver messages from Regimental Headquarters Company to battalion or division. I was not supposed to fight unless it was to get myself out of some situation. My duties, when on patrol, were to get information and not to kill, or take ground or prisoners, as a combat patrol would do. I spent a lot of time as a forward observer in observation or listening posts. These were usually manned by two men whose mission it was to warn the main line of resistance (MLR) in the event of an attack or any unusual situation. These posts, or foxholes, were usually positioned about one to two thousand yards in front of the American lines. We would have a telephone line as connection to the command post. Sometimes we used a radio. Many times we would direct or adjust artillery fire.

I actually enjoyed much of Army life up until the time when they started shooting back at me. During a lull in the fighting in France, I actually volunteered to be the jeep driver for the marques or The Free French of the Interior. They were an unusual type of soldier and never in any uniform. Each had his reason for volunteering for such a dangerous activity. They did not care to discuss it. They knew that the result was their death if they got caught on any mission and yet they either were fearless or were driven by a loyalty to France. I never drove for any women volunteers but there were many available. I would pick up 'Frenchy,' (Rene Croissant), a Tech. 4, from New York City, and we would join a group of two to six French civilians. They would open a bottle of wine which we all toasted and I would deliver the civilians to some outpost which was as far I dared to go with the jeep. I would wait for them to sneak through the German lines, get information and return. After a few trips I decided that my future would be in jeopardy if the German soldiers would catch me. I resigned and returned to more normal I & R duty.

The tension, at times, was almost unbearable. On patrol, your next step may blow off your foot by a shoe mine. The next rifle shot you may not hear for you are dead. Maybe humor, or an attempt at it, is healthy. I do not know how any front line infantryman was able to endure the constant artillery fire. Many times short rounds from our 'Friendly Fire,' or our own artillery, landed with disastrous results. You often think, "Which round has my name on it?"

While in combat, I was told to report to Technical Sergeant Pfeiffer, who had just received a battlefield promotion to 2nd Lieutenant. He informed me that Corporal. Douglas Grogan had received a battlefield promotion to 2nd Lieutenant and I was being promoted to

Assistant Squad Leader, which carried the rank of Corporal. I respectfully informed Lieutenant Pfeiffer that I preferred to remain a Private First Class and not have the responsibility of an Assistant Squad Leader. He told me to accept the promotion or they would transfer a corporal from another platoon to the position. This we did not want so I accepted and became responsible for 9 other soldiers. Private First Class Bernard Brauer, of Olney, Illinois, became my jeep driver and was under my command. This was very difficult for us since he and I had been buddies so far through training and combat. We even called one another 'Buddy Brown' and 'Buddy Brauer' by name, which Lieutenant Pfeiffer really did not like.

To receive a "battle field" commission is a special honor for an infantryman. This is usually given to a Sgt. who is doing the job and filling a void caused by an officer casualty or promotion. This works better than sending an inexperienced Second Lieutenant as a replacement. The casualty rate for Second Lieutenants is extremely high especially among the good soldiers who accept the responsibility for protection of 40 other men. The average non-commissioned soldier really does not want the honor. I prefer to be a Private First Class. I encouraged a member of our platoon to refuse such a promotion. "Tangle foot" Gormsen, whose father was a colonel, was offered one. He said his father would be so proud of him and his promotion. I asked him what his mother might think about receiving a letter edged in black. He remained a Pfc. and survived the war.

I do not know why my driver and I were back at division headquarters but we had some free time. Pfc. Brauer decided to wash the jeep. While we were hosing it down, the photographer for *LIFE* magazine came by and took a picture. The folks back home were delighted when they saw the picture with the caption, 'GI'S CLEANING THEIR JEEP AT THE FRONT.' We laughed, for we felt that division was so far back and away from the front that we did not carry our rifles. An infantryman is usually very close to his weapon!

One time Brauer and I were driving down a wooded road or forest lane on jeep patrol and I noticed him pointing to my left sleeve. I asked, "What the hell are you doing?" He said he was indicating to any German sniper that I outranked him. In other words, "Shoot him, not me, he outranks me." A combat infantryman's sense of humor is hard to explain. Some things that we thought were very funny were actually very 'sick'

While in France, we had various problems when the French Armored Companies were attached to us. They would not coordinate with the infantry squad that was assigned to them. The infantry squad is to protect the tank from enemy *panzerfausts* or anti-tank weapons. The French tanks would rush through a town or objective and leave the infantry to retake the objective without tank support. They were killers and not good soldiers, had little or no organization, and no accommodations for prisoners of war. Saul Saila, a member of our unit, asked about this fact and the answer was, "What prisoners?" They hated all German soldiers. They would tell us stories that would 'curl your hair' of what the German soldiers did to their wives, mothers and daughters. They only wanted to kill for revenge. Their hatred was almost as great as the feeling between Russian and German soldiers. The American infantryman and the German grenadier had a mutual respect for one another. One bad habit was the fact that the tankers would set buckets of gas on fire to keep warm. The worst part was that they would light up the sky and paid very little attention to the silhouetting, and artillery fire it would draw.

The story is told of the GI who had fallen asleep in his foxhole. He woke up to find a German soldier who wanted to surrender, sitting there with the GI's rifle taken apart. He had disabled the rifle so he could not be shot, but wanted to be taken prisoner.

The time I felt coldest was when we had established an observation and listening outpost located in the Maginot Line. I was sitting in a concrete bunker wrapped in my overcoat, sweater, etc., and huddling in an army blanket. I thought that I would freeze to death! They tell us that the winter of 1944-45 was one of the most severe in many years. Next time let's fight in the spring!

Early in December I got a short furlough in Nancy, France, the heart of the French perfume industry and toy business. I bought a large bottle of perfume for Lou Ann and shipped it to her. I also paid for a large selection of toy trains, which never arrived at my nephew's house. As they say, "So goes the war!"

I had so much invasion currency in my possession that I almost lost my mind trying to get it to the United States. Various methods were: (1) have a soldier make out five money orders to me for \$100.00 each. I would keep four and endorse one over to him. (2) I would buy stamps through the company clerk and send them home to my wife and brother (3) I would locate officers who recently arrived from the United States and pay more than the regular exchange rate for their American currency. Officers were allowed to bring a certain amount of American currency with them - I know not why. (4) I would give the money away. I sometimes gave money to GI's who were going on leave and who had little or no money to spend. This amounted to about \$9,000.00 while I was stationed at Bremerhaven waiting to be shipped back home. I also had a collection of nine or 10 fine mint condition pistols. I was allowed to take only one home, so I gave the others away. I still have the 7.65 mm. Walther PP model pistol (serial #146400 P) that is my prize possession of WWII.

The Non-fraternization Act, was a farce and very unfair to the average GI. It was a failure. The French would set up brothels as soon as they located in a town. The brothels were supervised and reasonably safe. Hitler had taught the German girls to be 'friendly' to the German soldiers and they thought promiscuity was a way of life. Most American soldiers soon learned that the average German girl would trade sex for most anything.

The Currency Control Act was established because many, if not most, of the GI's were involved in the disposal of American cigarettes, commonly known as The Black Market. Most veterans thought of it as a part of the system of the 'spoils of war' and not illegal. I had not yet learned to smoke so I sold most of my issue of American cigarettes. I did learn, however, to smoke a pipe and burned the heck out of my tongue!

The problem with The Non-fraternization Act was that it was so extreme. An American soldier was not allowed to be under the same roof with a German citizen. This required us to evict the German family from their home when we took possession. They were given one or two hours to get out. It would have been a lot more reasonable to have allowed them to stay in part of the house and for us to use the rest but, no, the 'non-segregation policy' was put into effect.

Some high ranking officer or politician must have decided this to help him get votes from the wives and sweethearts of the civilian population. If that was the case, it was an utter failure. In fact, it made some otherwise good soldiers criminals. The sex drive is very strong.

During the Battle of Heilbronn, we established an observation post in a beer hall to get first hand information for S-2. Brauer and I would take two five-gallon water cans along and bring back refreshments for the platoon. We had to go in under the cover of darkness because the Germans had established direct fire down, through, or upon the main street. We would stay all day, go back under the cover of darkness and report the day's observation. It was sort of fun and not very dangerous, as long as you did not drink too much or expose yourself to enemy fire.

Our primary mission was the observation of an attempt by the combat engineers to build a pontoon bridge across the Neckar River. The line troops needed tank support for they had made a crossing by boats. The fighting was fierce and from house to house. The *Krauts* had direct "88 fire" concentrated on the bridge area and just before our engineers could complete the bridge they would destroy it again and again. "Amphibious Tanks" attempted to cross but they sank to the bottom of the river. Finally, black chemical mortar troops were brought in and under protection of a smoke screen, the bridge was completed. The tanks crossed and were used to route the enemy from the stone buildings. We watched this calamity from the nearby pub, with relative safety. Waiting to relay the message of success was hard on the nerves but one of our jobs. It was not easy to observe or to recollect from memory and report.

One day some GI had liberated a motorcycle and was riding up and down 'our street.' Brauer hollered out, "Get off our street." He had no longer finished calling out when an 88 went down the street with a swish-boom! He hollered, "See what I mean?" Of course the cyclist departed from 'our street.'

Another time, Buddy Brauer sort of disappeared for awhile. When he returned, he was half drunk, having had a little too much in the way of refreshments. His arms were covered with wrist watches and his pockets full of rings. I picked out a nice wedding ring and wore it for many days. Brauer had just liberated a jewelry store. He liked explosives and practiced blowing things up. He was good at placing quarter pound blocks of TNT at the base of a tree and causing it to fall over a road or car path. This was a quick way to build a road block. While we were in Heilbronn, he disappeared for awhile and when he came back his pockets were loaded with paper currency. He exclaimed, "I did it! I did it! I just blew open the vault of the town bank." He was a great guy and a good soldier!

One of the many times that I was on outpost duty, a frightening thing happened. Our only contact with friendly troops was a telephone wire laid from our outpost to the message center at Regimental Headquarters. We had an agreement with the message center that they would keep the radio music on for us to listen to. One night the sound of music stopped and I felt panic. I thought that a German patrol had bypassed our post, found the line, cut it and was on their way back to eliminate us. Thank God, I was wrong! When we got back from the mission, I went to the message center and raised hell. What actually happened was that the captain in charge had dropped by and made the guys turn off the radio. It seems funny now but it sure wasn't then.

There were other problems with the French. It was at this time, between April 30th and

May 10th, that I saw General Dwight Eisenhower's staff car pass, on his way to pacify Generals LeClerc and Burrell. The French political leaders were interested in removing all machinery and portable materials from the factories and carrying them to France. They were 'sacking' Stuttgart. General Eisenhower ordered the 397th Regimental Headquarters Company to Eislingen, while the French looted Stuttgart. From May 10th to June 13th, we occupied Illertissen. From there, we went to Goppingen from June 13th to July 7th, and back to Stuttgart on July 7, 1945.

Another problem we had with the French was the fact that they disregarded orders and 'took Stuttgart,' or entered it instead of letting the Americans take it. The battle plan from General Eisenhower was for the 100th Infantry Division to proceed as rapidly as possible and capture Stuttgart. The German army, in its' rapid retreat, destroyed the bridges or in some way made it possible for the French to overrun the city. When we arrived, they had placed armed guards at all beer halls and wine cellars to ensure that we bought our alcohol from them.

Our solution to buying beer from the French was the following, and we did it over and over again. Four of us would drive around the city with an extra rotor from a jeep in our pocket. When we spotted a French jeep with no attending driver, two of us would jump out of our jeep, place the rotor in the French jeep, (for a jeep driver always disabled his jeep by removing the rotor) and drive away while the other two soldiers would block the road with their jeep. The two who liberated the French jeep would drive to our company motor pool, drive into a garage, and the next morning guess what - there was a freshly painted American jeep that we would trade to the French for booze. The 'money for booze' situation became so bad that the enlisted men in the 100th Infantry Division were preparing for armed combat with the French - we were ready to fight and take what we wanted!

The Roman soldiers were paid partly by issue of salt rations and partly by the 'spoils of war.' The American GI collected souvenirs and thought of it as partly the 'spoils of war.' When our regiment was located in Stuttgart, we were housed in a mansion at the top of a hill on Koenig Strauss. I just happened to 'locate' the family silverware and was descending the spiral staircase with it in my arms when the house frau appeared from nowhere. I did a little quick thinking and warned her that the American soldiers would liberate her family silverware if she did not protect it. From that time to the end of our visit in her home she treated me like a king.

One interesting mission was when we were occupying Reon L'Etape. Normally, we protected ourselves by staying indoors, preferably in a cellar, while in a combat area. It became obvious that we had a problem when every time a group of our men got together outside, we would be hit by an artillery barrage, so-called 'incoming mail!' The mission of the I & R Platoon was to determine who the culprit was, where he was, and how this was possible. We thought we had done an efficient job of clearing the area. The fact was that there was a nice tall smokestack in the area and a German artillery observer had been left behind to harass the troops. We took care of that problem.

Pfc. Brauer was sent to Paris, France for rest and relaxation (R. & R) and when returning he 'relieved' someone at Army level of a 30 caliber air cooled light machine gun & tripod. (It was considered okay to reconnoiter and relieve from those behind you, but never from those between you and the front.) He carried it in his duffel bag.

The I & R Platoon shared any packages from home. If a buddy received a package and mail call was when you were out on patrol, it was customary to wait until all were together to share and celebrate. Packages from home were highlights in our existence. Lou Ann was great about sending goodies. We all looked forward to her fudge, which she would pack in popcorn to help it survive the Army Postal Service system and keep it from breaking. One time packages arrived and I did not wait but opened the package. Much to our chagrin, during the trip over, sea water had seeped into the package and the fudge had a green layer of mildew covering it. One four-man patrol was still out but as soon as they arrived I announced that a package had arrived from Lou Ann and passed the fudge to Saul Saila, a member of our unit. We all had a good laugh at the expression on his face until he whipped out his knife from his boot top and cut himself a piece of fudge. We waited and watched for signs of illness as he went on enjoying the fudge. Well, it was not very long until all of us were scraping off the green stuff and eating fudge. No one had any ill effects, except the fact that Saul got more than his fair share.

Sergeant Pfeiffer got our attention one morning with his "Gather around the map board, men!" The new mission of the I & R Platoon was to find a route where the division could move forward without stopping. The German Army was retreating with little or no rear action. The 100th Division was to line up and keep moving forward as quickly as possible, with the 397th in the front. Our job was to proceed as quickly as possible to the next road hazard. It might be a blown out bridge, a few felled trees, abandoned vehicles, or whatever might cause the line to stop. We would then notify the engineers, or whoever, to get the road opened. That might mean line troops were required to eliminate any small group who wanted to fight. We did this by sending one jeep back with information each time we hit a snag. The rest of us tried to clear the hazard as best we could. It was sort of fun but sometimes a little dangerous. We assumed that there were no mined roads. If we were wrong the lead jeep would be destroyed. If the road block was properly manned, line troops or a tank would be called up to destroy it. As to the type of resistance we usually met during the rapid advance, I would say it was minimal. That was true unless you were the one needed to overcome the obstacle! Many times, the resistance was a small group of old men and young boys. There is not much glory to capturing an old man or a 10-year old boy who is so scared that he is crying and wetting his pants.

An example of American GI ingenuity is when it became necessary to dig a foxhole in frozen ground. A GI would fire a clip (eight rounds) of ammunition into the ground. This would loosen up the top soil and make it easier to dig. Not a bad idea!

The interrogating team told the story about the SS Officer who, when being interrogated, said, "You stupid Americans cannot win this war. You do not follow the book. An American soldier will place his weapon where the digging is easiest, even though the field of fire is not the best." That describes GI Joe and his ingenuity. He knew the book but he was practical!

During occupation in Stuttgart, there was not much for the I & R Platoon to do, so S-2 thought up little gems to keep us busy. Most of these missions involved procedures that were illegal, one of which was assigned to me since I did a lot of horseback riding alone. I was to befriend, and gain the confidence of, a certain girl by the name of Ingeborg, who sort of hung around the stables. She invited me to her house to meet her sister and brother-in-law, Helmut Haller, who was the owner of Reif, Wagon & Klein, a company that made the tank trailers for hauling gasoline etc., for the Luftwaffe. I met them and their neighbor, Mr. Keibler, who was the

architect that designed all the bridges on the Autobahn in Bavaria. We decided to get together to play cards and, while doing that, we would learn German and English. For one half hour only English could be spoken and the next half hour only German. That was fine except there was a ruling that no GI was allowed under the same roof with a German family. This rule was called 'Non-fraternization' - an impossible rule to enforce but a barrier. Major Robert Barkley, S-2, said that he could cover for me if I got caught by our Regimental or Division Military Police. If a VI Corp or Army Military Police caught me he could not protect me from a court-martial. He would claim that he knew nothing of my actions. You realize that I was married and dearly loved my wife, but the army did not seem to think that was important because I was the only source it had with Mr. Haller and Mr. Keibler. So, I sneaked into their house and we played pinochle. This mission involved many meetings and when the sister and brother-in-law arranged too much time for Ingeborg and me to be alone; I lost interest and terminated the relationship. I felt that they were attempting to arrange a way for her to get American citizenship by marrying an American soldier and becoming an American citizen. Mr. Haller and Mr. Keibler did disclose information about many of their associates and appropriate action was taken.

Another mission was an assignment given to Sergeant Leccese, T-5 Korman, and myself. We were to be postage stamp collectors and call on known stamp dealers to barter for their inventory. Leccese collected only US postage stamps, I collected only German, and Korman collected all the rest. They would not sell for money so we traded butter, gasoline, bread, meat and cigarettes for their stock. I brought home a great collection of German postage stamps that I collected. It was complete with both mint and canceled stamps, as far as those printed after 1937. Hitler used the issues to provide money to promote the party and himself. The dealers were also very cooperative with information once they realized that we were not after them.

General Eisenhower held a conference in Stuttgart between Pinky Burress, our General and the French General LeClerc for many reasons, one of which was that the 100th Division infantrymen and the French infantrymen were getting ready to fight over the access to beer. I saw General Eisenhower's command car pass us. We were moved out of Stuttgart for a few weeks while the French looted truck after truck, carrying things back to France. We were not the only ones who liberated items. The battle plan was for the 100th Infantry Division to capture Stuttgart but the French wanted the victory for themselves. They aborted the mission and proceeded to take Stuttgart and immediately put armed guards on all beer halls.

On patrol, we worked in four-man teams. A jeep patrol had a driver, a control man in the passenger seat up front and two riflemen in back. A walking patrol had a lead scout, a second scout, a control man and behind was the get-away man.

Once you returned from a mission, you more or less had free time while the other teams took their turn. This was not always quite true, however. Of course each individual drew his fair time on guard duty, which was always lonely and cold. After a few minutes your eyes would see all types of movement, etc. We, at Regimental Headquarters, were almost always far enough back from the front placing us in little or no danger from attacking forces. There was always battalion in front of us, company in front of them split into platoons, and then squads at the main line of resistance or the front where the foxholes were located.

The I & R Platoon usually had some protection from the elements. It might only be a

barn, an abandoned house or shed and sometimes a palatial home. It was seldom a tent or bare ground. We had it good compared to the line troops, except when on patrol. The line troops did not want our job and I frequently thanked God that I did not have their job. The medics, or medical aid men, assigned to squads or platoons had it the worst of all infantrymen. They would go out into mine fields and be under an artillery barrage to give aid to anyone who called out, "medic!" They were the bravest of all. For a time the German snipers were shooting at the red cross, which was painted on a white circle on the helmets of our medics. For this reason, they had to revert to plain helmets. Some began carrying a side arm which was against the *Geneva Convention*. The State Department boys did not have to play by the ridiculous rules that they set up. I wish they had! There seemed to be a breakdown between the idealistic thoughts of civilians and the reality of combat. The infantryman must be guided by his conscious and make his own rules to survive.

What did we do in our free time? What free time during war with the infantry? What a joke! You know what I mean. At times, as a group, we would gather around the heat source, usually a pot-bellied stove with a flat top (very convenient for toasting bread to eat with orange marmalade) and sing to combat homesickness. It was a different type of homesickness, for most of us never thought that we would ever get home; you live for today only and the rest is all a dream. We would discuss why we were there and how we could do the things we were required to do. We generally agreed that we were there so our families would not have to experience warfare as European civilians experienced war.

My job did have its' bad times but they were of short duration. On one occasion, one of our lead, or 1st scouts, Robert Teitz of Chicago, Illinois, was shot in the face by a German sniper. We did not have a medic along and so you did what you could for your comrade. Bob was tough. Another time, jeep driver John W. Atchison, from Roxbury, Massachusetts, while serving as a scout, and was separated from his three companions, which left him alone to fend for himself. He later appeared from nowhere and had made his way back through our MLR. We almost went into shock and took an oath that, henceforth, all or none would return from every patrol. When you were sent on a suicide patrol, you wrote your wife a letter saying that your death was necessary and that she should remarry since she was still young. She was not to be bitter, for the mission was necessary and it was your turn to go. The letter was held until the patrol was completed. It was destroyed if you made it back. Then there were the times on reconnaissance patrol when a flare would go off and you had to freeze, praying that the Volkstrom would not spot you.

On another occasion, a Sherman tank commander refused to move forward as support for our line soldiers because the road was not posted as 'cleared of mines.' When asked what it would take to get him to do his job, he replied that he wanted a jeep to proceed in front of his tank to clear for mines. The I & R men did the job. It was interesting that when we were about to round a curve in the road and a sniper took a shot at the jeep. The tankers eliminated the sniper by cannon fire. We had completed our mission so we returned and later found out that a Teller Tank mine was 25 feet ahead of our foremost position.

During the Battle of the Bulge, the Luftwaffe captured some allied fighter planes and Regimental Headquarters Company learned about this the hard way. Some of our men were admiring a fighter plane as it flew overhead until it dropped its' nose, dove, strafed the area and dropped bombs on them. Two men were killed and 10 were sent to the hospital. We were in a

cellar within 300 feet of the bombing. I woke Brauer up and told him to get under the bed for protection. Later, he asked me why I had awakened him. It seems that he preferred to be asleep if and when he was killed.

What are you supposed to do when the telephone lines are repeatedly broken and you think it is from incoming artillery? To your amazement, you walk around a building and see a little old lady with wire cutters in her hand. She was eliminated! These are the things you try to forget!

Pertaining to delivering messages, I must tell about April 22, 1945, the day of the mission for which Brauer and I were decorated with the Silver Star and Bronze Star Medals respectively. This was just two weeks before the war ended in Europe and the German army appeared to be in full retreat. The line troops would encounter a road block, destroy it and the regiment would go 'full speed ahead' to the next attempt to slow them down. The situation was routine and should have been a 'walk in the park.'

On April 21, 1945, Private First Class Bernard Brauer, of Olney, Illinois, and I were assigned to accompany 3rd Battalion 397th Regiment as it advanced through a wooded area. Our purpose was to carry messages back and forth to Regimental Headquarters Company. The troops were advancing so rapidly that the line crews could not keep up with laying telephone lines, and the radios did not always carry over the mountain ridges. Messages were not written but delivered by word of mouth. The battalion had advanced rapidly with little or no resistance. After dusk the rear guard of the retreating German army was overrun. It was a group of horse-drawn wagons and infantrymen. Everything was going well as far as we could tell from our rearward position.

After dawn broke, I was called to the battalion commander and told that they had advanced farther than originally planned and had taken another town. Rather than give up ground, the battalion commander decided to send word back, by us, to call off a scheduled artillery barrage, or air corps dive bombing. The mission was simple enough. It was to retrace our route as quickly as possible and convey the message in time to keep our artillery from shelling a town that we had secured and occupied.

We started back through the wooded and very hilly, even mountainous, area. All was going as expected until Brauer said, "*Kraut* at 1:00 o'clock." I looked up and at the crest of the next hill lay a German infantryman looking down his rifle at us. Brauer asked, "What do we do?" and I replied, "We came through last night. Hit the gas!" As we proceeded down the road there were German soldiers walking toward us with their rifles slung over their shoulders. They were on both sides of the road and I suppose they were just as surprised to see us as we were to see them. It is not very often that you encounter an armed vehicle approaching you from the rear. Dumb me! Thinking they wanted to surrender, I leaned out of the jeep and motioned for them to keep proceeding. I figured the battalion would take them prisoner. It was not long before I realized that these soldiers still had a lot of fight left in them.

Further down the road, they had set up a road block in an area where there was a deep drop-off on both sides of the highway. As we tried to stop, they fired a machine gun across the road in front of us and let us drive into the field of fire. A tracer bullet came from behind,

between our heads and in front of my face. I dove out of the jeep and down the embankment. Brauer came behind the jeep and down to me. I asked him if he was hit and he answered, "Yes." I said, "You hit bad?" He answered, "Yes." I decided to surrender, stood up and hollered, "*Komerad!*" They were not taking any prisoners that day so they fired the machine gun again and we both went down. There was no sound from Brauer.

I lay in a ditch with water in it and every time I tried to crawl away the shots hit in around me. I decided to play dead. I removed my 'souvenir pistol' from my left shirt pocket and jammed it in the mud. It was customary to place a captured pistol in the mouth of any surrendering soldier and empty the magazine. So-o-o! I made a couple more moves and when they came close I tried to act as though I had been killed. I know not how long I lay there with my eyes closed, my mouth open with the water running in and out, and trying not to shake so violently. I could hear the *Krauts* setting fire to our jeep and very excitedly getting out of there. I guess our appearance from behind them really shook them up. An infantryman fears a flank attack that will cut him off from his buddies. I do not understand why they did not check us to be sure we both were dead. We always did.

I made some promises to God, if he would only let me live, that are hard to keep. I am still amazed at the feeling of closeness to God that one can feel. After a while I could hear a tank rumbling along in the distance. It sounded like a Sherman tank but I was not sure. Then it dawned on me that the standard procedure for tanks at road blocks was to push the roadblock out of the way and proceed. So, I had a fifty-fifty chance of the tank pushing the jeep with burning ammunition on top of me. Not too good!

I stood up and saw an infantryman coming toward me and when he saw me, he raised his rifle. The bore of that barrel looked 10 inches across. I hollered, "Are you guys Americans?" The barrel was still pointed at me. You see, I had my wife send me my favorite leather jacket from home. No one in the infantry is issued a leather jacket, but motorcycle riders in the German Army wore nice leather jackets. I called out our Regimental number, "Are you guys 397th," and he lowered his rifle. It was our next battalion coming up the road and they saved me. I called for a medic, who checked Brauer and stated that he was dead. I checked him also and removed his wrist watch and pistol and then checked our jeep. It had a loaf of bread, and a jacket soaked in gasoline which was stuffed behind the radiator to ignite it. The Battalion jeep radio had a strong transmitting signal to Regimental Headquarters Company and they sent my message.

The Silver Star Medal was awarded to Brauer posthumously and given to his mother, and I received the Bronze Star Medal. We were only attempting to do what we had been trained to do. That was to carry out an order to the best of our ability and to accomplish the mission. I feel that the public relations officer at 397th Infantry Regimental Headquarters Company was very kind and that most citations are awarded due to an infantryman's reaction to his training with a certain situation, and not due to how brave he is.

We had an agreement that when you got into trouble you went out on the next mission. This was a carry-over from the cavalry where, when you fell off your horse, you got up and got back into the saddle. It works to overcome fear. So the next day, I went out with three other men on jeep reconnaissance. I was so jittery that I did not load my rifle for fear I might explode. The

treatment was effective. I was relatively calm and effective on future patrol duty.

I did a very stupid thing when we got back from the jeep patrol. I was told that Regimental Headquarters Company had put Bauer's name in for a recommendation to receive the Bronze Star Medal for heroic achievement. I went barging into the company command post and raised hell, saying that most of the officers had received a Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service. Brauer was killed while doing the liaison officers job and his mother would only receive a Bronze Star Medal as a reward. One of my sergeant friends grabbed me and shoved me out the door while telling me to shut up since I could be court-martialed and shot for insubordination. The Regimental Headquarters Company officers were very understanding and, not only did they not press charges, but awarded Brauer the Silver Star Medal. (174 days of combat & killed 11 days before V-E Day???)

As I stated before, I did not have a very good, or healthy, mental attitude. The officers not only overlooked my outburst but they issued me a pass to visit Brussels, Belgium, for rest and relaxation. I do not know how far it is from near Stuttgart, Germany, to Brussels, Belgium; I only remember that I spent a long time riding in the back of an enclosed truck with some other soldiers.

Upon arrival in Brussels I went into a United Service Organization (USO) building. I was going down a hall and a USO girl ran up, threw her arms around my neck and kissed me. She was yelling, "The war is over! The war is over!" My response was, "Yeah! Tell that to the guys I just left." I went in and played table tennis for an hour or so and when I came out she saw me, came over, and asked me what was wrong. I explained my problem. She listened patiently and was very understanding and sympathetic. It was May 6, 1945, and the war was over in Europe.

The City of Brussels celebrated for three days and nights. For American soldiers, drinks and women were free. I went to a dance that night and was drinking and dancing with a cute little girl, and her mother. The girl's mother said something that sounded like, "*Vou-lay-vou coo-shay et mwaa.*" I said, "I do not understand *coo-shay*," and they both burst into laughter saying, "All American soldiers understand *coo-shay*." I do understand now but I didn't then! It appeared as though love was not a prerequisite to enjoying sex as I had been taught. Sex was given as a gift!

I had no accommodations for sleeping, so I joined some sailors to sleep aboard their ship. Some other sailors had smuggled a girl aboard & she was entertaining the victors. I was offered my turn but I refused, hopefully out of loyalty to Lou Ann but possibly from exhaustion.

Hitler and his men did a very thorough job of teaching the young women, and especially the girls, in the Hitler *Kinder*. They understood that females were the playmates for soldiers. We think our younger generation has low moral standards and are too 'free,' but German women would trade sex for anything they needed or wanted. A pound of butter or five gallons of gasoline would be traded for the services of a woman. When we gave Stuttgart to the French, the *Burgomaster* was directed to provide 500 women for their brothels. It was reported that nearly 5,000 volunteered for service. They were hungry, and being a volunteer was a means to get preferential treatment. The French do take good care of their women, and enjoying sex was a natural social act. The stories in this category are too numerous and do not warrant repetition.

I did not feel sorry for the German or Alsatian civilians but they did have a terrible life. During the occupation, it was not uncommon for a well dressed house frau to stand at the garbage can where we threw our waste food so that she could pick out the salvageable food items for her family. Only the men ate meat - if they had meat!

One time I heard that the 44th Division was coming up onto the MLR, or the front. I got permission to visit a friend, Capt. Tom Alvey of Lincoln, Illinois, who was with a Regimental Headquarters Company. When we found him, we drove nearby and I hollered, "Hi! Tom!" and he shouted, "Don't you know enough, soldier, to salute an officer?" I replied, "Sir, up here, we only salute officers we want German snipers to shoot." He laughed and gave me a hug and a slap on the back. Tom was a good soldier!

When General Patton turned the 3rd Army north to head off the Bulge the 7th Army was forced to defend a two-army front. The I & R Platoon was used as front line troops for 48 hours. I was terrified all the time for I had little or no combat training as a line soldier since basic training. I never before was in the front line at the time of an attack you must have confidence in your training or fear creeps into your brain. Your knees turn to water and you are of little value.

Our commanders in the 7th Army tried to accomplish their mission with the least possible loss of American lives but once they had possession they would not retreat. This was proven by the action during the Battle of Northwind, on December 31, 1944. British Intelligence, ULTRA, had broken the German code and we were informed that a great mass of German troops was preparing to attack the 7th Army. We did not know where, but our front line troops were ready and waiting. The Century Division did not give up any ground and this action gave the VI Corp, Commander, General Patch and then the 7th Army Commander General Devers, time to send up reinforcements to keep the German Army from breaking through to the Savernes Gap. If they had been allowed to take ground by infantry to the Savernes Gap and then send through their two Panzer Divisions, they could then have annihilated the whole 7th Army. Then the 3rd Army, and the war in Europe, could have had a different ending. The German battle plan called for the annihilation of the 100th Infantry Division in the first 24 hours of combat. France would have sued for peace and left England and the United States to face Hitler. The war was far from over in Europe on January 1, 1945. Our Army was spread dangerously thin.

Some missions are not so pleasant, such as a 'suicide patrol.' On one occasion, the front was stagnant. Our Major, S-2, needed more information since the line combat patrols were not producing any prisoners. It was common knowledge that every morning the German forces opposing our troops would send two men, with water cans, down to a well to get water. As gentlemen, our troops respectfully withheld their fire while this was being accomplished. Our forces were on one ridge and the German forces were on the opposing ridge. There was a valley between them with a farm house and barn located on the stream running between the ridges. The well was at the farm house. The mission was to capture the two German soldiers and bring them back for interrogation.

The plan was for the I & R Platoon to infiltrate the barn under the cover of darkness, capture the German soldiers when they came for water, hold them prisoner during the day, and bring them back that night. It was all very simple except that it was obvious to the I & R men that the German artillery would destroy the barn rather than let us take prisoners.

Nine men were chosen to accomplish the task. I was one of them and my job was to carry a 30 caliber light machine gun. Two others were to carry the tripod and ammunition. I 'willed,' or gave, my leather jacket to one of the men, my wrist watch to another, my side arm to another, etc. The idea was for someone to recover my body. Then I wrote a letter to my wife, explaining that the mission was necessary and that it was my turn to proceed. Of course I wrote many personal things but mainly I asked her not to be bitter about my death, and told her that she should remarry and live a normal life because she was still very young. The letter was to be held until after the mission and only sent to her if I did not get back. If we succeeded and returned, then I would destroy the letter. What happened is a matter of record. Briefly stated, we went out and the information received caused the original mission to be aborted. We all came back without a scratch

During the occupation of Stuttgart I was a little mixed up and confused due to the effect of the event on April 22, 1945. To relax, I rented a horse, went off by myself, and rode through the Black Forest. It was beautiful and serene. The German population kept it very clean by walking through the forest with little carts, clearing it of fallen trees and picking up dead underbrush. I always carried a loaded pistol in my left shirt pocket for protection. The "Werewolves" or Hitler youth were in the habit of selecting targets of lone riders for target practice.

We had athletic events to let off steam. We even held a track and field meet with the contestants in new track uniforms. We named our playground Brauer Field in honor of our platoon's fatality. We had a table tennis team from 397th Regimental Headquarters Company that would challenge teams from much larger groups. I played basketball, fast pitch softball, table tennis, and ran with the four-man track and field team.

We would ride the street cars and pick up the conversations of civilians who made stupid remarks in the German language. Like the boy who said, "These American soldiers should all be put in concentration camps and killed." Bob Boyer, one of our radio operators, took out a cigarette and asked the boy, in perfect German, "Excuse me, may I have a light?" He held the cigarette up to be lit by the boy's shaking hand. The street car emptied at the next stop!

During the occupation, one problem we had with the liberation of items was that sometimes the officer who was censoring an item might refuse to let it go through, and later try to gain possession of it so that he could send it home. It didn't happen often, but it did happen. The rules of warfare cause men to do crazy things.

I think it is important to note that while the 100th Infantry Division did not see the extended months of combat that some divisions experienced, it did, however, complete 185 days of uninterrupted combat in southern France and Germany.

The German grenadiers defending their homeland in the High and Low Vosges Mountains, at both Northwind and Heilbron, were some of the best equipped soldiers, extremely dedicated to Hitler, and the most ferocious fighters ever to face the American, French and British troops. The civilians in the United States, and some high ranking allied Generals, thought that the war in Europe was nearly over. The German High Command was able to assemble enough soldiers to plan a counter-attack. This was to neutralize Patton's 3rd Army move northward. The

eight German divisions, including the 6th S.S. Nord Division, attacked the 7th Army on New Year's Eve and, had it not been for the action of the Century Division, it might have changed the course of the war in Europe. As an infantryman, like Yogi Berra said, "It ain't over till it's over!"

I thought it was over and the occupation problems were under control. A rumor was started throughout the division that the division was going to Japan because General Burrell had volunteered our services. We were next notified that the rumor was false and the point system would determine who would remain in Europe, as occupation forces, and who would go home with the 100th Infantry Division. It was basically fair and efficient. You were allowed one point for each month of service in the United States and one and one half points for each month of overseas service. An additional five points were credited for certain decorations, such as the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star and Silver Star Medals. The number of points needed to return to the United States with the division was 55. My total including the 5 points for the Bronze Star Medal was 54. The fact that I had trained and served with the Century Division all the way from Fort Bragg, through one hundred and eighty-five days of combat and could not return with my division was a low point in my army career. I was transferred to a Regimental Headquarters Company in the 78th or Lightning Division that was stationed near Darmstadt, Germany. I was the only combat veteran in my company. I was offered a promotion to Tech. Sergeant if I would sign on for another six months and train the I. & R. platoon. I refused for I only wanted to get home to Lou Ann.

While I was with the Lightning Division as part of the Army of Occupation, I had a very bad experience, which still comes back to haunt me. A member of the I & R Platoon, 397th Regimental Headquarters Company, 100th Infantry Division, Tech 5 Robert Boyer, had been reassigned to an outfit in Berlin. I got word that he had an emergency appendectomy and was recuperating. Since my duties were easily performed, and not very important, I asked for, and received, permission to visit my friend.

The papers were issued and I bummed a ride to Berlin with a jeep driver and his lieutenant. You realize that, to get to the American sector of Berlin, one had to go through a large territory policed by the Russian soldiers! The weather was a typically cold and blustery winter day. The jeep was open with only the windshield for protection from the cold. I was wearing my long underwear, wool shirt, wool sweater, field jacket and overcoat, but it was still very cold riding in that open jeep. The driver and the lieutenant were sampling a bottle of Johnny Walker whiskey to keep warm. We all know that whiskey only warms the throat and stomach and really lowers the body temperature.

All was going as well as could be expected, since we were in Russian territory and very uncomfortable due to the weather and the open jeep. At this point, we came upon a German civilian convoy that had been stopped by some Russian soldiers. When we stopped, a young boy tried to climb upon the jeep and was screaming in German, "Help! Help! The Russians are killing us!" You have to remember that the driver was at least half drunk (and many of them drove better that way), and the lieutenant was in a drunken stupor, which made me in command.

As the kid was screaming for help, I pushed him off the jeep and shouted to the driver, "Let's get the hell out of here. This is Russian territory and none of our business!" In defense of

my decision, my service pistol was under my overcoat and difficult to reach, my companions were drunk and the Russians were many and armed with rifles. I know, for I heard rifle shots while we were stopped. I assume they were in the act of shooting the German civilians. Here you need to understand "Sovereign Law" rules. That body of Russian Soldiers had supreme political power or authority. We were in their jurisdiction, with no authorization of permission to pass through. If I had been able to stop the Russian Soldiers from completing the act, the American authorities would have punished us for trespassing. We had no written permission to pass.

We drove on to Berlin knowing full well that we had witnessed that 'war is hell!' I must live with that decision for the rest of my life. Should I have tried to reach my pistol while we were stopped? I assume they were in the act of shooting the German civilians. This is military law and revenge in a practical case and not that unusual. All I know is that, of all the unpleasant things that I experienced, this is the most prevalent in the nightmares that have haunted me both while asleep and awake, for many years.

The rest of the trip to Berlin was uneventful except for the fact that I had carried two bags full of cigarettes with me. I was paid \$149.00 for each and every carton of cigarettes. I had so much money that I was afraid to try to go back through the Russian zone. I asked one of the drivers to bring it back to me at the Lightning Division headquarters. Of course, he was well paid. We wrapped it as though it was a pistol and I got permission to carry the package through.

I spent many hours and yes, days, trying to get that money home. I bought one and three cent stamps by the sheet until the company clerk asked me, "Brownie, how many stamps do you want?" When I replied, "\$9,000.00 worth!" he asked me to stop buying stamps because the inspector general could court-martial him. I would meet replacement officers as they joined our outfit and pay them 10 times the currency exchange rate for U.S. dollars. For some reason, even with The Currency Control Act, officers were allowed to legally bring a certain amount of U.S. currency with them.

Another problem developed from that endeavor. One of the GI's that I bought the cigarettes from, before I went into Berlin, thought that my profit was too great and decided that I owed him more money. He confronted me while stationed at Bremerhaven while I was waiting for a troop ship and became obnoxious with verbal threats until I resolved the problem by simply taking my 45 Colt pistol from its holster, drawing the slide back and putting a shell into the chamber, and asking him what he was going to do about it? He decided that I deserved more profit due to the danger involved in going through the Russian Zone. During war it was survival of the fittest. You make decisions and decide later as to what is right and decent. I can't believe I actually did some of the things that we all were guilty of doing!

During the time with the occupational troops, I remember being Corporal of the Guard one night when the shout, "Corporal of the Guard," rang out. When I arrived, it was evident that some civilian youngster had been shot, but not fatally. I gave the guard hell for not killing the boy. I told him, "You only shoot to kill." That statement caused me to be branded both as mean and as a killer. The whole company tried to give me the silent treatment. Nobody would sit by me at mess hall or talk to me. The guard claimed that he had caught the boy stealing from a box car in the rail yard. The guard post was located there to keep unauthorized persons from the parked train cars. Naturally, most of the German population testified that the kid was a good boy

and that he had to walk through the rail yard for some reason. The military government officials interfered and had the guard court-martialed. It was very difficult to protect him from civilian do-gooders. After that, the company realized why I said, "Kill him."

A directive came out asking if anyone knew anything about running an ice cream soda fountain and making ice cream. I volunteered and was assigned to not only construct both the soda fountain and the ice cream-making station but to also teach German civilians how and what to do. I knew a little German, read none, and the instructions and blue prints were all in German. Well, we got the job done much to my amazement. The women made ice cream all night until 20 five gallon cans were full. We did not wait for it to cure but started dipping at 8:00 AM and continued until it was all gone. The guys would form a line a block long and wait just to get some ice cream. I had not seen milk for a period of six months. The Army cooks had to use powdered milk from the time we hit combat until the occupation started.

Managing this situation also got me into trouble. Here I was among a group of civilian replacement soldiers, most of who had never seen combat. As I was attempting to keep the line moving, one of the "cowboys" said, "Don't you want us to talk to your girls? Are you saving her for yourself, you *Kraut* lover?" Well, I went over the counter and started to correct his error. The lady who managed the U.S.O. canteen came upon the scene and saved the soldier. She was the colonel's girl friend and I wanted no trouble with the colonel. My mental attitude was distorted with hatred for all German people after Pfc. Brauer was killed. The statement from the GI certainly did not warrant my reaction.

I was finally eligible to return home. I shipped out to Bremerhaven, Germany, aboard the second smallest ship. It was a Liberty Ship, or a Victory Ship, and quite a contrast to the USTT George Washington. I remember the waves coming over the railings and drenching the walkways. There was a group of black soldiers aboard and we had little to help pass the time. A memo was issued asking if anyone aboard knew how to braid Boondoggle. I volunteered and taught these men to make whistle cords, bracelets, etc. You should have seen some of the color combinations they selected.

My discharge was routine, first to New York, then to Chicago, where I met Lou Ann at the Union Train Station. We had difficulty finding a hotel with a room vacancy. We finally found one some place in a rundown section of town. I remember we blocked the door with a chair before we dared go to bed. We were awakened at 3 o'clock by some drunken woman hollering that she had not been paid. We had a lovely reunion in spite of the interruptions.

The most difficult task I ever had was the responsibility of making the trip to Olney, Illinois, in the summer of 1946. I was the only one with him when Pfc. Bernard Brauer was shot and killed. I thought it was my obligation to visit his family and tell his mother when, how and why he was killed.

Mr. & Mrs. Brauer had three sons in the infantry when she was notified of Bernard's death, or being missing in action. One of her other sons was a prisoner of war, and the other missing in action. She asked many questions after listening patiently to my recollection of what had happened. Her reaction was typical of most Gold Star Mothers. The pain of listening to what had happened to her boy was unbearable. She suffered with dignity but was proud that her

son would give his life for his friends and country.

Why do the good men die? I take a trip each year to Olney to visit his grave. I have coffee with his brother, who named his son Bernard. Maybe life does continue!

Reflecting on my military career, I was inducted into the Army of the United States as a Private, trained at Fort Bragg as a Jeep Driver (345-MOS, light truck driver), and shipped overseas to Europe on October 6, 1944. I was the jeep driver for Corporal John Burbank. I earned and received the Expert Infantry Badge at Fort Bragg near Fayetteville, North Carolina. I was promoted to Private First Class (745-MOS) on December 20, 1944, while serving with the Intelligence & Reconnaissance Platoon (I & R) of 397th Regimental Head Quarters Company, of the 100th Infantry Division and, on February 25th, promoted to Corporal (653-MOS, Squad Leader or Assistant Squad Leader).

COMPANY COMBAT LOCATIONS			
FRANCE			
Baccarat	November 6 to November 13, 1944		
Bertrichamps	"	13 to	" 18
Raon L'Etape	"	18 to	" 21
Moyenmoutier	"	21 to	" 23
Senones	"	23 to	" 25
St. Blaise le Roche	"	25	
Champany	"	26 to	" 27
Raon L'Etape	"	27	
Saarburg	"	27	
Dossenheim	"	27 to	" 29
Ingwiller	"	29 to December 6, 1944	
Reipertswiller	December	6 to	" 9
Mouterhouse	"	9 to	" 21
Petite Rederching	"	21 to	" 27
Bining	"	27 to January	11, 1945
Oermingen	January	11 to	" 18, 1945
Bining	"	18 to	" 23
Guisberg	"	23 to March	14
Holbach	March	14 to	" 17
Waldhausen	"	17 to	" 22

CROSSING THE SIEGFRIED TO GERMANY

Petersburg	March	22	
Neustadt	"	23	
Rödersheim	"	24	
Oggersheim	"	24 to March	31, 1945
Crossing the Rhine at Mannheim	"	31	
Eppelheim	"	31 to April	2
Wiesloch	April	3	
Sinsheim	"	4	
Kirchhausen	"	4 to "	13, 1945
Heilbronn	"	13 to "	15, 1945
Lehrensteinsfeld	"	15 to "	17
Löwenstein	"	17 to "	19
Neulautern	"	19 to "	20
Backnang	"	21	
Geradstetten	"	21 to "	23, 1945
Altbach	"	23 to "	26, 1945
Stuttgart	"	26 to "	30
Eislingen	"	30 to May	10, 1945

TOWNS OF OCCUPATION

Illertissen	May	10 to June	13, 1945
Göppingen	June	13 to July	7
Stuttgart	July	7 to	