

VOSGES MOUNTAINS

One of the first attacks where I had to lay a wire to a forward company, the Germans threw in shells. I had no place for protection so a rifleman invited me into his hole, which was only partly finished. I didn't need a second invite and joined him until the firing stopped. We heard a jeep going by towards the rear and looked out to question why someone was crazy enough to drive while shells were still falling. The chaplain, Sam Tyler, and his assistant had picked up a wounded man, placed him on a stretcher and were headed in their jeep for an aid station. Falling shells didn't seem to bother them if someone needed care. I heard the man didn't make it for shrapnel had gone through his helmet embedding it into his head. That didn't keep Chaplain Sam from trying. About that time a German soldier who was wounded cried for help. One of our medics crawled out to him. Shells were still exploding but that was the dedication the medics had. When he was close to the wounded enemy, the German turned toward the medic and shot him. Our men saw this happen and finished off that ungrateful human being.

Cattle and wild animals were victims also. There were cows, horses and deer laying in the fields swelled up ready to burst.

This first combat was in and near Ramboisvillers and then to Raon L'Etape and into the Vosges Mountains. (H- pg. 48) They were rough and rugged. It was dark, even in the daytime, with thick woods. The weather was always cold and raining. The mud roads so bad we had to push jeeps with trailers by hand, even when they were in four-wheel drive and extra low gear. (H- pg. 51)

The kitchens tried to keep close enough for us to have one hot meal per day but you can guess that was quite often impossible. When things worked right the cooks loaded hot food onto marmite containers, a type of thermos, hauled it as

close as they could and either a line man would carry some food to his company or individuals would take turns going to the "rear" and get some chow. (H-pg. 53, 69 & 72) The kitchen even brought mess kits and took them back to be washed for the next meal but did not furnish eating utensils. All of us had reduced the weight of everything we carried by throwing away all excess equipment. Most everybody carried only his own spoon. The spoon could be carried in your pocket, washed in a cup of coffee and reused. If a buddy lost his spoon you'd use yours, wash it in your coffee and lend it to him. When he was through, he washed it in coffee or whatever, and in your pocket it would go until the next use. Most of the time we did not have enough clean water to drink let alone wash anything. Why only a spoon? Knife and fork added to weight and a spoon could be used for any food, or soup. It was more practical. If needed, you could even use it to scrape a hole deep enough to lie in, if you had lost your entrenching tool. Since it was not always possible for the kitchens to get to us, most of the time we were issued "C" rations. These were canned beanie wienies, spaghetti, Spam, canned cheese and other varieties of canned food. Since these were heavy to carry, "K" rations, a dry food, was issued when it was more practical. While the dry was not so tasty it did fill a need. There was a package of instant coffee, bullion powder, a type of cracker and sugar, which could be saved for a more opportune time to use. It also had a small amount of toilet paper, a few cigarettes and the famous chocolate bar. The latter two were good for barter if it didn't have to be used or eaten first. The toilet paper could be stashed inside a helmet liner and kept reasonably dry until its necessary duty. All in all I felt the cooks did a splendid job under almost impossible circumstances. I tried to carry as many "K" rations, as I could, because I worked out of the area of my company much of the time and it was often impossible to get food otherwise.

In most of France, houses were built in small communities and the farms surrounded them. Barns were built attached to the houses. This made it easier to feed and tend the cattle and provided some heat to the house. Manure was piled in bins outside, ready for use on crops in the



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spring. The natives never seemed to mind the odor and we soon got use to it. The main water supply was a spring fed fountain in the town square that everyone shared. At times the spring outlet was only a little way down hill from and near the barns. If we ran out of safe water it was necessary to use halizone tablets to purify whatever was available. That left an awful taste and we tried to avoid that. Wash day found the women washing clothes in the trough below the cold water outlet without soap. This was a ritual year round even when snow was deep. To us they appeared to have a hard life.

Buckets were placed under the seats in the outhouses and this too was fertilizer for the garden.

Milk was not pasteurized and used whole. The first time I saw a farmer milking, I really was hungry for fresh milk. That was something we never had the whole time in Europe. Canned or dried but never fresh. This Frenchman was kind enough to offer some and I readily accepted. I knew it may be dangerous and I should not drink it, but the temptation was too great. I was already in danger by being in a war. Fortunately I did not get sick.

Another oddity: In most towns it was customary for their graveyards to surround the church. In many of them ground was scarce. Their solution was, after a body was buried for several years, it was exhumed. The bare bones were arranged in order inside of decorative cast iron fences. Leg bones together, rib bones together, skulls in neat piles etc. under a roof. Everything was in order. Very interesting, but different to us.

We were allowed, even encouraged, to write to friends and family but we were warned to be careful what we said. No telling where we were, exact duties, or, that a specific person had been killed. All mail was censored by one of the company officers and any infringement of the taboos caused that section to be cut out of the letter. I learned from family that several of my letters had been riddled with a razor blade. I didn't realize I had written forbidden information. Writing was often difficult because of time and losing paper or pens. Since this was before ballpoint pens, we used a fountain pen and carried a small bottle of ink. It sure was a pleasure to get mail. Packages of



Halizone tablet bottle

goodies were even better.

When you received a package you found you had more friends than you ever knew you had. Each one wanted a share. One time I was really disappointed with one package I received. My family knew how much I liked blackberry jam. Mom packaged a jar of homemade jam and mailed it. It arrived broken with glass all through it. A real sad day to throw away a whole quart of such delicious stuff.

Silhouettes in black were painted on walls everywhere. They were placed by the Germans to remind people not to talk about troop movements etc. These meant, "Even the walls have ears", an enemy might be listening.

The Air Force dropped aluminum foil (or tin foil) during bombing runs over the enemy territory to foil their radar. We could see masses of it in trees and along the roads everywhere. The idea was; when the radar tracked the foil, the return beams were scattered and also when radar was trained on the falling foil, it was confused with the planes and tricked the radar as to which was a real target.

Enemy observers used high hills, church steeples and buildings to spy on our troops and to aim artillery or mortar fire on us. When they were spotted, our men would make an effort to eliminate them as soon as possible. A picture in our history book shows the results of removing an observer. (H- pg.61) I remember passing this house several times.

We were always cold and wet. Since the woods were so thick and dark, someone built a small fire and several of us tried to heat some water in our canteen cups to make instant coffee. That sure sounded good. We had been in this particular section of the forest long enough to have a well-dug foxhole, covered with limbs and dirt and a very small opening to enter. This was designed to reduce the shrapnel's chances of entering if you were fortunate to get in it. All of a sudden we



"The walls have ears"

heard a big roar. I didn't recognize what caused it but dropped the canteen cup of hot water and ran the few feet up hill to my foxhole. I couldn't get into a nearer one because it was full of men piled on top of each other. It had been built for only two men but was full of several. If the one on top had been hit, those underneath would have to be rescued. I had to run for my hole and slipped into the small opening like a rabbit. Usually it was difficult to get into for it was purposely dug with a small opening, but that time I didn't have a hard time getting in, I was so scared. I still don't know if I went in head or feet first and I hugged the bottom of the hole until the attack was over. This was my first time to be strafed by an airplane. The roar I had heard was the engine before I heard the machine guns. When I finally ventured out, my hands got cold and my gloves were missing. While heating my coffee I had removed my gloves and tucked them under my belt. I backtracked downhill toward where the fire had been and found the gloves under limbs broken down by the bullets that were fired from the machine guns. We were very fortunate no one was killed or hurt. Apparently the Germans had seen the smoke rising above the trees and knew someone was there. Our lesson, was never again build a fire, even if there was only a remote possibility the smoke could be seen, no matter how good a hot cup of coffee sounded.

We tried to work together as pairs and to dig foxholes. This helped in the case of standing guard and if a buddy was on assignment the one left could finish a hole or other duties in the general area. Gordon Norris from Indiana and Frank Harris from So. Carolina, were in their 30's and we called them old men. They were buddies with a younger fellow, Samuel Mohler, from Ohio, who was borrowed from Co. "K". The three usually bunked together and often worked together. Harris was a jeep driver and took great pride in his vehicle. When in towns, and time allowed, he would mix oil and gasoline to wash his jeep and keep it as clean as possible. Older men seemed more skittish than a lot of us young pups. We were too young to know to be scared. After all nothing was going to happen to us.

In one attack, Norris was alone laying wire with a forward moving company. The Germans had just pulled back and we were chasing them.

They stopped, counterattacked with mortars and stopped our men. Norris, as usual, acted on impulse and jumped into the nearest depression he could see. It was a drainage ditch covered with leaves. He was sorry immediately. He had landed in a fresh pile of German feces and had to stay there until the attack was over. It was winter and there were only dead dry leaves. No water. Nothing else to clean with. He used leaves as best as he could but that only embedded the stuff further into his clothes. When he got back with his buddies and crawled into the tight confines of their foxhole, the stench was so horrible, they threatened to throw him out and let the "Krauts" have him. We had no spare clothing and over time things finally dried and lost their odor. Those three cursed that "Kraut" until we left Germany.

In this same general area, we heard the sound of a German machine gun to our rear. These guns had a faster rate of fire than ours and we soon learned to distinguish theirs from ours. Important to know at times. Several men formed a group to take out this gun and crawled toward the sound. At close range they saw an American firing the gun and didn't fire at him. This GI had captured this weapon and was having some fun. That is the last time we had that problem. He was lucky these men had some combat experience and looked first.

One man, I don't know from where they obtained him, but he was the laziest man I can remember. No one liked this man. He was so bad he even begged to get into everyone's fox hole because he was too ornery to dig his own hole to save his hide. I refused to let him share a hole with me. One night he went out to the woods to relieve himself, tripped over a captured ammunition cart, scratched his nose and applied for a Purple Heart and got it. That was a lot of brass because so many men were being severely wounded or killed and blown into smithereens. No one felt he deserved it.

One time I was laying wire past a company of heavy weapons men that had been stalled by snipers or machine gun fire. As I passed, someone called my name. I didn't know anybody there and couldn't recognize the person from a distance for he was muddy and had a beard. I stopped, walked closer and it was Rommie "Buddy" White Jr., from home. We had been schoolmates since the second grade and members of South Louisville Christian Church for years. Neither knew the other

was over there and had not seen each other since meeting in Kessler Field where both of us had been Air Force Cadets. When the program was closed we were sent to this same division at different times. We didn't have much time to talk but it was good to see a familiar face. Our paths crossed only a few times after that.

Soon after that meeting I was taking a line to "Buddy's" company again and met a fellow I had known in the University of Louisville Speed School, before being drafted. The night was very dark but we could see by the light of white phosphorus shells exploding in enemy territory. They make quite a light on a dark night. Some medics were carrying a man on a stretcher past me to the rear aid station. He had been in the attacking line, stopped and sat down on an antipersonnel mine, a Bouncing Betty or Shu mine, in the dark. His hip had been blown off and he died on the way before he could be helped. The engineers had cleared a path of mines, but often they were off the cleared path, and it would be dangerous to step outside of the cleared area, which was difficult to determine, especially after dark.

We pushed on through the mountains. I was alone one time laying wire to somewhere. I had a little diarrhea, which wasn't an especially rare experience. I rounded a hill, over the road and out in the open. Germans must have seen me and cut loose with firing a machine gun toward me. I dropped into a ditch and crawled out of sight and continued my work. I was uncomfortable for this shock had caused me to have a little accident. Not bad, but not good either. I don't remember how long before I could clean up. That was out of the question. Fortunately this was the only time and for that I'm still thankful.

Some towns turned out to be a surprise. We liberated a brewery and someone "rescued" a barrel of beer. Another found a wooden spigot. While several crowded around and offered suggestions, a fellow tried to drive the bung by hammering the spigot and didn't succeed with the first blow. The beer, under pressure, sprayed all over. Those close enough held their mouth open and enjoyed the fountain of beer. The bung was finally driven out and the seal made. People were using anything handy, from canteen cups to helmets to fill and have a party. Another town we entered had a huge wine cellar. When word got around,

many a side trip was made to it. For fear that too many would get drunk; there was an order to close the cellar. Good ol' Chaplain Sam Tyler felt for the average man. He said the officers got a monthly ration of liquor from the States and the "dog faces" only got 3.2 beer. He pointed to his captain's bars and told the Frenchman he was an officer and was taking bottles to give to the men. He and his assistant proceeded to load up their jeep. When it was sufficiently loaded they drove around and distributed it, spreading good cheer around to keep up morale. While they were loading up, I went in along side of them and rescued two bottles for myself. I had not drunk alcohol before that and didn't know what I picked up. After things settled down for the night and all duties were finished I split part of a bottle with a buddy. The balance was given to the switchboard operator. There must not have been a high alcohol content for it didn't phase any of us. Just a pleasant drink. I saved the other bottle for another time but don't remember when I used it.

I don't feel the former had anything to do with the next problem, but I believe it was in the same town. The next morning, several troops were to move out. A platoon in the house next to our switchboard had disappeared. All their personal belongings, gear and small arms were left behind. No one heard anything to cause suspicion of a raid. Possible cause was guessed that maybe there was a secret tunnel into the basement and the Germans got in. No one could find the answer.

When POWs were returned after the war it was told company "A" had been in a house and no guard was placed in position. The Germans came in, woke everybody and quietly captured them all. I wonder if that was the same episode that I remembered and thought it was a platoon.

Another occasion, the Germans counterattacked and we had to withdraw and consolidate. My company commander, Captain Keene, led a group out of town. Along the way we passed Chaplain Sam. He was several sheets into the wind, having had a little too much to drink. His hat in his hand and using his colorful language we had become accustomed to, he cursed the jeep because it would not stay on the road and had run into the ditch.

One time two of our men were assigned to a group to keep telephones up with the attacking

company. Not unusual but this one turned out really bad. One man we called "Lefty", I think his name was Dominic Fazio, from New York, said he and his brother had a garbage collection company there, and looked forward to going back to his work because it was "good money". "Lefty" was "borrowed" from "I" Co. The other man, Robert Nitschke, borrowed from "K" Co., was a tall blond from Ohio. Both had been borrowed from line companies because we were short handed. The two followed the attacking company down into a ravine, which was thought to be empty of the enemy. When the bottom was reached and they started up the other side, the "Heinies" cut loose with a withering fire of machine guns located at the end of the draw where they had not been seen. There was an awful firefight. The men were caught with no protection. "Lefty" and "Blonde" had left their entrenching tools behind because they had too much to carry and didn't know the Germans were there. They had their spoons in their pockets and hollowed out a small depression in which to lie until the "Krauts" withdrew. This caused "Lefty" to be shell shocked for a time. Our troops had to withdraw until the enemy could be "softened up".

The next day another attack was begun in earnest. I was assigned to lay wire with them as they moved forward that time. Just before the firing started, a man came out across the ravine, looked around and disappeared. No one fired because they wanted to surprise the Germans and also they felt this was just a farmer looking over his farm. We waited behind an embankment while artillery and machine guns laid fire across the ravine. (H-pg. 54, picture left top of pg.) The firing was so intense the bullets from the machine guns cut trees, about 8 to 10 inches in diameter, into logs, like a chain saw would cut them. Amazing. The enemy had pulled out completely and I finished another job safely. After the attack no bodies were found.

As we moved forward we took over small towns and often were able to sleep in cellars or barns. Sometimes we would run the cattle out into the field, throw down some hay and live in the stalls. Other times we stayed in potato or rutabaga bins and slept on piles of these. After all most buildings were made of thick stones and were

good protection. It also beat digging a foxhole in frozen ground.

In most French towns the people were so glad to see the Americans they passed out bottles of wine and quite often apples. We were really glad to have the apples for we didn't have fresh fruit. In some areas where we crossed the orchards, or in cellars we used for shelter, we helped ourselves to apples. Smaller ones tasted better than the large ones. (F)

In my letter dated 11-24-1944, I tell of getting my first and only kiss in France. The French were a kissing type of people. I had given three little girls some chewing gum. One of them reached up to me and I knew what she wanted, for I had seen them do it before. I leaned down and she kissed me on the cheek. We laughed for it was so cute. She was only four or five years old. The kids were so glad to get anything. Even something as little as a stick of gum. (F)

Some times it was two months before my mail came through. I was always so homesick and mail was the best medicine for it, be it letters or a package of food or candy.

All through the time of combat, civilians passed through our lines trying to avoid the fighting. Some were going back to find homes and families and others just trying to stay alive. Most of the time they carried or pulled carts or wagons with all the belongings they still possessed. Others were displaced persons from other countries that had been enslaved by the Germans. All were a sorry lot of humanity and we felt sorry for them. (H- pg. 113, 137,175,190 and 192)

At times we had to move fast to catch up to the "Krauts". Our group didn't always have enough transportation and grabbed a ride anyway we could. One such night I was riding in a half-track in convoy to another area. The so-called "Cat Eyes", very small lights because of black out, were on. The half-tracks were pulling 57-mm anti-tank guns behind them and the small lights were very difficult to see, even at only a few feet at a slow speed. Our driver lost contact with the vehicle in front of him and increased his speed just a little bit to catch up. We found the ones in front of us in a hurry. They were only a few feet away and we ran into the muzzle of the gun in front of us. The collision put the barrel through our radiator so

we backed off. Nothing was available for repairs so we had to drive on. I don't know what happened to the half-track after that for we parted company and I continued my wire duties.

This was in an area where there were French forces. We always hated to be near them for they acted as if they either didn't have any sense or didn't care that the Germans were near or both. These "Frogs", we called them bad names at times, built fires to heat food, ran around with flashlights and drove with full headlights, right out in the open, at night, where the Germans could see and shell them. Each time we were around the French at night, the Germans threw artillery in. We thought the "Frogs" were crazy. After all, the only equipment they had was what we furnished them and they lost a lot of it.

One time we had just gone into a small French village and set up our headquarters of operations in one of the stone houses. This made us feel a little bit at ease. Several of us had the duty to lay wire with the leading attack companies. Major Janes, a picturesque officer from Winchester, Kentucky, who always smoked a strong cigar, was leading. Ever so often we stopped, connected a phone and he would call, "Everything all right on the right? Everything all right on the left?" If so we would advance a little further again. The Germans countered with "tree bursts" and shrapnel dropped all around us. Some artillery shells were equipped with very sensitive fuses and were set to explode when they were near a dense cloud or tree

tops. When these neared limbs they exploded causing shrapnel to spread over a greater area. There is a picture in our history book (H pg., 55) that I think was of us. The scene is very familiar. Everyone lying down without cover, shells bursting in the tree tops and a drum of wire lying near by. Chaplain Sam walked up to the Major and asked for permission to take his assistant and the jeep around the road to meet the troops in case someone was injured. Major Janes said, "Ok, if you want to, but the road has not been cleared of mines." Sam, who again used his very colorful language to make his point said, "Let the --- damn mines take care of themselves. If someone gets hurt, I want to be there." Off he and his assistant went. This was their style and dared anything to happen to them. They did this often for this was their way of helping.

When we started out in the morning, "Lefty", mentioned above, was part of the crew.



Shrapnel from German shells



Wire team by permission of the 100th Inf. Div Association
The Story of the Century History Book

Suddenly he disappeared and when he couldn't be found, we feared he had been wounded or killed. When we finished laying our wire and returned to the stone French house's cow pen, "Lefty" was under a bed trying to dig a hole in the wood floor with his hands. He had gone off completely because of being trapped a few days earlier. Fortunately he later recovered and saved me one night when I became "shell shocked" and didn't know where I was.

Several of us had just returned from an assignment and went into the cellar cow pen and were discussing happenings of the day. A German

artillery shell burst against the wall across the road. We felt it and heard quick footsteps run across the floor above. We recognized Frank Harris' footwork. He had turned the latch to get into this house and the explosion across the road lifted him up and literally threw him into the room. His steps showed he was in a hurry to get into a safer location. Fortunately he was not injured but turned white as a sheet and was breathing hard. This is another example of how close a person could get to disaster and still live.

Corporal Carlson was a cab driver from New York and when he drove a jeep he drove like he was still there. I didn't like to ride with him, especially around narrow twisting roads, and it was even worse when snow was on the ground. I feared for my life. In one little town our switchboard was set up in an old house and several times I was requested, instead of him, to drive to a town closer up to the "front" to gather firewood. Someone had found it high and dry in the attic of another old farmhouse. Wonder what that Frenchman thought about his loss of firewood.

Most of the towns were laid to waste by both sides before we captured them. Our switchboard had to be placed in as safe a position as could be found. One time it was in an enormous cellar where the ceiling must have been ten or twelve feet high. There was only a steep set of stairs to the outside and the inside was black as night. Flashlights had to be used to see anything. We had our bedrolls in there and used it for a switchboard center to work our lines out to the companies. The only opening, other than the stairs, was a vent grate way up near the ceiling. All the wires from the switchboard to all the companies were pulled through that grate. Since it was so dark someone had a bright idea. They parked a jeep just outside the grate, pulled a headlight, and wired it into the cellar, near the switchboard. The jeep was kept running day and night so the board operator could see without a flashlight. Good idea. But I wonder what would have happened if a German patrol came by and saw the running jeep and all these wires into that cellar? There was no house over it, for it had been completely blown away. The snow was deep and full of our footprints as we went in and out.

Another time the switchboard was in the

front room of a house where the operator could see out the window and down the road. Quite a lot of wires were strung out and around poles on the street. Something tore down several wires and I was assigned the job of finding and repairing all the loose ends. Snow was knee deep and I had to dig into the banks to find the lines. The operator watched me and every time I cut into a wire he would ring the switchboard. This puts out about 100 volts when the hand crank is turned. Of course I was shocked each time and he got quite a kick out of my misery. As usual, we laughed at a lot of things just to keep our sanity.

Occasionally the switchboard operator would listen in on conversations to test the lines to hear if the Germans had tapped into them. Someone fixed a speaker from an old radio with a plug and connected it to the switch panel. This became a loud speaker and if something of interest was playing, anyone near could listen in. One night everyone was tense. A German counterattack was expected. There were times when the Germans were forcibly gotten drunk and attacked straight at the American lines, firing randomly while running. (H pg. 99) While many were mowed down, some were able to get through, because there were so many. This was what we expected this time. The forward artillery observer heard a noise out front, saw movement in the dark but could not distinguish what caused it. Fearing the worst, he called for "time fire" to be placed on the target only when he gave the command. This fire was to surprise the enemy and stop the attack. Artillery from several miles back would fire first, then the next in line fired. All timed so all shells would reach the target at the same time. The switchboard operator had the speaker on and we could hear the entire goings on. Our hair was standing on end. The observer changed the coordinates for the target saying it had changed directions and was coming up the draw on the right. Several times he cautioned not to fire until he gave the word. Everyone was tense. Finally the observer called "Cancel all fire orders. It is just a farmer moving through the front with a flock of sheep." Everyone sighed with relief and had a good laugh. If this much artillery had hit those sheep there would have been a lot of mutton spread over France.

I don't recall where or when, but I remember two times of getting a bath during combat. A few men at a time were pulled to the rear and given a treat. About 20 or 30 miles back, engineers pitched two large tents, put up a gasoline-fired pump and heater mounted on a trailer, next to it. A hose was placed in a stream, water pumped through the heater and out a spray mounted on the tent's center pole. In one tent, we'd strip naked and run through the snow to the next tent. The water seemed scalding hot, maybe it needed to be, for us to scrape clean, then dry off and return to the first tent. There were piles of pre-used clothes, having been washed in hot water, lying in stacks. Shirts piled together, pants in another stack, etc. We'd pick until a piece of clothing would almost fit and dressed. Wool clothes washed in hot water were stiff and shrunk but they felt good and we were grateful. These are the only times I remember getting a bath, during combat, except when going back to the rear to the rest center at Sarrebourg.

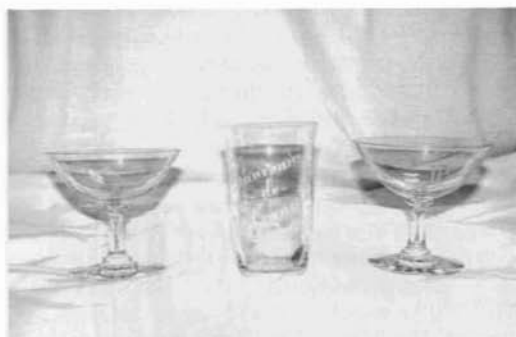
One letter from home told me my cousin, Alvin Hoover, was in Europe so I asked for his address. The day my answer came I was surprised he was in the same division. I got on the switchboard to find the location of his company and it so happened it was in the same town I was in that day. I hurried down to the old glass factory where his company was billeted for the night. When I walked in he was really surprised. He didn't know I was in Europe. Broken glass covered everything for the factory had been shelled. His buddies busied themselves by finding an unbroken glass, striking it with a small stick or pencil, checking for different tones and aligning them in order of notes. By striking them a tune could be played. If a piece broke, a search was made for a replacement and the game went on. I thought that was great. Alvin and I talked for a while but we both needed to get back to duty. We did meet again about two more times before getting home. Again it was a thrill to see someone you knew. (L)

I was familiar with glass but not crystal. I soon learned the difference and also that Baccarat, France was the crystal capital of the world.

Several of us heard the factory in St. Louis was selling crystal that had not yet been destroyed

by bombing and before another attack. We made a trip there and purchased some. It was quite cheap. Better to sell to us at a reduced price than have it destroyed by war and get nothing. I purchased eight glasses and sherbets for Mother, and six of each for Gladys. We were not married but I thought this would be great to give her. The price was only a few francs. I almost bought a large real crystal punch bowl with all the attachments for only fifteen francs but didn't, for fear it would be broken before getting home. I should have taken a chance.

We were told a man in town would engrave this glassware for us so I looked him up and drew a picture of what I wanted engraved. "G" on Gladys' sherbets, "Mom and Dad" on Mom's. On all the glasses, "Souvenir of France". The man was a little old fellow and his machine looked like a foot treadle operated sewing machine, but had a rotating wheel where a needle would have been. This was the burr used to engrave the glass. As he peddled the treadle he turned the glass by hand



Crystal from St. Louis, France



Receipt for crystal

and cut the designs. He was so skilled he drew no pattern and when compared piece to piece it is difficult to see any difference. I made arrangements to come back a few days later and pick them up. Fortunately when they were finished, I was still near and was able to return by hitchhiking back to St. Louis. (F) He only charged me two bars of toilet soap. I got a bar a month in rations and had not bathed yet so I had the price. Both of us were thrilled. I bummed a wood crate, packed everything in hay and mailed it all hoping for the best, from Enchenberg. (F) Two pieces sent to Gladys were broken but those sent Mom came through all-together. Lucky. They are still in the family and much treasured.

Another time I shopped in a store and bought a pair of wooden shoes for Gladys. The French lady that lived in the house we stayed in, begged for them, saying she needed a new pair of shoes. Maybe, but I wanted Gladys to have them for a keepsake. She still does.

If you were wondering how I had time to do these extra things, it was between and along with assignments. The line companies moved forward leapfrog fashion. As one moved through another, two in front and the former, considered in reserve, stayed behind a while or if needed it was pushed through another direction to stop an attack of the enemy or start an attack from our side. It was best to have two companies on line and one in reserve if possible. As a company moved forward, some in my outfit laid wire with and to them and continued to repair that line as necessary. That meant traveling to the front, back and forth to the switchboard and across the front as needed. The lines radiated out from the battalion switchboard to the front and sides, to companies and adjacent battalions and to the rear for Army headquarters and all other support units. All like a giant spider web. That meant I was all over, to and from all companies as needed. None of this was fun. It was always within the sound of and mostly in range of shelling, bombing or strafing. A great deal of time was spent with riflemen under fire. My job was to keep telephone lines operating, not firing a rifle except as personal protection. That meant I was fired at and had little chance to return the same. It was so hellish and nerve-racking I prayed earnestly, and many times, to either remove me from this or blow off a leg so

I could get out of this hell. My prayers were not answered and I did not get away from it all completely until combat ceased.

As combat continued and we had more casualties, noncoms that had shown leadership were promoted with "Battle Field Commissions" to replace lost officers. One I recall, was Staff Sergeant Samuel Rosenberg. He seemed to be a very nice fellow and was complaining about being assigned too many missions to clean out machine gun nests. One day he said, "Captain _____ is going to get me killed yet. This is the third time today he has sent me and a group to clean out a machine gun nest." He had completed the first two but this time his prophecy proved right. He was killed on this one.

In another little town we met a Frenchman that explained he was with the French Freedom Fighters. I don't know how he finally made us understand because we did not know French and he spoke little or no English. He led us, there was only two or three of us together, into this house to the cellar and began to dig in the dirt floor. He dug up the old rusty remains of a pistol he had buried years before when the Germans took over his house. The pistol was no good then but it was kept out of the hands of the Germans. He also showed the slice in the rear of his raincoat and explained he had stabbed a German soldier and took the coat.

In this same town, we had not been able to get food or rations from the kitchen for a while. I had a packet of bullion and some GI crackers saved in my pocket but only a little water in my canteen. I scrounged through a house, found some seed onions and small potatoes. I built a fire, heated the water with potatoes and onions. I crumbled the stale crackers in and had a feast. Wasn't enough but it tasted so good I wanted more. When we did get out of water we could get more at the town fountain but had to use tablets to purify it and that left an awful taste so we tried to avoid that.

Another time I didn't have enough rations and was so hungry I picked up a can of rations from a dead German. Since this was canned I felt it safe to eat. Using my pocket GI can opener I wrestled the top off and smelled an awfully strong fish odor. I was so hungry I tasted it but couldn't stand to eat it. It seemed to be strong mackerel or

anchovies. I knew they were short on food and I don't see how they survived for that was about all I ever saw they had. I felt sorry if it was so. I never tried to eat their food again. As much as we complained about our rations, they were far superior.

The engineers, when possible, would sweep the roads for mines before trucks and tanks would travel over them. (H- pg. 77) I remember one such time; there was a narrow twisting black-top that ran up and over a small incline. The road had been cleared and white tape placed on stakes to show the limits of the cleared area. It was slow and congested and some hotheaded impatient truck driver decided to go over the tape around the line of traffic. Out in the field he drove over a land mine, damaged his truck and could not go any farther, but the explosion also killed one of the men removing mines. The dead man's officer was really cursing out the truck driver for being so stupid and killing his man. I did not have the opportunity to hear the outcome but that officer was mad enough to kill that careless jackass driver.

We had been issued a thin parka that was white on one side and OD. (H- pg. 98, & 101) on the other. By turning the coat its camouflage helped against the snow or dark landscape, whichever was needed. We also, as supplies permitted, exchanged our "combat boots" for "shoe-packs". They were waterproof footgear with leather uppers to help keep the feet dry in rain or snow. Inside we had felt pads to cushion our feet and absorb moisture. Feet tended to sweat and this caused



Can opener

trench foot when exposed to the cold. We had two pair of pads, one to wear and the other to place in the bedroll or next to the body at night to "dry out". Sometimes smelly, but they helped. Special gloves were issued to riflemen. They were like mittens except the trigger finger had its own section. Therefore we could pull the trigger without removing the glove. The outside was made of water resistant material and a separate liner inside was made of wool. This helped keep the hands relatively dry and warm.

I remember the time that one of the companies was caught out on the forward side of a high



Riflemen's gloves

hill facing the Germans across the valley on the opposite hill. No trees or other cover to hide behind. The weather was about twenty degrees below zero and snow was very deep. These troops stayed in their foxholes all day with boots on, inside of bedrolls and/or blankets and were barely able to keep from freezing. If they ventured outside in daylight the Germans would shoot. They could only get out after dark for toilets, food or help. Many lost their toes or feet due to trench foot or freezing. I never understood why they were not pulled out of this position after dark. There surely had to be a reason to remain here for several days. When their telephone lines were broken they couldn't be repaired until after dark.

One night it fell my assignment to repair this telephone line. I was to drive the jeep as close as possible and repair a line that had been broken for most of the day. Remember that I had only a few hours of driving any vehicle. Our crew was about four men, all loaded with tools and wire we estimated we'd need. I drove as close to the company as practical. The snow was deep and light from the sky was almost nonexistent. Fearing we would drive off the path into a ditch and be stuck, we chose to park the jeep and walk. After only a little bit, we saw a movement in the distance that appeared to be a patrol of men. They, like us, had white parkas for camouflage, but we could not be sure they were American or German because the Germans had captured some of our coats. I signaled the men with me to stop and drop. The other group must not have seen us for they continued on. So did we after they disappeared. We had no desire to have a firefight even if they were Germans. Just repair the wire and get out. We continued the rest of the way to the marooned company,

completed the telephone repair and walked back to our jeep. We were lucky we had a hole or cellar to return to that night. The men in that forward company didn't.

Big powerful searchlights, like those that were used in England to search for German airplanes making raids against London, were set up in our rear. These were used to shine light on the clouds that overcast the sky and reflect over the German lines. The theory of this "artificial moonlight" was to help our troops see the enemy at night. I didn't think it helped us much. The Germans tried to knock them out. (H- pg. 121 & 174) These same lights are used now to draw attention at the grand opening of new stores in the U.S.

"Bed Check Charlie" was the name given to the light German observation plane that flew over about midnight each night. The motor had such a different sound it was always distinguished from ours, even if it could not be seen. The pitch would vary between a roar and a growl. Very different than most light planes. He tried to spy on us and gather information but we didn't fire at him, for if we did, our location would be revealed and he could call for artillery on us. One night while I was on guard duty outside the Battalion C.P., I heard "Bed Check Charlie" and reported him to the officers inside, as I had been directed. They were accustomed to him and said, "OK". Shortly, a jeep loaded with soldiers on patrol and armed with a mounted 50-cal machine gun, barreled up and asked for the Battalion C.P. While someone went inside to report, they gave me the information they were relaying to the officers. They had seen "Bed Check Charlie" drop five paratroopers. Word was immediately sent out to double the guard and I soon had another man to join me. Later the patrol returned and reported that three of the paratroopers had been captured. I never heard what happened with the other two.

Because of the weather, we held up in the same position for several days. Some 40mm quad anti-aircraft units were positioned near us. One warm day the ground thawed and their heavy gun mounts sank down in the mud to the axles. Three P-47 airplanes flew over, close to the ground and to our rear into the sun. No one fired because they were our planes. Soon they returned with

guns blasting at everything. I had been outside and saw them go over but as soon as they started firing I ran into a house and hugged the floor until the attack was over. They only made one pass that day. We found, later, these planes had been captured, the American insignia left on and then used against us. (H-pg.97)

A new outfit from the States was relieving us, so we could push forward again. Our guard at the cross roads had just been replaced by the new troops and his replacement was badly shot. We never heard, but he was not expected to make it. A 6X6 personnel truck was unloading more new troops in the same area. All the tires on that truck were flat, the canvas cover riddled and several men killed. One had caught a 20mm round in the head and the truck looked as if hogs had been butchered. Once again I was lucky.

A week later the captured planes tried the same trick but this time they were shot down. I actually saw one of them go belly up and crash. A good sight if it can be called good. (H pg. 109)

Another day the sergeant called me to go up to the next town and pick up something. I needed to get my carbine in the house but he said, "There is one in the jeep, go ahead". I looked in the back seat, saw one there so I took off. Down the road, between towns, I saw a rabbit sitting on the snow in a field. Thinking how good he would taste in a stew, I stopped, fired, missed and tried several more times, kicking up snow all around him. By that time he was crossing the road and a vehicle was coming toward me and I didn't want to shoot someone. I tossed the carbine into the jeep, went on, completed my job and returned to base. I started to replace the used ammunition for whoever the rifle belonged to. It did not have any left in it. I had only fired 3 or 4 times. Someone had used almost all the ammo before me and had not replaced it. If I had met a "Kraut" I would have been long gone. I always kept two clips, full and taped side to side, so I would have plenty ammo if needed. I never let that happen again. I made sure I had my own weapon, clean and full of ammunition.

As usual we were staying in a little French town and had taken over some houses. Some of the civilians had been out in the woods to pick up their ration of firewood. The government owned the forest and cut the firewood, with

each family getting a share. All the small limbs and brush could be had for the picking up. This family had a load of logs on the ox drawn wagon, driven by women, and pulled near the house to unload. This was in the way of our vehicles so several of us young men wanted to help these "old" women. They probably weren't over 30 or 40, but looked old. The women reached up on the wagon, lifted a log onto a shoulder, walked into the barn and tossed it onto the log pile. I reached for a log, rolled it on my shoulder, felt like it was going to drive me into the ground, lugged it to the pile and dropped it. They were used to heavy work and were upstaging us with their strength. I don't remember trying it again. Too embarrassing.

In good weather we could see the "vapor trails", frozen exhaust fumes, of airplanes going toward Germany for bombing runs. The fighter planes were faster and wove around the B-17's, B-24's and B-25's making trails like spider webs through the straight ones of the bigger planes. One day a large flight of B-24's was going overhead but one lagged behind. He had started having trouble as he passed over our lines. They were lucky because the plane had not gone too far into Germany. We could hear the motors missing and see he was losing altitude. The crew tried to restart the motors and for a while the motors fired as they should and it appeared he climbed a little, before they cut out again. We could see the plane start a spiral to the right. Men started jumping and the parachutes filled out as we watched and counted until we thought everyone was out. Men with vehicles drove to the area and recovered the complete crew. The pilot was the last to jump and landed in a tree and broke his leg. When the plane hit the ground it missed the town. There was still most of the fuel and all the bomb load when the plane crashed, causing a terrible explosion and the ground shook like an earthquake.

We were always laying wire to everywhere. One time Lucian Pierce and I worked several hours putting out a line to "I" Co., way out on the brow of a hill, overlooking the town of Reysersviller, France. This was a good distance away from the main body of troops. The "Password and Counter Password" changed at noon each day. We happened to leave before we got the new password. After laying this line in the morning, we had worked the rest of the day to repair it for it had

been damaged several times before we could finish. It was difficult to keep it in working condition. Generally when both wires were broken or cut, it could be checked by clipping onto the wire with our field telephone. We could determine the direction to go in order to find the break. Late that day there was a one-sided break and was difficult to find. It could not be found by the same method. We started from "I" Co. and followed the wire by holding it in our hand, feeling all the way for the break. By the time we found and repaired the line, dark caught us. We couldn't see the way back to the main body of troops and had to handhold the wire and follow it. The woods were dark and rough. We stumbled and fell over rocks and stumps for a long time. Pierce was a person with little patience and declared he was dropping the wire and started in the direction he thought was right. I said "I don't think that we should do this but I'll go with you so we won't be separated and shoot each other." I followed for some distance and when we came to a clearing, he said, "This does not look familiar." I agreed. We then proceeded to crawl on hands and knees to retrieve the lost telephone wire. It took some time and was not a pleasant trip. When we finally found it and followed it to the main body of companies, we were challenged with the new password. Since we left the forward company before the password changed, we had not received the change at noon. We were in deep trouble. We explained to the guard. He pulled back the rifle bolt and chambered a round. That sent cold chills down our backs and we really explained why we had not heard the change and how we had gotten lost. Finally the guard believed us and we returned to our own outfit. That was a lesson not soon forgotten. I don't believe I ever again failed to get the new password.

I did not actually see it happen but all of us believed it and had a good laugh at the story told about one of the "snipers". He told of the German on the far hill, in the woods on the other side of the ravine, that had the habit of coming out of hiding. Still thinking he could not be seen, he'd turn his back to the Americans, shuffle his feet and drop his pants for his daily routine. Because he didn't face us, the sniper used the excuse to place his rifle, with its attached scope, over something for a rest. When the "Kraut" came out and got

comfortable. "I squeezed the trigger. That damn 'Jerry' jumped up in the air and disappeared." No matter how serious something became, we had to laugh just to keep our sanity. Wonder how that German explained that wound?

While we were in this location, the Germans fired at us with big guns. We could see the flash, hear the report and then the shell exploded near us. The L-5 artillery spotter airplanes went up and tried to spot the gun emplacements. They could never find them. Later we could understand why. We were approaching the Maginot Line where the gun turrets raised, fired and then disappeared into the ground, well camouflaged.

We returned by a rear road to a town, I believe it was Lemburg. As we drove around a bend of the road, the body of a German soldier, that had been a member of an anti-tank gun, had fallen on the surface of the roadway. Because of Germans firing at us, no one could remove the body. We traveled over this stretch in a hurry and every time we got to this area, we could feel the bump as we passed over the body. His remains were finally washed off the road with the rain and snow just like that of a wild animal would have been.

We used the town of Reyersviller as headquarters for a while. This little town was fairly well protected and we cleaned up. Our group was billeted in an old saloon. Behind the bar there was a pit of water, covered with an iron grate. I guess this caught all spills of beer. Frank Harris, the older man and jeep driver, wanted to be neat whenever he could, lost his razor and borrowed mine. Frank dropped my razor into this pit and it could not be recovered. He later replaced it with another, which I used until I came home.

Another man and I were assigned to follow "I" Co. up a road behind Reyersviller over the hill toward where the big guns had been firing at us. The troops were stopped at the edge of the woods, blocked by small arms fire and artillery. We finished the wire to the company and returned to the tavern we were staying in. Something broke the wire and a crew of four men was sent to repair the break and tie the line overhead where it crossed the road. When we got to the first broken place, the Germans were firing pretty heavily. The driver turned the jeep around for a quick getaway when we were finished. Another man climbed a tree with pole climbing spurs, to tie the wire over-

head. One man pulled wire and spliced it. I put on the field telephone to test the line, to be sure it was complete. The Germans threw in some big shells that landed among us and we had no protection of foxholes or anything else. We were out in the open in the middle of a big forest and shells landing all around. The man up the tree jumped down. I threw the phone in, the other man dropped the wire, we all piled in the jeep and the driver went hell bent for leather to the rear. Out of range of fire, we connected our phone and reported what happened. We were ordered to go back, finish fixing that wire and don't come back until it was repaired. We tried to explain it would be suicide to go back then and there. We were ordered to go anyway. The three didn't want to go and I reasoned my friend "Buddie" White was up there without a phone and if the Germans counterattacked, our men would be in a bad way. Radios were used a lot but were unreliable because of terrain and weather conditions. That is why our phones and wires were depended on so much. I decided to go alone and asked to have the jeep so I could get back quickly. They walked back after giving me the vehicle. I drove to where I expected to find broken wires. I knew I had a bad time driving for I still didn't have much experience and asked one of the men in a foxhole to turn the jeep around so I could leave in a hurry. Some new infantrymen had moved in and while digging their foxholes they buried the wire with dirt. They couldn't see the wire after dark making my job more difficult. It took me several hours before all the broken wires were repaired.

I wasn't quite finished when I heard steps marching down the road that sounded like those of the German hobnailed boots. I crawled down into the ditch and yelled "Halt." They stopped and I challenged. I knew I couldn't make much headway stopping a bunch coming through but I could alert the men around me. It turned out some GIs had captured Germans and were marching them back to POW camp. Boy! Was I relieved! On they went.

When I finally completed the line repair I tried to start the jeep. Several times I started and killed the engine by letting the clutch out too quickly and not giving it enough gas. It made an awful racket because a hole had been punctured in the muffler. It was well after midnight and dark as pitch. I couldn't see the road and when I finally

started to move I had to look at the sky between the tree tops to stay on the road and make it back to base camp.

The next day some of the men recognized that I was the one that made so much noise. They said the Germans heard the noise and tossed in some heavy artillery because they thought that tanks were moving in. I hope no one was injured because of that.

For this action, one of my officers told me I had been written up to receive the Silver Star but later, instead, I was presented a Bronze Star, by some big wheel in the old saloon that we used for headquarters. (My citation dates this action as December 14, 1944. (Doc- 3)(H- pg. 87, map) The paper work states that other men had laid the phone wire earlier, but I was the one that put it in place. That was one reason I was sent, for I knew where it was located.

A few days later my name was drawn to take a trip to a rest center in Paris. I am sure it was because of my actions earlier. We left December 18, 1944 (L) by three trucks with 34 men, and it was great to get away. We spent part of a day and one night near Sarrebourg, France where I got my second bath not in combat. The first was out of my helmet; the third was when I got to Paris. We were able to go to the Red Cross and get Coke and doughnuts. What an added treat. I toured the town as much as I could and saw all of the historical places. There was a place called Lunar Park, similar to Fountain Ferry Park in Louisville, where I rode rides and played those games that are usually at a carnival. I racked up several scores but not enough to get a prize. Another soldier also playing, didn't have enough score and gave me his. This made enough to choose a small pencil. It appeared to be carved ivory, maybe plastic, and had a magnifying glass in the side of one end. By holding it close to the eye and looking through it, pictures of scenes in Paris could be seen. I sent it to Gladys for a keepsake, which we still have.

A strange sight to me was the urinals on the streets. A metal shield stretched almost all the

way around a light pole on the street corner. Men entered in the gate opening and urinated against the pole where it ran into the sewer. The shield was about a foot off the ground and men's feet could be seen standing around inside. In one park a hedge only shielded the urinal and I saw one man stop walking with his lady friend, walked into the hedge, did his business and never missed any conversation with the woman. Strange to us Americans.

The civilians would gang up around a soldier if he had candy or cigarettes to sell, and buy all he had. If a GI threw away a butt, there was a rush of people to grab it and they would almost fight each other over it. Terrible to see people in such an awful state.

Some places in France the people were so hungry they argued over our garbage which was intended for the hogs. This was hard for us to watch. (F)

I also had pictures made in one of the machines where you sit in a booth in front of a camera, put money in a slot, pose different ways and a strip of pictures came out. In another place I had pictures made like a postage stamp and I used them on letters for my signature.



Stamp

I purchased a few gifts for family. For Dad I bought an electric razor and for Mom and the girls handkerchiefs and other things. I sent Gladys a bottle of "Evening in Paris" perfume and a bracelet that contained pictures of buildings in Paris, molded into the links.

I was also able to see Jack Benny in an USO show while there.

I spent three nights and two days there before returning to my outfit. Funny how good it is to get behind the lines but you worry you are not with your friends and are also wary of what is happening. At the front you know where the enemy is, but away, you are anxious and wondering what is going to happen. It was a mixed relief to get back.

(Note--GO #37 is the last of the series for 1944)

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Posthumous Award of Bronze Star Medal..... I
Award of Bronze Star Medal..... II
Award of Air Medal..... III

SECTION I -- POSTHUMOUS AWARD OF BRONZE STAR MEDAL

Under the provisions of Army Regulations 600-45, as amended, a Bronze Star Medal is posthumously awarded to each of the following named individuals:

EDWARD GRZELECKI, 31178881, Sergeant, 399th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 4 November 1944, in the vicinity of St. Remy, France. With five other enlisted men, Sergeant Grzelecki volunteered to install a roadblock under enemy artillery, mortar and sniper fire. Although pinned down by hostile action on four occasions, the party courageously proceeded with its mission and succeeded in establishing the roadblock, then manned the position without relief for fifteen hours, returning the fire of the enemy and providing security for troops in a nearby village. In this action, Sergeant Grzelecki was mortally wounded. Next of kin: Frances Grzelecki (Mother), Ashuelot, New Hampshire.

DAVID H. SMITH, 35611940, Sergeant, 398th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 11 December 1944, in the vicinity of Lemberg, France. When his company's communication line was severed as a result of enemy artillery bombardment, Sergeant Smith was assigned the difficult and dangerous mission of repairing the wire. Subjected to concentrated mortar and artillery fire, Sergeant Smith was wounded while courageously performing his duties, and died shortly thereafter. Sergeant Smith's complete devotion to duty and his fearlessness in the face of danger won the praise and admiration of all officers and men of his organization. Next of kin: Betty H. Smith (Wife), Mammoth Yellowstone Park, Wyoming.

SECTION II -- AWARD OF BRONZE STAR MEDAL

Under the provisions of Army Regulations 600-45, as amended, a Bronze Star Medal is awarded to each of the following named individuals:

DAVID W. BALLIE, JR., 01311279, First Lieutenant, 399th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 16 November 1944, in the vicinity of Baccarat, France. While his platoon was deployed on the forward slope of an adjacent hill preceding an attack by the remainder of the company upon enemy positions, Lieutenant Ballie, by skillful maneuvering of his men, succeeded in drawing the fire of the enemy forces and disclosing their disposition. Repeatedly exposing himself to enemy fire to uncover targets for his riflemen and harassing the enemy with flank patrols, he diverted the hostile fire to his sector and greatly facilitated the successful frontal attack of our forces. Entered military service from Honolulu, Hawaii.

JOHN P. OWENS, 33000774, First Sergeant (then Technical Sergeant), 398th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 10 November 1944, in the vicinity of Etival, France. When his section of heavy machine guns was assigned the task of supporting an advancing rifle company, Sergeant Owens was forced to lead his men over open terrain under intense enemy mortar and artillery fire. Despite a shrapnel wound in the foot, he refused to be evacuated and continued leading his men in the face of withering hostile fire. As a result of his outstanding courage, initiative and leadership, his section was able to accomplish its mission and effectively support the rifle company. Entered military service from Baltimore, Maryland.

JOHN H. SLADE, 34573797, Technical Sergeant, 397th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 8 December 1944, in the vicinity of Mouterhouse, France. Assuming complete command in the absence of his platoon leader, Sergeant

Slade was given the difficult and dangerous mission of clearing enemy rear guards and hostile snipers from the western section of a town. Moving forward under heavy small arms fire, he so skillfully deployed his men that all enemy resistance in the sector was destroyed. Entered military service from Hawkinsville, Georgia.

CHARLES S. ADAMCEK, 31251922, Staff Sergeant, 399th Infantry Regiment. Entered military service from Glastonbury, Connecticut.

GEORGE W. DAVE, 6863423, Staff Sergeant, 399th Infantry Regiment. Entered military service from Kansas City, Missouri.

JACK D. METRO, 33713569, Private First Class, 399th Infantry Regiment. Entered military service from Pitscairn, Pennsylvania.

JAMES M. WRIGHT, 6883740, Private First Class, 399th Infantry Regiment. Entered military service from Clarksburg, West Virginia.

WALTER F. SMYTHE, 37567472, Private, 399th Infantry Regiment. Entered military service from Saint Paul, Minnesota.

For heroic achievement in action on 4 November 1944, in the vicinity of St. Remy, France. These men, members of a rifle squad, volunteered to install a roadblock under enemy artillery, mortar and sniper fire. Although pinned down by hostile action on four occasions, the party courageously proceeded with its mission and succeeded in establishing the roadblock, then manned the position without relief for fifteen hours, returning the fire of the enemy and providing security for troops in a nearby village.

HUGH J. BYRNE, 32597134, Staff Sergeant, 398th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 9 December 1944, in the vicinity of St. Louis, France. Assigned the mission of establishing contact with a unit on his company's right flank, Sergeant Byrne courageously led a patrol through intense artillery fire and across a thickly-planted mine field. Successfully accomplishing his mission without casualties to his squad, Sergeant Byrne enabled his company to continue its advance with confidence that the flank was protected. Entered military service from Hackensack, New Jersey.

FRANK E. CRITTENDON, 34579375, Staff Sergeant, 397th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action during the period 10 December 1944 to 14 December 1944, in the vicinity of Mouterhouse, France. Sergeant Crittendon was entrusted with full leadership of his platoon on 10 December, when both his platoon leader and platoon sergeant fell victims to enemy fire. His platoon was given the difficult assignment of occupying a hill and organizing its defense without the assistance of and acting independently of the remainder of the company. Sergeant Crittendon conducted his mission with such skill that the hill was secured and completely denied to counter-attacking hostile forces, greatly enabling the company and battalion in accomplishing their own missions. Entered military service from Hartwell, Georgia.

CHARLES F. FILLEY, 35551536, Staff Sergeant, 398th Infantry Regiment. Entered military service from Mishawaka, Indiana.

JAMES V. SABIA, 32094757, Staff Sergeant, 396th Infantry Regiment. Entered military service from North Bellmore, New York.

DURWOOD H. CONROY, 34738257, Sergeant, 398th Infantry Regiment. Entered military service from Memphis, Tennessee.

JACK B. ROBERTS, 37518795, Private First Class, 398th Infantry Regiment. Entered military service from Parsons, Kansas.

For heroic achievement in action on 14 December 1944, in the vicinity of Reyerwiller, France. After their platoon had withdrawn from an area subjected to heavy hostile artillery, mortar and small arms fire, these men with disregard for their personal safety, remained behind to administer first aid to a seriously wounded comrade. While waiting to evacuate the casualty under cover of darkness, and although unarmed except for knives, they captured eight German prisoners. At nightfall, they successfully evacuated their wounded fellow-soldier with the aid of an improvised stretcher.

EDMOND J. LOOBY, 32655348, Staff Sergeant, 397th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 13 November 1944, in the vicinity of Raon L'Etape, France. While leading a five-man patrol to reconnoiter enemy installations and strength, Sergeant Looby and his comrades were all wounded by a concentration of heavy mortar shelling. With great devotion to duty, and although wounded himself, Sergeant Looby removed the other members of his patrol to safety, made his way back to our aid sta-

tion and then guided the aid men to the casualties. His heroic action undoubtedly saved the lives of the four members of his patrol. Entered military service from Bronx, New York.

ALBERT A. MAVRINAC, 13095612, Staff Sergeant, 398th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 4 December 1944, in the vicinity of Soucht, France. While directing the fire of his eighty-one millimeter mortar platoon from an advanced observation post, Sergeant Mavrinac, who was also in communication with a chemical mortar platoon and a sixty millimeter mortar section, observed an enemy outpost group to the front and by accurate fire from his own platoon dispersed the hostile force. When a machine gun emplacement engaged our infantry, Sergeant Mavrinac switched his fire to the enemy weapon and then, seeing one group of enemy riflemen to the left front and another to the front, he directed the fire of the chemical platoon and the sixty millimeter mortar section, respectively, upon these two targets. By his feat of simultaneously directing and adjusting the fire of three different mortar units upon three targets, he dispersed the enemy forces, silenced the automatic weapon and rendered efficient support to our troops. Entered military service from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

WARREN L. MILLER, 6809132, Staff Sergeant (then Private), 397th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 2 December 1944, in the vicinity of Ingwiller, France. When his platoon sergeant was killed and one machine gun was put out of action during a bitterly contested engagement, Sergeant Miller promptly assumed command of the platoon and succeeded in returning the disabled weapon to action. Subsequently subjected to an intense mortar barrage which inflicted a number of casualties upon the platoon, Sergeant Miller himself received three wounds but, disregarding his injury, crawled to a nearby unit and returned with an aid man, refusing medical attention for himself until all other casualties were treated. Entered military service from Reading, Pennsylvania.

LEWIS SANFACON, 31282093, Staff Sergeant, 399th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 9 December 1944, in the vicinity of Lemberg, France. When fire from an enemy machine gun halted his company's advance, pinning the right flank to the ground, Sergeant Sanfacon volunteered to lead a party of three enlisted men in an attempt to put the enemy weapon out of action. Moving over mined terrain in pitch-black darkness, the group succeeded in circling the enemy position and opened fire from the rear. Immediately wounded by fire from the enemy, Sergeant Sanfacon nevertheless continued to engage the hostile force and, sending the other men to attack from the flank, diverted fire to himself in order to cover their advance. As a result of his personal bravery and tactical skill, the party succeeded in silencing the enemy weapon, killing four members of the crew, and made it possible for our forces to continue their advance. Entered military service from Caribou, Maine.

JOHN L. AUGHEY, 35564488, Sergeant, 399th Infantry Regiment. Entered military service from Hobart, Indiana.

HENRY F. BENTON, 36079069, Sergeant (then Private First Class), 399th Infantry Regiment. Entered military service from Valmeyer, Illinois.

HUBERT H. CREASEY, 33534377, Private First Class, 399th Infantry Regiment. Entered military service from Evinston, Virginia.

DON K. SHAEFFER, 35246813, Private First Class, 399th Infantry Regiment. Entered military service from Tippecanoe, Indiana.

For heroic achievement in action on 8 December 1944 and 9 December 1944, in the vicinity of Lemberg, France. Assigned to support a rifle company in its advance upon an enemy-held town, these members of a machine gun squad completed their mission despite enemy mortar and artillery fire of extreme intensity which put the remainder of their platoon out of action, then moved into the town bearing not only their own weapon but the gun and ammunition of the squad which had been evacuated. By their devotion to duty, they contributed materially to the attainment of the objective and salvaged valuable equipment.

PHILIP D. BROOKS, 15402179, Sergeant (then Private First Class), 397th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 9 December 1944, in the vicinity of Le Witterschall, France. While entrenching for the night, Sergeant Brooks' company received heavy enemy artillery fire which inflicted numerous casualties. Discovering that all assigned company aid men had been wounded by the barrage, Sergeant Brooks courageously left his sheltered position in order to administer aid to the

casualties. Although he himself was eventually wounded by the continuing enemy artillery fire, he persisted in his self-imposed task, and by his courageous and skillful efforts contributed greatly to the welfare of his wounded comrades. Entered military service from Ironton, Ohio.

WILLIAM C. KNIGHT, 35770807, Sergeant, 398th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 4 December 1944, in the vicinity of Soucht, France. When both his squad leader and assistant squad leader were killed by hostile artillery fire during an attack on enemy positions, Sergeant Knight, unhesitatingly and on his own initiative, assumed command of the squad. He immediately reorganized his force and led them in repelling an enemy counter-attack, and then, while still subjected to intense artillery and mortar fire, made his way back to his platoon leader to report the action. As a result of his quick thinking, initiative and skillful leadership, the company front was maintained intact. Entered military service from Montgomery, West Virginia.

STANLEY H. PAPE, 32650244, Sergeant, 397th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 8 December 1944, in the vicinity of Mouterhouse, France. While his battalion was engaged in an assault upon strongly-defended enemy positions heavy concentrations of artillery fire disrupted communications with forward elements, and Sergeant Pape twice led a wire crew under intense enemy shelling to repair breaks in the wire line. Although wounded on the second occasion, he staunchly refused evacuation and directed his crew in the completion of their assigned task. Entered military service from Monesdale, Pennsylvania.

RICHARD R. POLHEMUS, 11138414, Sergeant, 397th Infantry Regiment. Entered military service from Old Greenwich, Connecticut.

EDWARD F. CROFTS, 12238686, Private First Class, 397th Infantry Regiment. Entered military service from Lockport, New York.

JULIUS D. MORRISON, 12289191, Private First Class, 397th Infantry Regiment. Entered military service from Brooklyn, New York.

HORACE T. SPRADELY, 8283588, Private First Class, 397th Infantry Regiment. Entered military service from Mansfield, Louisiana.

MARIAFO CORREIA, JR., 31426126, Private, 397th Infantry Regiment. Entered military service from New Bedford, Massachusetts.

For heroic achievement in action during the period 6 December 1944 to 8 December 1944, in the vicinity of Mouterhouse, France. On the night prior to a battalion attack upon an enemy-held town, these enlisted men were assigned to act as security for a forward mortar observer. Advancing into enemy territory, the group entered a building located on high ground overlooking the town, and spent the night there despite hostile soldiers who entered and left the structure from time to time. As a result of the courageous action of this group, extremely accurate mortar fire was directed upon the town from this vantage point during the following day, and our forces were successful in securing their objective.

STUART L. SUSSMAN, 13122491, Sergeant, 397th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 19 November 1944, in the vicinity of Raon L'Etape, France. When the leading rifle platoons of his battalion were halted in their advance on an enemy-occupied hill, and pinned down by a heavy concentration of hostile small arms fire, Sergeant Sussman surveyed the situation, and seeing no adequate position for placement of his machine gun on or to the rear of his front lines, fearlessly moved his weapon well forward of the line of infantry from where he could deliver accurate and destructive fire. As a result of this courageous action, his company was able to continue its advance. Entered military service from New Gardens, New York.

MARSHALL G. DAHLEN, 37162403, Technician Fourth Grade, Medical Detachment, 397th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 9 December 1944, in the vicinity of Mouterhouse, France. When the company to which he was attached as aid man was subjected to an enemy barrage, Sergeant Dahlen was himself wounded while administering aid to a casualty, but he calmly dressed his own wound and continued with his duties. Throughout the ensuing night he cared for the casualties, striving untiringly to relieve the pain of his wounded comrades until evacuation was made possible on the following day. Entered military service from Duluth, Minnesota.

JOSEPH D. MCCORMICK, 34842546, Corporal, 399th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 7 December 1944, in the vicinity of Lemberg, France. After advancing with his platoon during the day's fighting, Corporal McCormick returned to

his vehicle at night and, traveling over almost impassable roads under black-out conditions and subjected to heavy enemy mortar and artillery fire, brought vital supplies of food, water and ammunition to his unit. On this occasion and at many other times, Corporal McCormick braved enemy mortar, artillery and small arms fire to remain in contact with his platoon and make possible the prompt and uninterrupted supply of his unit. Entered military service from North, South Carolina.

JEFFERSON V. OLIVER, 34497177, Corporal, Headquarters Battery, 100th Division Artillery, for heroic achievement in action on 2 December 1944, in the vicinity of Petersbock, France. When intense enemy shelling disrupted communications between artillery and forward units, Corporal Oliver voluntarily led his crew to an area under heavy enemy bombardment to repair the severed lines. By crawling from the shelter of one foxhole or shellhole to another, he succeeded in locating and splicing the breaks in the line, thereby restoring communications and permitting the continued support of infantry forces by his artillery unit. Entered military service from Knoxville, Tennessee.

DOFALD C. UHLER, 15399592, Corporal, 397th Infantry Regiment. Entered military service from Globe, Arizona.

JOHN J. OLSEFSKI, 31455207, Technician Fifth Grade, 397th Infantry Regiment. Entered military service from Waterbury, Connecticut.

For heroic achievement in action on 13 December 1944, in the vicinity of Mouterhouse, France. When their company had secured its objective, these men were assigned the dangerous and difficult mission of laying wire to establish communications with the battalion command post over a route that was being heavily bombarded by enemy artillery and mortars. Although the hostile shelling continued over a period of fourteen hours, these men courageously and steadfastly remained at their posts, laying seven different lines during the night to successfully maintain communication.

EDWARD A. HUBER, 32648475, Technician Fifth Grade, Headquarters Battery, 100th Infantry Division Artillery. Entered military service from Long Island, New York.

EDWARD W. STEWART, 32649033, Private First Class, Headquarters Battery, 100th Infantry Division Artillery. Entered military service from Long Island, New York.

For heroic achievement in action on 2 December 1944, in the vicinity of Struth, France. Assigned the mission of installing and operating a forward switching central in a town from which the enemy had been driven but a few hours previously, Corporal Huber and Private Stewart courageously and efficiently discharged their duties despite intense enemy artillery shelling of their position. As a result of their untiring efforts, accurate reports of artillery action were transmitted and our forces were able to deliver effective counter-battery fire.

WILS A. JOHNSON, 31255441, Technician Fifth Grade, 398th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 11 December 1944, in the vicinity of Lemberg, France. While laying a company communication line, Corporal Johnson and two other linemen were subjected to a heavy artillery and mortar barrage which wounded his two comrades and severed the wire in a number of places. Without regard for his personal safety, he immediately rendered first aid to his stricken comrades, carried them back to an aid station, and then, on his own initiative, fearlessly made his way back through the continuing enemy barrage and successfully restored the company communication line. Entered military service from Worcester, Massachusetts.

JOHN S. TUMIDAJSKI, 31244968, Technician Fifth Grade, 925th Field Artillery Battalion, for heroic achievement in action on 20 December 1944, in the vicinity of Bitch, France. When communication with the company forward observer had been severed as a result of a hostile barrage, Corporal Tumidajski was assigned the difficult and hazardous mission of repairing the break. Although subjected to intense enemy mortar bombardment, he repaired the line, and then, on his own initiative, testing and finding that other important company and communication wires had also been severed, repaired these in turn, despite the continuing enemy shelling. As a result of Corporal Tumidajski's courage and devotion to duty, vital communications were restored. Entered military service from Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

JAMES W. DIMMICK, 34911339, Private First Class, 397th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 23 November 1944, in the vicinity of Le Saulcy, France. Assigned the mission of establishing a roadblock, Private Dimmick's pla-

toon while en route was pinned down by heavy and unexpected fire from hostile automatic weapons. Disregarding his own safety, Private Jimmick traversed three hundred yards of open terrain under intense small arms fire in order to transmit orders from his commanding officer to the leader of a weapons platoon in the rear. As a result of his action, the hostile position was put out of action by friendly mortars and the platoon proceeded to the successful accomplishment of its mission. Entered military service from Gulfport, Florida.

ROYER E. FUGATE, 37533905, Private First Class (then Private), Medical Detachment, 398th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 23 November 1944, in the vicinity of Le Trouche, France. When the platoon to which Private Fugate was attached as aid man was subjected to enemy artillery fire, a machine gunner was seriously wounded by shrapnel. Disregarding his personal safety, Private Fugate advanced through the continuing hostile barrage and effectively applied a tourniquet to the leg of the injured man, who otherwise would have quickly succumbed to loss of blood from his wound. Entered military service from Lebetto, Kansas.

DAVID G. HOWARD, 17197283, Private First Class, 397th Infantry Regiment. Entered military service from Omaha, Nebraska.

JOSEPH H. HAWKEY, 36466125, Private, 397th Infantry Regiment. Entered military service from Owosso, Michigan.

For heroic achievement in action on 4 December 1944, in the vicinity of Bothbach, France. When the platoon of which Privates Hawkey and Howard were members was pinned down by intense enemy machine gun and mortar fire, the platoon scout was wounded and fell in an exposed position well in advance of our forces. On receipt of orders to withdraw in order that an artillery barrage might be laid on the area, Privates Hawkey and Howard, with full knowledge of four previous unsuccessful attempts by the members of the platoon, volunteered to evacuate the wounded man. Despite enemy fire they succeeded in reaching the casualties but were wounded by the explosion of an enemy mine while carrying an injured soldier to safety.

HARLAN A. KNEPPE, 35802150, Private First Class, Medical Detachment, 399th Infantry Regiment. Entered military service from Fort Thomas, Kentucky.

ANTHONY P. LA CORCIA, 35316263, Private First Class, Medical Detachment, 399th Infantry Regiment. Entered military service from Chicago, Illinois.

For heroic achievement in action on 9 December 1944, in the vicinity of Lemberg, France. When our positions were attacked by enemy flak-wagons, two platoons were forced to withdraw, leaving wounded men behind in their foxholes. With utter disregard for their own safety, these aid men voluntarily advanced into the evacuated area and, despite bursts of small arms fire which repeatedly halted their progress, succeeded in reaching a soldier who had received a severe head and brain injury and led him to safety through the only available evacuation route.

HAROLD J. LANIUS, 42107871, Private First Class (then Private), 398th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 19 November 1944, in the vicinity of Le Trouche, France. When his company was isolated by enemy action, Private Lanus was assigned the mission of establishing contact with the remainder of the battalion. While cautiously proceeding across an open field, intense enemy fire partially halted his movement and forced him to take the best available cover. Coming upon several wounded soldiers, he administered aid to them; then, making his way through continued mortar and sniper fire, succeeded in establishing contact with friendly forces. Entered military service from Tarrytown, New York.

EUGENE T. LEAVY, 12228195, Private First Class, 398th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 5 December 1944, in the vicinity of Moezfeld, France. Although aware that the road which he was to traverse was subjected to heavy enemy bombardment, Private Leavy without hesitation drove from the regimental command post to a battalion command post and returned, obtaining and delivering information vital to the successful operation of our forces. A few minutes later he again braved enemy fire to obtain similar information from another battalion, being forced to stop and seek cover on the way by the intensity of the enemy shelling. Entered military service from New York, New York.

ORVILLE I. RICHOLSON, JR., 35892953, Private First Class, 399th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 9 December 1944, in the vicinity of Lemberg, France. When his company found itself out of communication with other units

GO #1 Hq 100th Inf Div, APO 447, US Army, 3 Jan 45 contd:

and surrounded on three sides by enemy forces, Private Richolson volunteered to establish contact with the battalion command post, the location of which was unknown. Private Richolson crawled for three hundred yards through a hostile barrage and, when discovered by the crew of a hostile machine gun, evaded their fire by crawling along a ditch until he eventually located the battalion. Upon returning to his unit he was wounded in the chest by enemy machine gun fire, but succeeded in notifying his commanding officer of the completion of his mission. Entered military service from Lafayette, Indiana.

GERALD C. WEBER, 35705011, Private First Class, 398th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in action on 15 December 1944, in the vicinity of Bitche, France. After a wireman from his section had spent eight day-light hours in attempting to establish a wire line under intense hostile artillery and mortar fire, Private Weber was assigned to relieve him. Although subjected to enemy observation and constant shelling, he continued to establish the line throughout the night. His courage and complete devotion to duty in the face of danger won the praise and admiration of all officers and men of his organization. Entered military service from Louisville, Kentucky.

SECTION III -- AWARD OF AIR MEDAL

Under the provisions of Army Regulations 600-45, as amended, the Air Medal is awarded to each of the following named individuals:

LLOYD C. BORGEN, 01166179, First Lieutenant, 374th Field Artillery Battalion, for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flights against the enemy in France during the period 17 November 1944 to 21 December 1944. Entered military service from Brooklyn, New York.

THOMAS J. JARZAPKOWSKI, 01174330, Second Lieutenant, 250th Field Artillery Battalion, for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flights against the enemy in France during the period 13 August 1944 to 25 December 1944. Entered military service from Saginaw, Michigan.

By command of Major General BYRESS:

RICHARD G PRATHER
Colonel GSC
Chief of Staff

OFFICIAL:

Byron C De La Mater
BYRON C DE LA MATER
Lt Col AGD
Adjutant General

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