

MAGINOT LINE

We were in the same position for several days because we had run up against the Maginot line. The French had built these fortifications after WWI, to guard against the Germans if they attacked again. When the Germans invaded France at the first of WWII, they bypassed the Forts, surrounded them and starved the French into surrendering. The Germans then modified these structures to guard against an attack on Germany.



Entrance to one of the forts

This was the largest part of the Maginot line. First it was to Fort Freudenberg and then to Fort Schiesseck, which consisted of eleven pillboxes, five stories deep, made of reinforced concrete ten feet thick. Some had disappearing gun mounts. All were arranged to fire on each other for protection in case of attack. These were connected with tunnels underground and supplied with an electric narrow gauge railroad. It contained kitchens, sleeping quarters, sick bays, water, forced air supply, electrical generators, fuel and anything

needed for a long siege. (H- pg. 92) In 1987 Gladys and I visited this series of forts and took a trip into them riding the electric trolley and listening to the French tour guide. We even watched as he used the elevator to raise the gun mount above the ground and caused it to traverse as it would if used in war time.

Our infantry troops could not break these for awhile. Air support was called in and dropped 250 and 500 pound bombs directly on the forts. The artillery brought up 105 and 240 mm guns and fired point blank. The only damage was chipped concrete. The Germans would go down into the connecting tunnels until the attack was over then return, open doors and fire at us again.

Nothing tried seemed to work. Then some of the men crawled up to the barbed wire surrounding the forts, slipped a Bangalore torpedo under the wire and blew it up. This allowed them to get close enough to fire small arms at the openings and keep the Germans buttoned up. Another man would crawl up, place an explosive on the doors, crawl back and set the charge off. This allowed our men to throw grenades, etc. into the openings and run the Germans into the tunnels. This was done with several forts and the Germans were trapped in between behind massive steel doors that sealed the tunnels between forts.

One supply fort contained machinery for the air and generators. Twelve hundred pounds of dynamite was placed on the main floor and then exploded by a distant bazooka. This resulted in an awful explosion ruining the equipment but doing little damage to the enclosure. Three days later a few Germans crawled out this opening, some wounded, some out of their minds but many others were left dead. (H- pg. 84)

After one of the first forts was taken, another man and I carried telephone wire up to the backside. We had one of the large spools, containing a mile of wire that weighed 100 lbs., suspended on an axle between the two of us. We used this because it was uncertain how much line was needed and it was too far, too much trouble and too dangerous to go back for more. The back of this bunker was straight up and had small embankment to the right that went from the bunker, down and over the field. (H-pg. 86)(H-pg.88) One of the

captains with a walkie-talkie was directing his men up a draw and trying to keep them out of the line of fire from another pillbox. The bunker we stood next to had a closed steel door beyond a deep dry moat. We couldn't reach across and get in. A large German shell landed on the other side and threw dirt, debris and shrapnel over our side. It did not hit us but when I looked up I saw a body flying through the air. I first thought poor GI, then



By permission of the 100th Inf. Div. Association
Story of the Century
Fort where German body splayed on my wire drum

recognized the German uniform. The remains fell into a bomb crater that two GIs were using as a foxhole. They crawled out cursing, "That 'Kraut' was so all to pieces we couldn't throw him out of the hole." (H pg. 85)(H-pg. 87, map).

The captain then started across the field to join his men. As I bent to pick up the drum of wire there was a piece of the German's body, about the size of a small steak, lying on my drum. I kicked it off and started to follow the captain. A lieutenant followed him, a sergeant, a radioman and another man with my partner and me in the rear with the wire. Mortars dropped among us but we ran on for the edge of the hill and out of sight. One man was wounded with shrapnel through his helmet. We dressed the wound and attached him with a fellow taking prisoners to the rear and asked him to stop at the aid station with the wounded man. We later heard the sergeant and another man were also wounded. We completed the telephone line but night was on us. (H- pg. 85).

We tested the new line and found it broken, followed it back by hand and found it cut where the shells had fallen. We repaired it and continued to search for more breaks. I saw a man lying there and shook his foot to see if he was wounded and could be helped. No! He was already

stiff and beyond help. I traced the wire back past the first pillbox by hand because I couldn't see it in the dark. The light of a shell lit up the dark enough I could see someone in a crater pointing a machine gun toward me. The hole was a bomb crater being used for protection. I talked quickly explaining who I was and was trying to find the broken wire. The man replied he had seen it before dark and it was close by. I was glad he was a seasoned veteran and not a new man and looked before he pulled the trigger. He was following my movements to be sure who I was. I warned him I'd be back after I fixed the wire. When I turned back, I called out I was returning. I continued to one of the open pillboxes and checked on the phones there.

One of the medics was asking for someone to lead him to a sergeant that was reportedly wounded. The medic had spent several hours trying to find the man, but was unsuccessful. He didn't mind going again but did not want to wander around the front aimlessly in the dark. Someone volunteered to lead him and they took off. Before long they returned with the wounded man. We all admired the medics. They had a difficult job and did it well.

In the 1970's the Louisville Courier Journal published an article about this part of the Maginot line. Some of the ground over the tops of the forts and tunnels was being used by the French farmers to raise crops. I recognized the pictures of the forts as those I had placed telephones around and into, where the captain was giving orders over the radio to his company and the German's body was splayed over my wire drum.

As we took pillboxes we used them for shelter. I remember seeing a large unexploded shell on the floor in one of the first pillboxes I entered. Our history book says it was a 240mm that penetrated into this pillbox, called Ft. Freudenberg. (H- pg. 82)(H- pg. 93)

Over days of mending and replacing wires I traversed the general area often. On one trip as I passed between pillboxes, there was a radio that someone lost, probably when he became a casualty. As I hurried by I grabbed it, thinking it may be needed, and ran on. The "Krauts" saw me and opened fire with a machine gun. Bullets were too close for comfort so I dropped the radio and jumped over the edge of the embankment out of

sight. To keep hidden I crawled through the ditch beside the road. It was filled with the dead and parts of bodies from the days before.

Today there is a lot of talk about POWs and MIAs. All wars have them. Some bodies are so disintegrated it's not possible to identify them. Man's inhumanity to man.

Someone placed a B.A.R. at one of the open doors to the tunnels on the lower floors and ordered the Germans to give up. They refused. The gun was fired and the engineers came in and welded the doors shut at both ends of the tunnel. The "Krauts" could not get out. The Maginot Line had been broken.

The Stars and Stripes was a newspaper published by American Forces in Paris. One of the reporters wrote a story about the Maginot Line describing it as poorly built. He remarked the concrete was of such poor quality a pencil could be pushed through it. That made us mad as hell. Someone went back to Paris, corralled that reporter, brought him up front and challenged him to push a pencil through the concrete. He returned to his paper, retracted his statement and wrote an apology. (H- pg. 92)

We knew there was a large build-up of troops in front of us by our patrols that probed through enemy lines from time to time, but we didn't know why! Before long the "Battle of the Bulge" began. Several years after the war was over, some secret information was declassified and released saying it was found the Germans had planned a winter offense toward our division called "Nordwind" or "North Wind" in English. Hitler countermanded the generals in charge and changed this through Belgium. Thus "Battle of the Bulge" was directed north of us. If it had come in our direction, our division may have been demolished. We were lucky again. (H- pg. 94)

For some reason, someone called it combat fatigue, my name was drawn to take a few days off and visit a rest center in Sarrebourg, France. It sure was good to get away from all the noise and stress for a few days. We could get a good night's sleep and full meals. (L) There were several men there I knew. (H- pg. 71) Someone heard of a civilian who would let us sleep in their house instead of the rest center but we had to go to the rest center for meals. I stayed at the civilian's. There we slept in beds, much better than the floors or

barns and foxholes I was used to. (F)

When I got to the rest center I had a pain in my right knee. When I examined it there was a cut in it and a corresponding one in my pants leg. It was probably done when the shrapnel hit me a couple of days before. I had been so busy I had not noticed. I did not want to apply for a Purple Heart for such a small thing when so many others were in such terrible conditions. If I had known then that later it meant five points toward going home earlier, I may have been tempted.

When I returned to my unit on Christmas day, it was in a different town than the one it was in when I left. They had moved into Siersthal. With the "Battle of the Bulge" up north, several units on both sides of us had been withdrawn to go north and rescue those trapped. This caused my division to withdraw from the Forts and consolidate our lines to the new town Siersthal. Telephone wire was scarce and we needed more than we had. The usual procedure was to go back and reclaim some that was unused. I told the sergeant I knew where we had laid a mile or so before I was sent on leave and it could be easily picked up. He said they had laid some elsewhere while I was gone. Fortunately we went that direction. We were in Siersthal and I had wanted to go toward Reysviller and then to Lemberg. Later we learned the Germans had moved, overnight, into the location near Lemberg where I had suggested. If we had gone my direction we would have run into the enemy and no telling what would have happened. (H- pg. 98)(H-pg. 99&103)

Our division newsletter February, 1997 told about the French farmer who, about thirty years after the war, July 1975, found one of our men, from "L" Co. 399th Reg., in a foxhole on the outskirts of Lemberg. Pfc. Maurice "MO" E. Lloyd's body was still at his Browning automatic rifle where he was killed, January 1, 1945 in the German counterattack. He had been shot in the forehead and the body was not discovered earlier because the foxhole had been covered with logs making it difficult to see. (Newsletter February, 1997)

Things were very tense for some time. The Germans had retaken the pillboxes, un-welded the steel doors and found some Germans were still alive. "Berlin Sally" broadcast over the radio and called the 100th division "The Bloody Butchers of

Bitchie.” Some of the original men that went over with the division had heard her “Welcome to Europe 100th division. The war is being won by Germany and you will be able to go home soon.”

The Germans kept the pressure on us and we feared a breakthrough for our troops were spread so thin. All our gear, bedrolls, wire and everything that could be, was loaded on vehicles. A hand grenade was fastened to the switchboard to blow it up if we didn't have time to unplug it. The engineers had placed charges in all the trees along the road to form a roadblock to our front. (H-pg. 95 & 112) We only had one open road to retreat over and we were tense and afraid.

As I said before, we had to find something to laugh at and relax. GIs were good to the people, giving them a little food, chocolate and cigarettes. We were in a stone French house in Siersthal and the owners lived in the cellar for protection. Their little boy would visit us and we'd give him chocolate. Some made a game of it. He would be booted, mildly, in the rear by a “GI” who would then yell “Boot in the ass”. All would laugh and give him some more chocolate. The little boy thought it was fun. One day we looked out of a window where the boy's father was bent over the woodpile, loading his arms with wood for the fire. The French wore wooden shoes outside and removed them at the door. Inside the wooden shoes were moccasins that were kept on in the house. The son was standing behind his father with his little wooden shoes on. One of our men hollered

“Pierre, boot in the ass!” The boy hauled off and kicked his father onto the woodpile. His armload of wood flew all over. The old man picked himself up, grabbed the boy and dusted his rear well. We all had a good laugh over that and gave the boy some more candy.

Somewhere around this time, I got some grease, maybe from our kitchen, potatoes, onions, canned fruit (gooseberries or plums) from a house no one lived in, and made a meal. (L) I also got some canned milk, cocoa from rations, a little sugar, mixed it with snow and made “snow cream”. I was laughed at, but soon the others joined me and made their own.

After Christmas and into the New Year, the weather was well below zero and the engineers used dynamite to blow foxholes, the ground was frozen so deep, and bodies froze very soon after being killed. If memory serves me right, I believe the temperature dropped to 20 degrees below zero. (H-pg. 100 & 101)

The Germans threw a “Nebelwerfer” into town and blew the roof off a church very close to our house. That is a 210 mm rocket that sounds like a freight car going end over end in the air. It sure is demoralizing to hear. Later I saw the remains of one of the base plates. It was about one and a half-inch thick steel and the holes in it were formed or drilled in a spiral through it. The gases escaping through these holes caused the rocket to spin. Thus the terrible roar. We never were pushed out of town.



The church in Siersthal 1987

BITCHIE FRANCE

Late winter or early spring we forged forward again. The "Battle of the Bulge" was over and we retook the Forts but resistance was not so great this time. We pushed into the town of Bitchie, France. The first time in history this town and its towering Citadel above it had ever fallen to force. It was quite a feat historically.

While in town, Chaplain Sam Tyler held church services on Sunday, in the remnants of an old barracks, "Hinderberg-Kaserne". Quite memorable, because it was out in the open with no structure around us. (H- pg. 96) We were sitting on the remains of an old latrine. When the service was over, I slipped and partly submerged my foot into a semi-liquid of human manure. I removed as much as I could and moved on. I am sure I attended other services of Captain Chaplain Sam's but this is the one that sticks in my mind.

In this area I found some unusual bullets that were made of wood. We had never heard of such and speculated they were used by snipers. In case of injury wood splinters would not show up on x-ray and could not be found. That would delay the healing. In recent times it is also considered they may have been used for target practice because of the shortage of metal in the last days of the war in Germany.

On the other side of town was a self-propelled 88mm gun mount firing at every vehicle passing over the road. It had been bypassed, unseen, in the woods just out of town. My wire crew needed to go down



Chaplain Sam Tyler



Wood bullets

this road. The 88 fired at everything moving so we stopped and sat at the edge of town pondering how to go safely. A tanker saw our problem but could not help. He did say, "wait a minute" and crawled up a small hill, pointed his Thompson sub-machine gun into a pillbox we had not seen. He let loose a burst and waved us on. We did not know there was a German machine gun up there. We decided to go down the road as rapidly as we could. A 100-lb. roll of wire was positioned on the back of a jeep for we had almost a mile to go so we needed this big roll. The driver, Frank Harris, was to drive as fast as I could pull the wire, while two other men grabbed it and tied it once in a while to keep it from pulling in the road and being broken by vehicles. We had not gone far before the 88 fired at us. I heard the round fire, with its distinctive shrill whistle coming toward us. I jumped a belly whopper into the ditch along the road and the shell exploded near by on the surface of the road. I was lying below its level and the concussion engulfed me but the shrapnel went up into the air and when it came down on me it didn't have much force left. When Harris heard the gun fire, he stomped on the accelerator and the jeep was soon behind a small hill and out of sight. It's a wonder the wire had not broken with the speed he was traveling. He looked around and thought the rest of us had been killed. I heard the gunfire again as I jumped up and ran toward the stopped jeep. Harris said I came running out of a cloud of smoke. The second round hit near also. We couldn't see the other two men but waited a while and shortly they came running. The rounds had fallen between us and they waited until the firing stopped. Fortunately none of us were injured. We continued to Camp De Bitchie, a military fort. Our wire was not in service when we reached the camp so we had to go back, find the damage and repair it. We drove as far as we could and still be hidden by the little hill. The line checked out good to the front. It was beyond where we were fired on. We piled into the jeep and barreled down the road to our starting point. The wire was good to the rear switchboard. It had to be broken somewhere near where the shell landed. We remembered from earlier training that a big gun usually did not fire at one or two people, only at bigger targets. The

the driver barreled down out of sight again while two of us walked the line and sure enough the shell had landed smack dab on top of the wire right at the base of a tree. We lay down in the ditch out of sight and made repairs. This time the line was good all the way from rear to the front in Camp De Bitchie. (H pg. 124 & 127). The big gun did not fire at us again and we hightailed it to the jeep and forward to the barracks.

I was really shook up and shaking. The sergeant said the line to "K" company was out. I agreed I would go fix it if someone would go show me its location. Someone else had put it in and I didn't know where to find it. He said it was so late it could wait until daylight, unless a call came in from the rear saying that it had to be repaired. I crawled into a bunk on bare springs and wrapped in a blanket and went to sleep. About two in the morning the sergeant woke me to go fix the line for a call had come in from the rear saying it had to be put in operation. I was so shaken by the shell earlier I was trembling and sweating and yet freezing but I still had to go. "Lefty", that I spoke of earlier, went with me and found the line. I repaired one end while he repaired the other. Mission accomplished. I was still in a state of shock and didn't know which way to go back to the barracks. I kept telling "Lefty" the next shell was going to get us. The Germans were pulling out but throwing everything at us, randomly, before they left. "Lefty" led me back to safety. If it had not been for him I would have been lost.

The 398th Reg. was awarded the Presidential Citation for this Battle of Bitchie. (H- pg. 98)

January 15, 1945 I got a haircut from a Frenchman for a pack of cigarettes. (F)

Some time about here we had some "Gurkhas" attached to us. They were dark skinned and I believe they were from Nepal serving with the Indian or British Army. They wore turbans instead of helmets and if I remember correctly, colorful uniforms. They carried big knives instead of rifles and had a belief that if they removed the knife from its sheath they had to draw blood before replacing it. If they cleaned it, they pricked themselves before returning it to the sheath. If a G. I. asked to see it they gladly showed it but would pierce the soldier just enough to draw a bit of

blood. I never asked to see the knife but the handles were very ornate.

I don't know if it is true but the rumor was that they fought mostly at night and would crawl into a foxhole, feel for a helmet, and if it had a sand finish, it was an American and they would leave. If the helmet was smooth it was a German and they would cut their throat before leaving. True or not we noticed a difference when they were around and the Germans seemed to withdraw. We liked this less pressure on us.

I don't remember having as much as a cold even though we were in all kinds of bad weather, but I did have one bad toothache. I had broken a tooth on a chicken bone and it was painful. The middle of a war out in the woods is not a good place for a toothache. It finally became so bad I was sent back, January 18, 1945, where there was a dentist. It was about 15 miles to the rear, but not so far that it was out of the sound of artillery. The chair did tilt a little but there was no electricity. The doctor had to peddle a large wheel that turned the cable in the drill, while he drilled out the broken or decayed area, preparing for a filling. I don't see how he kept from having the drill all over my mouth. He did complete the filling; the ache stopped and I returned back to duty with my company. The filling did not hold so I had to go back for another fix. (L)

February 23, 1945 I was awarded the good conduct medal. It was supposed to be given after one year of service but it took me twenty four months to get to me. It took a while to catch up because I had been transferred so many times. (L)



Good conduct medal

HEADQUARTERS SEVENTH ARMY
APO 758 US Army

GENERAL ORDERS)

12 March 1945

NUMBER 91)

E-X-T-R-A-C-T

Battle Honors - Citation of Unit. III

III - BATTLE HONORS - CITATION OF UNIT. By direction of the President, under the provisions of Section IV, Circular No. 333, War Department, 1943, the following named organization is cited for outstanding performance of duty in action:

THE 3D BATTALION, 398TH INFANTRY REGIMENT is cited for outstanding performance in combat during the period 17 to 21 December 1944, near Bitche, France. On 17 December 1944, the 3d Battalion was assigned the mission of breaching the formidable fortifications of the Maginot line west of the town of Bitche, France. The main line of enemy defense was Fort Freudenberg, a large fortification, and Fort Schiesseck, which had eleven adjacent units, each unit with a gun emplacement or a series of guns ranging from forty-seven millimeters to one hundred and thirty-five millimeters, which were mutually supporting and extremely difficult to attack. The walls of the fortifications were from three to ten feet thick and constructed of reinforced concrete. Some of the units had as many as five stories below ground-level with underground railroads which were used for supply. With no terrain features for protection and only shell craters for cover, the 3d Battalion, taking advantage of a forty-five minute barrage, moved into the attack. Under intense enemy artillery, mortar, automatic weapons and small arms fire, the 3d Battalion pressed the attack and, after fierce fighting, captured Fort Freudenberg along with units ten and eleven of Fort Schiesseck. At this point the enemy increased their artillery and mortar fire, forcing the battalion to dig in for the night. At 0930 hours the following morning, 18 December 1944, the attack was continued behind a rolling barrage laid down by supporting artillery. Fighting their way up the steep, barren slope of the difficult terrain, through heavy barbed wire entanglements, the assault detachments, despite harassing enemy fire, rapidly wrested the remaining units of Fort Schiesseck from the enemy. The fighting aggressiveness, courage, and devotion to duty displayed by members of the 3d Battalion are worthy of the highest emulation and reflect the finest traditions of the Armed Forces of the United States.

By command of Lieutenant General PATCH:

ARTHUR A. WHITE,
Major General, GSC,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

s/ W. G. Caldwell
t/ W. G. CALDWELL,
Colonel, AGD,
Adjutant General.

EXTRACTED AND REPRODUCED: HQ 100TH INF DIV
16 Mar 45

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D. D. S.

DISTRIBUTION: "A" & "BB"

CHASING GERMANS

The Germans were on the run so we regrouped and gave chase. We turned a little north and headed through the Siegfried line toward Germany. The difference was amazing. We crossed over through a little town where, on the French side it was not clean, not modern and uninteresting. Across the border, on the German side, the streets had curbs and the houses were more modern with city water and indoor plumbing. The border cut right through the town.

Our mail delivery had not improved. A package mailed October 19, 1944 was not received until March 27, 1945. (F)

We pressed on and stopped in Ludwig-

shafen where we stood guard in a large chemical factory. It was in ruins from the bombing but we still had to guard it.

The next day we rode over a pontoon bridge across the Rhine River into Mannheim. (H-pg. 136) We really felt we were in Germany at last. We bypassed Heidelberg because it had been declared an open city. That meant German forces would not be stationed there for defense and the city would not be destroyed. It was a cultural city with colleges and museums.



Mannheim



Seinsheim to Mannheim, damaged "Autobahn" & railroad

HEILBRONN

We traveled quite a distance until we came into Neckargartach on the Neckar River. The Germans had pulled out of this and other close neighborhoods and put up a defense line across the river in Heilbronn. They destroyed the last remaining bridge just as we arrived. As we pulled in, some of our advance troops captured a lot of rifles, carbines, shotguns, over and under, side by side and rifle and shotgun combinations. Some were very elaborate with silver inlays and fancy carvings. They broke the stocks, even though it was a shame to destroy such fine pieces, because they didn't have time to store and protect them. They didn't have the ability to take them with them so they destroyed all they could, to keep the civilians from using them against us. I found a small fancy carbine with a broken stock and took it with me, intending to send it home and have it repaired.

I had been laying telephone wires for miles and had not slept for about two days and a night. Since I was so tired and had not slept for so long, I looked for a place to lie down. Civilians had filled all the basements and there were no barns. I reluctantly found a bed on the second floor and bedded down, about 2 a.m. Didn't remove any clothes. Sleeping where there was so little protection, was a no, no, but I was so worn out I didn't care. A few tanks had moved into town and were kept busy moving around to make the Germans think that more were moving into town and an armored assault was emanate. The engineers were laying a smoke screen and the "Krauts" couldn't see on our side of the river. (H-pg.142 &146)

About 2 o'clock in the morning, about the same time I got to bed, the engineers put in row-boats and ferried the infantry across the Neckar River for a surprise attack. (H- pg.138 &140) The Germans were really surprised and our men made good headway until the Germans woke up. The first building in the area near the river was an electric power plant. One platoon made it further in and to the top of a hill, named Tower Hill, (H- pg. 141 &144) that the enemy used as an observation post. The surprised Germans there were taken prisoners but the GIs didn't have time to search the prisoners because of a counterattack. The Germans had been aroused and surrounded the hill

cutting off any escape route the Americans had. Our men fought until they ran out of ammunition and called for help and could get none. They asked what they should do. There was no choice but to surrender and the whole platoon was captured.

When the German counter attackers took the Americans as prisoners and prepared to shoot them, one of the German officers that had been captured by the Americans wouldn't let them. He said the Americans had captured them, treated them well and had not done so much as take their personal belongings, so the GIs were spared and taken prisoners of war. After the war most of the men were returned and told their story.

The attack had been a surprise but when the Germans woke up all hell broke loose. Several companies were pinned down and had a difficult time. We learned, later, the German SS had intended to make a last ditch stand at this town.

About 3 a.m. a sergeant woke me and told me to go repair the line that had been put across the river. I was to go several blocks parallel to the river, another few blocks toward the river. There I would find the engineers and they would row me to the other side where I could find and repair the broken wire. I found the engineers and they took me across the river. (H- pg.143, 147, 148 & 154) I found the wire broken by an explosion of a shell, repaired it and checked to be sure it was working from one end to the other. The switchboard operator answered with "Is that you Weber?" I assured him it was. "You don't need to go back to the house you had been sleeping in. There has been a direct hit and the house is destroyed." Boy, was I lucky again! I had moved out just in time. I lost all the clothing that I was not wearing and all other personal belongings. My souvenir carbine was lost too. Later I was able to replace all I needed and found another place to stay. (H- pg.138)

Fighting continued and many times the wire across the river was destroyed. Some bright mind decided to replace the regular wire with a cable surrounded with a steel mesh. Maybe it would resist being cut by shrapnel. It sounded like a possible solution and they put it into action. Shrapnel still broke the steel casing and had to be repaired. Big problem #1. No one gave us tools to

splice a steel armored cable. We went back to the old telephone wires. At least we could repair them. These wires were damaged so often they had to be replaced over and over several times. Each time the engineers would row us to and fro.

The third day over on the German side of the river I saw a man that I recognized from "I" Company. I asked about "Buddy" White, for I had not seen him for awhile. The man told me "Buddy" was killed the first morning after the first attack. He was in a foxhole on our side of the railroad track, in front of the powerhouse. (H- pg.138 & 140) He was a sergeant and when one of his men was wounded, he raised up and called for a medic. A German sniper from the other side of the track shot "Buddy" in the arm. He called for a medic for himself and the German shot him again. This one was fatal. Several of his men saw this happen and immediately killed the German. Apparently, about the same time, I was behind the powerhouse repairing the telephone line to his company. The battle was so hot word was slow to get to me. After the war was over I visited the site where he had been buried but his body had been reburied at St. Avold in France. None of the Americans killed were left in what had been enemy territory. His death certificate said shrapnel had killed him. I guess his body had been moved near the river until it could be transported across, when time permitted. Shrapnel had probably damaged it before it could be removed for burial. Fighting was so severe only things that HAD to be ferried over, like food, ammunition, wounded and replacements were taken until time permitted. (H- pg. 145 & 146) The grave registration officers did a great job and removed all American bodies as soon as possible. Their big problem was true identification and we always felt they did a super job of this.

During the fighting in France the German POW's were used to pick up their own dead. In Germany both POW's and civilians were used to pick up the dead, sometimes piling them in ox drawn carts like logs for firewood. They also buried their own. (H- pg. 190)

One day while I was in the powerhouse, another soldier and I cracked the big steel sliding door, the kind that opened for freight cars to come in, just a bit to look over the railroad track at the

Germans on the other side. One of them saw us and fired a round through this small crack and into the other man's hand. That ended our observation and we closed the door. Another time I walked up on the catwalks over the big machinery just to look around. The "Jerries" threw a shell onto the roof and that ended another of my inspections. They seemed difficult to deal with.

The powerhouse had its own toilet facilities but it was small. The electricity and water systems were not in operation at this time of battle so the toilets and urinals were soon filled to overflowing. They were the only relief stations near and as the situations of combat paused, the GIs from all around made their way to these. Use your imagination as to the piles and stacks of human refuse in one place. There always seemed to be just a little room for another and then another use of hard pressed men to add their own contribution. I certainly would not have wanted to have latrine duty here when the battle was over!

We could not withdraw and they would not give up. The rowboats were damaged so badly we had to bail while rowing and there were times we had to row ourselves for the engineers were busy or would not go again.

Engineers and smoke platoons placed smoke over the area to hide our operations. Sometimes that helped but the "Jerries" still caused havoc. (H- pg. 142 & 149) The engineers had tried three times to float a pontoon bridge across the river and each time the Germans waited until the last pontoon was in place, and with pinpoint accuracy, sunk the whole thing. (H- pg. 146,147,151&155)

Floating gear was placed on three tanks and they tried crossing the river. Again the "Krauts" sank them. Only the radio antenna was sticking out of the water on the first tank and the other two were out of commission. (H- pg. 145)

The Germans had superb observation from the hill on their side of the river. Our artillery and fighter planes tried to knock it out but it kept going. (H- pg. 141& 144) Liaison planes called for artillery and bombing against the tower but it was never completely destroyed. Note: See my pictures in 1987.

When both sides of a telephone wire was broken and an attached phone or switchboard was

cranked, there was no resistance to turning the handle. Nothing could be heard. If one side was broken a conversation could be heard but the phone did not ring. If the line was grounded, a great deal of resistance was felt when a crank was turned. The latter was the hardest to find. One day in Neckargartach we had such a ground. To find it the wire had to be cut and tested to find the direction to go to eliminate the ground. The wire was repaired and the process continued until the ground was found and eliminated. This time I continued for a mile or more before finding the bad place. When I did, it had a straight pin stuck through the insulation, grounding the wire, and then it was placed behind firewood that was protecting a basement window. This was the only time that I can recall, of finding sabotage to our wires. I cut out this section, repaired and established communications again because this happened to be an important trunk line.

I was on both sides of the river from time to time, and while in Neckargartach and things quieted a bit, I explored a hotel with some friends. There was a huge wine cellar with great barrels of wine. Some were about ten feet high and some only six feet. We did not want to spoil the wine and did not try the big ones but tried a smaller one that had a faucet in it. It was great. I also found a purse with several silver five-mark pieces, and took one for a souvenir. I did not want to take them all. We never found where the Germans were that we thought were living there. They may have watched us from a hidden place. We were in this position over the Neckar for nine days before other troops were able to fight their way around and behind the Germans. When the other regiments were able to do this, we were able to get a pontoon bridge to stay in and cross over with tanks and more support. (H-pg.161)

The "Tankers" told the stories about having to shoot old men and young boys that were standing in the streets and firing rifles at the tanks. (H- pg. 145, 147& 184) They sure didn't like this but these civilians were shooting at them. We later heard that the SS troops were hidden and threatened to shoot the civilians if they didn't fight the Americans.

Heilbronn was badly devastated when the enemy finally quit. (H- pg. 158,159 & 163) Note: see my pictures taken 1987.



German rifle & bayonet

When the battle ceased I walked across the railroad track in front of the powerhouse and searched several dead Germans. All along the brick wall fence there were one or two dead men in each foxhole, each only a few feet apart. I picked up several rifles and threw them down each time I found a better specimen. I found one that looked like a sports rifle with a knurled bolt handle. There was a metal band around the stock behind the bolt so I kept this one because it was different. I searched for a bayonet in good condition to go with my rifle. When I found one I liked, it was on a dead German's belt. He had been dead for some time and getting ripe. I was afraid he would explode if he was disturbed too much, so I just cut his belt and relieved him of the bayonet. After all he wasn't going to use it anymore. While this was dangerous and frowned on, I really wanted one of these rifles. The problems, with doing this, were unexploded duds and possible booby traps. I had been through so much I just ignored all that.



German Rifle cleaning kit

The rifle was in extra good condition and just needed to be oiled and cleaned to remove rust caused by dew and powder from having been fired. Another good thing, by removing the butt plate, I found a bolt and the forward mechanism came loose behind the breech and the stock was in two pieces. That made the rifle short enough to ship home without cutting the stock. Every piece of the rifle, including the stock and firing mechanism had the same serial number. This had to be a hand fitted rifle. It survived the mailing home. I have since found it to be a scarce model Hungarian Folks rifle, a Gew 98/40, made before the war.

It is an eight-mm and compatible with the German ammunition.

The German prisoners were usually searched for weapons and at times some personal belongings taken. I never got to search any one of them so a man gave, or sold me, a pocket watch. It was enclosed in a metal case with a clear front through which the time could be read. This case helped to protect the watch from being shocked and broken. It did stop working and I tried to get it repaired when I got home, but I was told it was not repairable because the balance staff was not available. It still made a good souvenir.



German watch



Sgt. Rommie C. White Jr. "Buddy"
Picture furnished by brother
Don White

C O P Y

HEADQUARTERS 100TH INFANTRY DIVISION
Office of the Commanding General
APO 447, U.S. Army

GENERAL ORDERS)
NUMBER 277)

9 November 1945

BATTLE HONORS - CITATION OF UNIT

By direction of the President, under the provisions of Section IV, Circular Number 333, War Department, 1943, and with the approval of the Army Commander, the following named organization is awarded the First Oak Leaf Cluster to the Unit Citation for outstanding performance of duty in action:

THE THIRD BATTALION, 398th Infantry Regiment, is cited for outstanding accomplishment in combat during the period 5 April 1945 to 12 April 1945, in the vicinity of Heilbronn, Germany. After crossing the Neckar River by assault boat, the battalion secured a bridgehead and prepared to hold its position when intense enemy artillery and mortar barrages landed with almost pin-point precision on the crossing site, making further use of assault boats impossible and isolating the battalion. Simultaneously wave after wave of hostile troops, an entire regiment in strength, counter-attacked, and the weight of the numerically superior foe forced the battalion to withdraw to the river's edge. Despite heavy losses, remnants of the battalion reorganized and, when the Germans stopped to dig in, attacked again and retook most of the lost ground. Every night for five nights the enemy attacked, trying desperately to regain the east bank, but each time they were thrown back. On one occasion, after a three-mile long column of enemy troops and vehicles poured into the lines, the Germans charged with reckless and fanatical zeal, and succeeded in making a slight penetration. Committing its reserves, the battalion stopped the attack and re-established its lines. By the individual heroism and intrepidity of the officers and men of this command, the depleted battalion held the bridgehead for eight days and nights under continuous and savage shelling, enabling the Division to push other troops across the river and insure the success of the vital operation. The accomplishment of this battalion reflects the highest traditions of the Army of the United States.

BY COMMAND OF BRIGADIER GENERAL TYCHSEI:

W. V. RAWLINGS
Lt Col GSC
Actg Chief of Staff

OFFICIAL:

s/Leonard F. Olliver
t/LEONARD F. OLLIVER
Major AGD
Adjutant General

C O P Y

Certified a True Copy:

Walter L. Baker
WALTER L. BAKER
1st Lt., 398th Inf

CHASING GERMANS AGAIN

After we broke out of the bridgehead we chased the Germans day and night. They blew roadblocks of trees across the road to slow us down. We were strung out in a long line with the lead vehicle being a tank fitted with a bulldozer blade. When a roadblock was encountered, the tank fired a machine gun into it. If there was no return fire the tank pushed the blockage away and we'd go to the next one. The Germans tried to slow us but did not man these blocks.

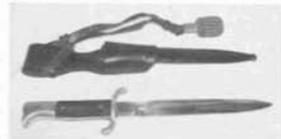
One time while we were stopped we heard a dog bark close to the tank I had hitched a ride on, which made us think the Germans were hiding in the woods. It was night and dark so some of the men, armed with rifles, walked in a short distance and found an old man and his dog. He was drunk, had wandered from town and was sleeping it off. He had no idea the Americans were close and sobered up in a hurry when we put him on the tank and gave him a ride into town.

As we went through town after town, orders were issued to the people to turn in all weapons, rifles, pistols, bayonets, big knives and such. (H- pg. 179) There was a wagon filled with good-looking bayonets so I saved several including a dress bayonet and a good-looking dagger. The latter turned out to be a Luftwaffe dress bayonet with carved bone or ivory handle and silver thread tassel. I sent them home. When our children's school had a meeting and wanted such things displayed I obliged. A guard was to be placed at the display, but was not. My good Luftwaffe bayonet was stolen and has not been found.

In this same town, soldiers were ordered to give up and be taken prisoners. A man, dressed in a German uniform, came out with hands up and was taken prisoner. The fellow I spoke of earlier



By permission of The 100th Inf. Assoc. *The Story of the Century*



German dress bayonet

that I did not like, took charge somehow. I was shocked when he pointed a .45 cal automatic pistol, don't know where he stole it, at this German. In Yiddish he made the prisoner believe he was going to shoot him. He backed him to the edge of the ditch and repeated he was going to shoot him. The German begged and cried, not to shoot. This was in front of the Battalion C.P. and they were asked to send someone to take the prisoner to the POW compound. The man tried to get someone to speak to him in French, saying he had been captured and put into slavery as a soldier. He had been in civilian clothes but put on the uniform to surrender, as ordered. This no good jackass wanted to play like a hero, and I'm sure he still brags of capturing a prisoner although he nothing to do with it. Several of us warned him to put the pistol down and he continued to frighten the German. I never liked him or his tactics and pointed my carbine at him and said if he shot that prisoner I was going to shoot him. I meant it. I was mad. This was a helpless human. I would have been in a heap of trouble but thought I was right. Some of the other GIs joined me with the same warning and pointed their rifles at this no-good jackass. Finally a jeep drove up; the prisoner put on the front as was customary, and taken to a camp. He was so relieved he collapsed and had to be helped up on the jeep, cried his thanks and wanted to shake hands with me and the others that helped him.

Most of the towns in Germany where we passed through quickly, were groups of displaced persons greeting and cheering as we went by. A lot of them were Polish refugees, just released from slave labor or concentration camps. Often they played accordions, sang their native songs and danced. It was both heartwarming and saddening to see them. (H- pg. 8, 113, 175, 190 & 192)

The 100th Division, as a unit, had been on line for 175 days continuously, so we were pulled off and placed in reserve to rest. Several divisions had been in combat more days but not continuously. (H- pg. 195)

Sometime before we went in reserve, the Red Cross came up close to the rear and gave out hot coffee and fresh doughnuts. What a treat. (H- 182)

IN RESERVE

My company stayed in Murrhardt (F) and my platoon was housed in a mansion. The house belonged to the man that owned the manufacturing company of boogie wheels for German tanks. We made good use of the washing machine in the basement and the swimming pool in the front yard.

Mail was getting to us faster, usually about 10 or 11 days. That was wonderful. (F)

The civilians were allowed into their houses to pick up clothes and things, for they had been forced out so quickly they could not take all they needed. We were not supposed to fraternize, (talk) with the civilians.

I don't remember when I met Murray Solomon, but we became friends. He and I took a few hikes together. He spoke Yiddish and it was close enough the Germans could understand him and he told them how bad Hitler and the Nazis treated people. I could only listen.

It was spring and we made the most of it. I



Gerald Weber

took hikes with several others also and enjoyed the countryside. Jim Petch and I walked out to the woods, still carrying our rifles, found a clearing, peeled down to our under shorts and warmed in the sun. When we returned we were told the news, the war in Germany was over and everybody celebrated. (H- pg.195)

Eero Wirkkanen, from Massachusetts, was learned in nature. He knew the Latin and English names of trees and flowers so we'd walk through fields and woods and talk about them. I knew a lot by the English names but there were some not native to my Kentucky. One time we found a cascading waterfall, about 25 feet tall and then straight down for another 25 or 30 feet. We stripped to our birthday suits and had a shower. It didn't take long for this was a mountain

took hikes with several others also and enjoyed the countryside. Jim Petch and I walked out to the woods, still carrying our rifles, found a clearing, peeled down to our under shorts and warmed in the sun. When we returned we were told the news, the war in Germany was over and everybody celebrated. (H- pg.195)



Jim Petch



Water fall

steam and ice cold. It was a treat on a hot day. (L) On another hike we saw deer stop and watch us. The Germans had not been allowed to hunt for so long the deer were not afraid. I cornered a small fawn in a fence corner and tried to pet it. When it became so frightened it tore its skin on the wire fence I backed off so it could run. It fell over its own feet, jumped up and was gone. A thrill to be that close to this beautiful animal.

As we stepped over a small ditch, Eero said "There are trout in here." I did not believe him so he showed me how to sneak up and see them dart under an overhang. That made a believer of me. I had no idea they lived in such a small stream. The water came off a mountain and it was ice cold. We later returned with fishing lines and he caught a few but I never got the hang of it. I looked first and scared the fish. When we got back to the house we had a delicious fish fry.

The electric system was really strange. A fellow borrowed an iron from one house and used it in another and the iron burned out. We learned some houses were wired for 110 volts of electricity and some 220 volts.

Household appliances were made for different voltages and could not be interchanged from house to house as we do in the U.S.

We had drills etc. to keep us busy but we also prepared to get ready to be shipped to the Pacific where the war continued.

We were issued new clothing and some new equipment. None of us looked forward to that. We felt we had done our share and wanted to



Eero Wirkkanen & Gerald Weber

go home. (H- pg.200)

Someone gave me a small Kodak with a folding bellows and I was able to get a few rolls of film to take some pictures. I already had a small camera that my mother had sent me, a Kodak Jr. 620 and film, some months before, that used a small size film, and had taken some pictures during the war.

The crystal on the watch my dad gave me when I left home, broke, and when I put it in my pocket the second hand tore off. Somebody was going to France on leave so I sent it back to be repaired. When it was returned, the crystal was ok, but the second hand was just clamped to the face and didn't work. I had it repaired properly when I returned home.

According to one of my letters to Gladys, dated May 21, 1945, (L) I had just received word she had received the crystal I had sent months before from St. Louis, France. They had arrived in time to be there before her birthday on April 28. I was glad to hear they finally did get there. They were mailed in the fall of 1944. During these times, letters and word from home took a long time getting through.

I don't remember the town, but somewhere about this time, I wandered around the countryside just taking in the sights. Out in a cleared field I found a large chicken house surrounded by a tall chain link fence. Inside there were hundreds of hens laying eggs that I could see in the nests. I tried and tried to find a way to get just a few fresh eggs to eat. That would have been a rare treat. There was no way I could get in without breaking through the fence and I was afraid that would get me in hot water, so I went hungry for fresh eggs.

There were times we found crocks in the basements, or cellars, with a thick starchy substance in them. We'd take a stick and probe. If something solid was felt, we would reach in with our hands and pull out fresh eggs. The Germans had a way of preserving them but we never learned what the liquid was. We did enjoy the eggs.

An unwelcome order came down from Division Headquarters about a soldier that had been accused of rape. He was to stand trial at court martial and if found guilty he would face a firing squad. The whole Division would be a witness and the squad would be selected from our ranks. Eve-

ryone squirmed. No one wanted to do either. During the trial, the German girl that accused the GI, admitted she consented but was forced to cry rape by an SS Officer, who had learned of the affair. If she did not accuse the American soldier the SS would shoot her. We were all relieved. That would have been an awful ordeal if the trial had turned out the man was guilty.

"Lefty", I spoke of him earlier, found a pistol hidden in the house and showed it to me. It was unloaded and after I inspected it I handed it back. He reinserted the clip, loading it, which I didn't realize and reached for it to check something else. I pulled the trigger and it just clicked. I pulled the slide to the rear. That had loaded a round into the chamber. I was still unaware the clip had been inserted and the gun loaded. Having always treated a gun as if it's loaded, I laid it across my left hand pointed away from everyone. When I pulled the trigger this time it exploded. I knew I was in trouble for I saw plaster fly off the wall. If anyone else heard it I would have to explain. I then looked down and saw blood. The bullet hit my thumb but I could not feel it. I wrapped it in a handkerchief and headed to the medics. They thought my thumb was broken and I needed to go to the hospital. I begged not to go. I had just received a letter from Gladys that something had happened to my sister at home and I didn't want to worry my parents.



Gerald Weber

Gladys' letter said she was sorry to hear about my sister Ivalena but did not give me any details. I tried to get word through the Red Cross but word never came back. All I wanted was the answer of what happened. They dressed the wound and let me go back to quarters. The next morning I returned to the medics for the thumb really hurt bad and was swollen.

I was sent to the hospital where x-rays showed part of the bone was shattered, so they operated to remove bone splinters. The wrapping was soaked with blood and formed a hard cast.

The day before, June, 1945, (L) I was

working on a telephone pole, repairing telephone wires. When I started down, I lifted the left climbing spur out of the pole, intending to place it below the right foot. I missed and the spur dug through my shoe into my right heel. I pulled it out and climbed down. My shoe was full of blood but I finished the job and returned to our house. It did not hurt so I let it go. While I was in the hospital they dressed that wound also. When I woke up, I reeked with the odor of ether. Awful. I heard what I thought was the voice of an American woman but was so groggy I couldn't see her. When I recovered, it really was true, a real American nurse. There were only two nurses to care for about forty men.

Penicillin was new and shots were given every three hours, around the clock. The hospital was in a tent and the beds were folding cots. A week later my arms were so sore from all the shots, I asked the nurse if she could put the shot in my rear instead of the arm. She agreed and stuck my hip. I'm sure she stood back and threw that big needle like a dart. I almost jumped through the side of the tent. That's the last time I let her have that pleasure for I am sure I heard her snicker.

The man across from me was wrapped in so many bandages, the only place he could get his penicillin shot was in the ankle. The nurses were so busy, I tried to feed him and put his cigarette in his mouth to smoke because he couldn't bend his arms or use his hands. He asked me how I could stand to help him because of the terrible odor. It was bad but he needed help for he was burned over most of his body. According to him, he was dry cleaning his clothes in gasoline instead of washing them in water. He forgot and lit a cigarette and the gasoline caught fire. He put the gas can top back on to keep the rest of it from exploding. He was shipped to Paris for further treatment and I never heard if he lived.

Another man had been circumcised and spread the sheet over his knees to keep it from touching the sore spot. He complained to the nurse that every time she passed by he swelled up and hurt worse. The nurse said she knew the cure for that. She went out, picked up a big spoon, pulled the sheet back, and gave the offending member of his body a good whack. That cured the problem, or at least he didn't complain to her again.

In about a week or so I was sent by ambu-

lance, for a 20-mile ride. (F) to the airport in Mannheim to be flown to Paris for more treatment, maybe a skin graft. At the airport I saw the remnants of a German jet plane. There were no guards and I was able to crawl up and through a B-25 Bomber. June 18, 1945, we were put on a C-47 hospital air ship for Paris. It took 2 hours and 10 minutes to get there. (F) I had never been on this large an airplane and when we flew over the mountains the wings flapped like a seagull. I knew wings moved some but not that much. I mean they really flapped on the end. (L)

In Paris, there was no other treatment except shots and I was mobile. Only my hand was bandaged so I toured Paris as much as I could, riding the subway all over town. I'd visit the Red Cross, eat doughnuts and drink Coke. I visited Notre Dame Cathedral and was disappointed for it was so dark and humid and cold inside. The outside was impressive.

I visited Napoleon's grave, Arch of Triumph with the eternal flame and other historic places. I rode the elevator to the second floor of the Eiffel Tower and took pictures of the American planes on display under it. The third floor was closed off to visitors for it was used for wartime radios. I crossed over the Seine River and had my picture made where Hitler stood and had pictures made of himself.



Gerald Weber

One GI patient had a disease, or skin condition, that caused welts to raise up on his skin when scraped. He and others were playing cards when one of the French cleaning ladies passed by. They had seen her approach and had marked designs, swastikas etc., on this man's back with fingernails. The welts rose and looked bad. They explained to the French woman, the Germans had branded this man. She believed this and expressed her sorrow. Not long after she left, the back cleared and no sign of them was left. This was another way the GIs made something to laugh at and relieve tension.

This hospital was full of combat casualties. Some didn't live and I am sure others spent many years in veterans hospitals without being able to

return to society. The medics did a heroic job on the battlefield saving men that otherwise would not have made it at all. The doctors at aid stations stabilized many more until they could be evacuated to a hospital where more sophisticated means were available to repair damaged bodies. Remarkable things were accomplished. I saw one man in this Paris hospital that had no fingers on one hand and only part of two on the other one. During several operations the doctors were cutting the two remnants apart and repositioning them so that they would oppose each other and could be used like a thumb and finger to grasp articles. Many other wonderful repairs were being made.



"Smitty"

Everyone in combat feared being killed but a fear of being maimed was just as bad. No one wanted to be returned home without being whole. I heard of one man in one of the companies that I kept communications to, was wounded. He was infuriated and felt he was mortally wounded, so he stood up on the road at the railroad crossing and fired directly down into the German foxholes killing several enemy soldiers. Before doing this he made this remark. "I know they are going to get me but I'm taking as many with me as I can."

Many so-called heroes were men that became so angry about being wounded or buddies wounded or killed, they did extraordinary things that they would not do otherwise. It was not their intention of doing something to be called a hero. Fear and anger had a great hold on all of us most of the time.

Many of the soldiers, wounded or not, were unable to return to normal lives when they returned home. Everyone matured faster than normal, bodies were changed and minds were altered. At times girls or wives could not accept the changes or found someone else during the absence of boyfriends or husbands. That was another great fear. Many a person at home or in the service got a "Dear John" letter. That was crushing and must have been difficult to take!

A fellow patient had picked up a slide-rule

and I admired it so much he sold it to me for about \$5, if I recall correctly. The body looked like it was made of ivory and on the rear was a scale to calculate the root of any power or the power of any root. The one I used at the U of L did not have this scale.

One day, June 10, 1945, (L) I was in line at the Red Cross to have my picture taken to send home. I looked around and Clyde Chandler was behind me. We were friends and members of South Louisville Christian Church back in Louisville. We had pictures made together and my banded thumb showed so I sent it home with the explanation I had broken my thumb, just didn't tell them how. Clyde was in the Airborne and had jumped in combat in Italy, "D Day" and during the "Battle of the Bulge".

After two or three weeks I returned to my unit in Waiblingen. On the way I stopped in Strasbourg overnight and had pictures made of me in front of the train station. I also took some pictures from the upper floors of a damaged church. So many of the towns suffered a lot of damage.



Letters had accumulated while I was gone. In them I learned that Ivalena, my 13-year-old sister, had drowned. My mother had written me in care of the chaplain but he was sick and sent to the hospital before the letter reached him. I got hurt before he returned and word did not follow me to the hospital. Gladys did not tell me any more detail about my sister until Mom's letter gave me the news first. It was sad news but I was glad to finally get the facts. I knew it was hard for the family because they were worried about me and did not need another problem.

Clyde Chandler & Gerald Weber

U S ARMY HOSPITAL PLANT NO. 4318
814TH HOSPITAL CENTER
APO 887, U S ARMY

6 July 1945

SPECIAL ORDERS)
NO. 187)

1. Par 4, SO 186, this Hq, cs, is amended to delete therefrom so much as pertains to Pfc Frank F. Gagliardi, 32705703.
2. Par 5, SO 186, this Hq, cs, is amended to delete therefrom so much as pertains to the following:
Cpl John R. Waits, 34761832, 180 Inf,
Pvt Devon E. Dalton, 39028025, 2955 Reinf Bn.
3. Following pnts are reld fr atchd Det of Pnts, this hosp, fr obsn and trtmt and WP w/o delay to proper sta for ret to dy:
Sgt Gerrard Dasanthoon (Dutch Army) Lt Piotr Mazur (Polish Army)
Kurt Rabeling (Dutch Civilian)
4. Pfc George Skolski, 3245310, (846 Engr Avn Bn), A/U Det of Pnts, this hosp, are reld fr further obsn and trtmt and A/U 70 Reinf Depot (AAF), AAF Sta 385, for ret to dy. Temp S/R, A/P, Abstract of Hospitalization and available clothing and equip will accompany EM. T by CV is atztd.
(Auth: Ltr Ltr 21, OCS, ETOUSA, 3Mar45) TDN. 60-114 P 431-02 A 212/60425.
5. Following O & EM, not members of Det of Pnts, this hosp, are reld fr further asgmt w/present units, as indicated, for further transfer to ZI for obsn and trtmt. S/R, A/P will be forwarded to this hosp within 24 hours after receipt of these orders. Disposition of personal effects and baggage of pnts will be made in accordance w/SOP 26, 9Jun44 & SOP 45, 3Aug44, as amended. No T involved. EDCMR: 6 Jul 45.
CAPT CURTIS L. PARKER, 0917301, 13 TRG,
Tec 4 Max Dresher, 36694864, Hq U.S. Group C.C.A.(g) D.,
Cpl Thomas E. Allen, 38524237, 3799 QM Tk Co.,
Tec 5 Doyle Poling, 35589535, 741 Ry Grp Bn,
Tec 5 Henry R. Walker, 32919952, 67 Hq Co QM Base Depot.
(Auth: Cir 33, Hq ETOUSA, 27 Mar 45)
6. Following O & EM, units as indicated, are reld fr atchd Det of Pnts, this hosp, fr further obsn and trtmt and WP w/o delay to proper sta for ret to dy. T by GV and/or R is atztd:
CAPT RICHARD W. HUTSON, 0328653, 424 Inf,
R/O CULLEN IRISH, II, T60605, 75 Sqn, 435 Trp Carr Gp,
T/Sgt Jesse F. McDonald, 36783711, 353 Harbor Craft Co,
S/Sgt Willard S. Robbins, 34855122, 353 Harbor Craft Co,
Tec 3 George W. Head, 140936690, 23 BFO,
Tec 3 Robin Shaddock, 19179811, Hq 1st ECAR,
Sgt Norman A. Brassard, 11064066, 90 Sta Comp, 9th AF,
Tec 4 Clarence A. Eckart, 36526138, 79 Gen Hosp,
Tec 4 Leo Evans, 35004836, 54 Sig Bn,
Tec 5 Glenn E. Pierce, 17057407, 3254 Ord Depot Co,
Tec 5 George Rubas, 32815619, 1st ECAR,
Tec 5 Charles Wright, 31322050, 217 (US) Gen Hosp,
Pfc Oliver Anderson, 37435631, 370 Med Bn,
Pfc Elwood A. McFadyen, 34855410, 353 Harbor Craft Co,
Pfc William H. Wright, 17155997, Gen Hq, Trams MRS,
Pfc Gerald C. Weber, 35705011, 398 Inf

(Cont'd)

- 1 -

SO 187, Hq 4318 USAHP, APO 887, 6 July 45 - Cont'd.
Par 6 - Cont'd.

Pvt William A. Nagy, 35069635, 2208 QM Trk Co,
Pvt Joseph J. Nitzburg, 42038567, 65 Gp Hq, ASCS,
Pvt George Wycheck, 33186712, 3626 QM Trk Co.

(Auth: Cir 33, Hq EPOUSA, 27 Mar 45) TDN. 60-114 P 431-02 A 212/60425.

7. Following EM, A/U Det of Ents, this hosp, are held fr further obsn and trmt and A/U 19 Reinf Depot, APO 176, for ret to dy. WP thereto at once by R. Temp S/R, S/P, Abstracts of Hospitalization and available clothing and equip will accompany EM. EBCMR: 7 July 45.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ASN</u>	<u>GRADE</u>	<u>AcrS</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>CASUALTY</u>	<u>ASGMT</u>	<u>ASR</u>	<u>FHY</u>	<u>CL</u>
Stotler, Joseph W.	37641860	S/Sgt	Inf	NBC		L	Unknown	Q	(In chg)
Vetter, John J.	39313677	S/Sgt	Inf	NBC		G	"	Q	
Banks, Lloyd E.	42076001	Tec 3	Ord	NBC		L	"	D	
Loger, Richard T.	20749839	Sgt	CAC	NBC		G	"	Q	
Smith, Blair A.	33768323	Sgt	CE	NBC		L	77	D	
Waits, John R.	34761832	Cpl	Inf	NBC		G	Unknown	Q	
Davenport, Roddy W.	34641624	Tec 5	QMC	NBC		G	"	Q	
Schuler, Howard B.	33757891	Tec 5	MD	NBC		G	"	Q	
Bigos, Anselm	31434321	Pfc	Inf	NBC		G	"	Q	
Erickson, Lynn E.	38283039	Pfc	Inf	NBC		G	"	Q	
Gagliardi, Frank F.	32705703	Pfc	BI	NBC		L	"	Q	
Graves, Philip	20457150	Pfc	Cav	NBC		L	"	D	
Kerkes, John	31278186	Pfc	CAC	NBC		G	"	Q	
Reynolds, Vance A.	34926256	Pfc	Inf	NBC		G	"	Q	
Robinson, Charles S.	35758743	Pfc	Inf	NBC		G	"	Q	
Tebb, James E.	35844147	Pfc	Inf	NBC		G	"	Q	
Willard, William L.	34594409	Pfc	Inf	NBC		G	"	Q	
North, Levi E.	31069079	Pfc	Inf	NBC		G	"	Q	
Dalton, Devon E.	39028025	Pvt	Inf	NBC		G	"	Q	
Harris, Marion M.	34517518	Pvt	BI	NBC		G	"	Q	
Johnson, Lawrence F.	34190323	Pvt	CAC	NBC		L	"	D	
Mulder, Bobby	34978997	Pvt	Inf	NBC		G	"	Q	
Perkins, Jessie	34761474	Pvt	QM	NBC		G	"	Q	
Sellers, Clarence	34508037	Pvt	CE	NBC		G	"	Q	
Thorpe, Roy V., Jr.	32943986	Pvt	Inf	NBC		G	"	Q	

(Auth: Cir 33, Hq EPOUSA, 27 Mar 45) TDN. 60-114 P 431-02 A 212/60425.

BY ORDER OF COLONEL BERWALD:

ALBERT JONES
Major, MAC
Adjutant

OFFICIAL:

Albert Jones
ALBERT JONES
Major, MAC
Adjutant

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- 2 -

OCCUPATION

Several men decided to go hunting. They drove a jeep at night with headlights on and when the deer were startled and blinded by the lights they froze in place. This was not good sportsmanship but they wanted fresh meat and brought back several deer. Two had been killed with one bullet while standing side by side. One shot went through one and into the next, killing both. The German cooks that were hired for us, field dressed the deer and hung them outside in very cold weather for about a week before butchering them. This was to make them tender. They marinated and cooked the steaks for us. I had never tasted venison before and it was delicious. We didn't need all the meat so the rest was given to the cooks for their families. Fresh meat was rationed for them and hunting was forbidden, so they were thrilled to get it. These cooks made very good meals for us.

Again, I don't remember the name of the town, but it was a small one, which we were occupying. Our mess hall was in a building with a lot of windows where our tables were set up. The kids would stand outside in the windows and watch us eat white bread and thought we were having cake. They licked their lips and smiled. They really went wild when we had ice cream, made with powdered milk. We tried to be good to kids and gave away lots of candy and chewing gum but watching us eat was upsetting. Outside in the rear, large cans were set up for garbage. Next were more cans with heaters in the water. We'd dump leftovers, bones etc. in the first can, dunk the emptied mess kits and utensils into boiling hot soapy water, dunk into another can of hot water to disinfect and rinse in clear hot water.

One day a thin old man found his way to our garbage can, filled with bones, partly eaten food, coffee and everything else dumped into it. He plunged his hand in, pulled out food, bones etc. and placed it in a can. He would look at us and say "For der hund", lick his fingers and go at it again. We knew the dog didn't get much of that. The old man was starving and ate even our garbage. This also took its toll on us. We were blessed to be Americans.

At the cessation of hostilities we moved to other towns for occupation duties. My company

moved to the beautiful ancient town of Esslingen am Neckar. When the U.S. Army approached this town, officials met them and surrendered so the town would not be damaged. Fortunate for both sides. We also started training and getting new clothes in preparation to be transferred to the Pacific. August 10, 1945 the 100th was alerted for redeployment to the Pacific to ship September 10, 1945. (H-pg.200). On August 17, 1945 the division was notified the big bomb had been dropped and the Japanese had surrendered. The war was over. (H- pg. 201)

When the Pacific War was declared over we gave a big sigh of relief and settled down to occupation duties. Several things were developed to keep us busy, besides army drills. One was the opportunity to go to school where several subjects were offered. I chose a couple, one of which was German. I have always been interested because Grandma Weber spoke it. The teacher was our Company Commander, Captain Keene. I didn't realize before, he was an interpreter during combat. He started with the alphabet and pronunciation in German. He was very good and I learned a lot in a short time. (H- pg.201) School did not last as long as expected for units were broken up as men with enough points shipped home.

August 15, 1945, (L) the U.S.O. brought the Bob Hope show to us. I believe it was in Stuttgart. Jerry Colona the comedian, and Billy Conn the boxer, were there. We really enjoyed the break in everyday routine. Anything to pass the time faster. Later, Marlene Dietrich came over for a show, but I had never heard of her and didn't go. Maybe I should have. (H- pg.199)

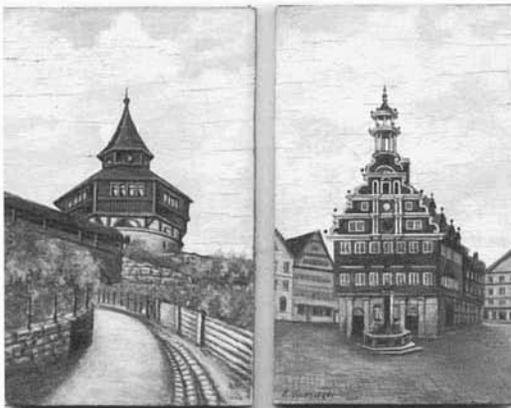
We had a swimming pool that was taken over for the use of American soldiers. We also took advantage of the showers there because they had hot water.

It was nice to walk down to the Red Cross and get a cup of coffee or a Coke and a doughnut. Another pass time was playing Ping-Pong. Some of the displaced people were Polish, and counted in Polish. The GI's counted with each other in English and with the Polish in German. I found German a lot easier to understand than Polish, and we had fun.

One morning at sunrise, I was on guard

duty at the end of the street that had been reserved for us. The scene was so great, I ducked in, picked up my camera and took a picture. It was ok, but black and white does not do justice to a sunrise. This memory helped me when I returned in 1987, to find the house I had lived in.

I attended the Old Protestant Church in the oldest area of Esslingen on Sunday mornings where I met Herr E. Spiedel, (D) a former American soldier from WWI, who stayed in Germany. He took me through this old building, up into one of the towers, across the "bridge", from which we had an excellent view of the city, down over into and down the steps of the other tower. This behind the scenes was very unusual and interesting. This building had originally been the Catholic church until a new one was built across the street many, maybe several hundred, years later. The new one was very ornate with many carved stone figures. During our visit in 1987 Gladys and I were delighted to visit this "newer" church and climbed the steps, almost 160, and took pictures of the beautiful views over the countryside. He was a very good artist and musician, so I bought two pictures of scenes in Esslingen he painted for me on small pieces of plywood. I still have them.



The Old Berg & The Altes Rathaus
Paintings by Herr Spiedel

I learned he had access to film from someone in his family. I had a Kodak folding camera and he sold me two rolls for one pack of cigarettes. I didn't smoke and saved my ration for bartering. The other men saw me using film and wanted to buy some. I sold them one roll for one

pack and I'd take that pack and buy two more rolls. When I had collected several cartons I informed Herr Spiedel I would like to buy a camera, either a 35mm Lica or a twin lens Rolliflex. He told me in church one morning, he had a camera, a twin lens Rolliflex, for me. October 15, 1945, (L) we met after dark in the rear lower floor of the Rathaus. I couldn't check out the camera in the dark but took his word that the camera was in good working condition. I questioned him how much in payment? He asked if a carton, 10 packs, of cigarettes would be too much? They only cost 50 cents a carton and we were allowed a carton per month. Unknown to him, I had ten cartons under my raincoat, gained by bartering, and would have gladly given them all. Because I thought that his price was too cheap, I asked if he would accept two cartons. He was pleased and so was I.

I used that camera until I got home and it was supreme. I wish I still had it. After I was at home a while I decided I was going to get married and needed money more than an expensive camera. I advertised it in the newspaper and the first person to call, gave me \$140 cash. That was a lot of money in 1946. I had been offered \$200 in Germany by a Polish officer and another GI but refused because I wanted a good camera. (L)

The people, living second to the house I lived in, were a Swiss family and we couldn't force them out of their house. They spoke fluent English and I made friends and visited when I could. The man asked if I would like to go mushroom hunting. Of course. He took his book with color pictures and we hunted off in the woods nearby. His wife cooked and we ate them. They



Eleanor & Hans Haffner By Eero Wirkkanen

must have been all right. We didn't get sick but I didn't like the mushrooms. (L) They had two children, Eleanor & Hans Haffner.

Another time when I was on guard duty some woman tried to walk through our area of the street. I blocked her and she pushed trying to get through. She said she wanted to visit the doctor at the other end of the street. I almost loaded a round in the chamber to fire a shot into the air but hesitated. Finally several men, playing ball near by, surrounded the woman and convinced her to turn back. I was relieved.

That same day Eero Wirkkanen took pictures of a group from my company and sent me an 8X10 after I got home.

I wrote Gladys from the living room of the very nicely furnished house. I even took a picture

of her picture I had carried since I left home. I had it on the table where I often wrote her telling how homesick I was and longed to be back home with her. I also told her I showed the picture to the house owners and talked of being anxious to get back home to her. The cherry tree in the yard was loaded and I liked to go out, pick a bunch and have dessert while I wrote.



Hausenrgney Strasse, Esslingen
I lived here.

The owners were allowed in to get clothing and other belongings. The lady even cleaned the house for us because Jim Petch and I kept everything as well as possible and the owner appreciated that. Some of the GIs tore up and destroyed everything. I felt that was terrible.

Next door an old man came out of his house, pushed his car out into the street and built a fire with wood in a burner in the back of the car. There were tanks on top that captured the partly burned gases and saved them to use in place of gasoline since there was no gas for civilians that soon after the war.

On July 21, 1945, about 2 a.m., we began a search, called "Tally Ho", of civilian houses. It was like a raid, without warning. Apparently this was conducted in a coordinated move all over Germany at the same time for a surprise. We had to knock on the doors, wake everyone, look through everything, closets, drawers, attics, basements and any place weapons might be hidden. We were to pick up guns, swords, butcher knives or anything that might be used as a weapon. The word had already been put out to turn in all such things but this was to reinforce the order. We were ordered to pick up anything Nazi related, such as literature or books. This seemed reasonable but when people answered the door and armed Americans were there, chaos developed. Old and young women cried, the men shook and children were frightened. They had thought something bad was about to happen. Our orders were not to take personal goods but the civilians did not know that. The next day, Sunday, July 22nd, about 6 a.m., this search was repeated. It was a very unpleasant duty and we were as glad as the civilians it was over. (H- pg. 199 & 200) (L)



Nazi Propaganda Booklet

One rainy night a soldier came to my door and said there was a German woman at the guard post at the far end of the street and she wanted to see me. I was puzzled for I didn't know any civilians. I put on a raincoat and walked to the end of the street. The lady spoke very fluent English, introduced herself as Lisa Haffner and remarked, "I hear you are going to England!" My name had recently been drawn to get a furlough to England or Ireland. I questioned how she knew this and she said she had been told somehow. I never found out

how. She continued that she had been a student in England before the war and wanted me to carry a letter to the family she had lived with. She and her father wanted to know if the English family, H. J. Raymer, survived the war. She also said I could come to her house, meet her father and he would explain more. I was unsure as to what to do, but agreed to meet her father, Herr Haffner. I made arrangements as date and time. (D)

On the set night I found the house and was introduced to Herr Haffner, who also spoke fluent English, and I felt the whole family must be well educated. We talked awhile and he explained they wanted to hear from friends. It was so close in time since the war ended I did not want to do something wrong and explained my position. After another meeting or two, I agreed if the letter was written in English, I would read it and if I felt it was alright, I would try to deliver the letter. They agreed, wrote it, I read it and figured I would do them the favor.

I left July 24, 1945 (L) going through Pforzheim to Mannheim by trucks, and then by train to Paris. Pforzheim was the most devastated town I had ever seen up to that point. I learned later, the British had bombed the town after it was found the Germans were manufacturing war



Pforzheim

goods in the basements of the houses. This camouflaged the operations by using homes instead of a large factory. The war was almost over before this was discovered. The raid lasted 29 minutes and killed 30,000

people. Bulldozers had cleared roads of rubble and piled it all over where the houses had been and anywhere else that it could be placed. The people buried in the rubble could not be rescued and flowers were placed on the piles of brick in memory of the victims.

My furlough didn't begin until I reached England, seven days plus travel time, the order stated. The officer that led our group said we

needed to stop in Paris three days and that would not count off time in England. Of course none of us little old enlisted men would disobey an officer. I had learned to get around Paris during my hospital stay and really had a good time again. When our three days were up we met, traveled to Le Havre and were billeted in a tent city, called Pall Mall, for a day before getting a ship to South Hampton, England. Before leaving, another man and I went down to the coast, found an abandoned gun ship, climbed aboard and took pictures. I had some made while sitting on the cliff tops looking west toward home. This section of the "chalk cliffs" was scenic and made me think of the song "White Cliffs of Dover" and wishing I were going home.

I had a choice of going to England or Ireland. I chose England because I could also travel to Scotland, getting to see more countries. I had also heard, before I left Germany, it might be possible to hitchhike a ride by air to the U.S. from England, and return within the week, if there was space. (L) It wasn't possible for me and I was very disappointed.

In London, I checked in at the Red Cross where I planned to stay and then looked up the H. J. Raymer family (D) in the telephone book. I explained I was an American soldier, had been in Germany and had a letter from the Haffner family. I thought the lady was going to cry. She wanted me to come immediately and gave me directions to the house. When I arrived they greeted me like a family friend, read the letter and asked



Raymer family's house

questions. They agreed to send an answer to the letter when I returned from Scotland.

Their house had been damaged slightly by a German "Buzz" bomb or "V" rocket, but they were not injured. All three sons had been in the

war and one was killed. One of them came home on leave from the Navy while I was there, so I met him and his girlfriend. The family insisted I stay with them while in London. I did, for it was much better lodging and the boy's girlfriend, "Jo" A. Harris, wanted to show me London. We toured and saw a lot of landmarks while I was there. My time was up too soon, for I had planned to go by train to Edinburgh, Scotland, then to Glasgow and back to London before my leave was up. I had arrived in London on Friday and left Wednesday for Scotland. (L)

I arrived there Wednesday afternoon and visited Sir Walter Scott's memorial and the famous Castle of Edinburgh. At a department store, I bought a broach, for Gladys, made of antelope horn, the native animal of Scotland. It was decorated with silver and the end was engraved with the thistle, the national flower of Scotland. I always like to have a remembrance that has a special meaning.

I left Edinburgh Thursday afternoon for Glasgow, didn't stop but continued on to Prestwick and on to London, arriving the next morning. I spent overnight with the Raymers, toured Hyde Park and rowed a boat on the lake in the park. (F) The park was noted for speakers. Anyone wanting to could get up on a "soap box" and start speaking on anything they wished. I took a picture of an old white haired man speaking on "Love" to quite a crowd. One picture I took was of an old man shining the shoes of an American soldier. This scene really struck me as sad.



Broach

I talked with the Guard at Buckingham Palace. He was not supposed to, but answered me when I asked if he was hot. I looked straight ahead and so did he, answering out the side of his mouth so it couldn't be seen. He said he was about to melt. He also informed me the Queen was scheduled to come out the gate in a few minutes in her private car. I stood there and waited. When the car drove through I snapped a picture but not before she pulled the curtain and I did not get her, only the car.

The Raymers gave me the letter to the

Haffners and a gift. When King George was crowned King in 1937, after his brother, Edward, abdicated to marry Wallie Simpson, the Raymers bought three cups and saucers, with the King and Queen Mary's picture on them. This was to be a keepsake for each son. They gave me the one that was supposed to be for the son that had been killed. I was very touched. I packed it carefully and mailed to my mother for I was not married yet. We now have it as a treasured keepsake.



Cup & saucer

S o m e place in England, I think it was in London, the engineers built a temporary latrine over a canal. They had removed a section on the iron fence from both sides of the stream, built a wood platform over the water with toilets and covered the structure with tent material. Refuse dropped down into the stream and made it an open sewer. People were used to strolling along the banks and viewing the flow of water. The open sewer did not stop this practice. Men and women walked along and often stopped and watched, and apparently talked about things floating downstream. The Europeans don't seem to have the same inhibitions about these things as we Americans.

On the way back to our units our officer said we had to stop in Paris for two days again. Reluctantly we finally returned to duty.

When I returned I delivered the English letter to the German family, who was quite pleased to hear from their friends. I continued to visit the Haffners and even took some of my rations and shared them as I ate their food. I showed them my picture of Gladys, told them how lonesome I was and wanted to get back home and get married. I felt I had done my part and was frustrated I had to stay so long after the war was over. Lisa's mother was dead, her elderly aunt and uncle, a cousin with wife and baby, a friend and his wife, from the street we had taken over, lived with the Haffners. Housing was scarce and families doubled up. The cousin sold jewelry and I bought some for all my

sisters, my Mother and Gladys. I learned Herr Haffner was a professor at the College of Esslingen, an archaeologist and curator of the local museum. The friend living with them was a fellow math professor, Herr Joseph Gehrig, (D) at the college and had been displaced when our company took over his house. I wrote home and asked for my math book that I used in college so I could brush up before coming home. The professor helped me on problems I could not get. Math is a universal language and he spoke English, but Lisa translated when necessary. I was homesick and this helped me pass the time.



Dr. Haffner, Lisa & family

One day Herr Haffner asked me to walk with him down to the Altes Rathaus where he unlocked the doors on the third floor and ushered me into a museum. He was the curator and was taking artifacts out of hidden storage and getting ready to reopen to the public. He showed me a decorative bronze article that was green with age. He explained he had excavated it, September 1935, from a 400 or 500 year old, ancient grave, in the nearby town, Esslingen Sienu. It appeared to be a belt buckle or decoration to wear on clothing. In the center was a swastika. He explained this was an ancient emblem, not a new one, but the Nazi party claimed it. Before we left he presented me with a replica he had cast to give to

dignitaries. I was very pleased he honored me with this keepsake. We still have this in our treasures.

Eero Wirkkanen and Dominick Scarchilla and I borrowed bicycles and toured the countryside. This was beautiful country and riding was a great way to see it and pass time

While we had time to relax, we still had duties to perform. One was to repair telephone lines between cities. One method was to ride a jeep down the railroad tracks and add wire between existing ones and replace those that had been torn down. We had a one-mile drum of wire attached on a bracket to the jeep, climbed the poles with climber's spurs and spliced wire to the spaces that lacked it. It was quite a bumpy ride over the railroad ties. Sometimes we were lucky and as we passed a house where the family was home, we'd ask if they had "Appful Mouist". When they had it they brought us a pitcher of this delicious homemade hard apple cider. It was not cold but cool from the cellar because they didn't have refrigeration. The weather was hot and this was really welcome. We couldn't drink much at a time because it had a real kick. Really refreshing!

Favero was driving a jeep loaded with our equipment and several of us men to a cross-country job. As we turned off the road to drive up a steep grassy hill, a passing German flagged us down. We could not understand him and wondered why he stopped us? I asked if there were mines? He pointed to the tires and said, "Gums nix go". We took it he meant the tires would not go up such a steep hill. We thanked him and started up. He stood and watched with his mouth wide open while we went to the top without stalling. He must have thought our jeep was like the weak counterpart the Germans used. We completed our job and took a few pictures of ourselves climbing the telephone poles.

Jim Petch and I roomed together on the first floor of the German house and he heard his brother Bob was in France. After they were able to make contact they arranged for a meeting in Heidelberg. He was given permission to borrow a jeep and invited me to go along. October 20, 1945 (L) we met Bob in Heidelberg and he told us of his experience "D-Day". He was among the first to go into "Omaha Beach". Because of a strange feeling, he asked to be the first off the landing

craft. A colonel and a sergeant followed him. He had only gone a short distance when a direct hit was made on the craft and everyone else was lost. During later days the other two men were also killed, leaving him the sole survivor of the whole boat. (An article was in our division newspaper telling about our meeting.) We had a nice visit, toured some of the historic town and returned to Esslingen and Bob returned to his post.

On our way back we stopped in Bensheim, Germany (F) to visit "Buddy" White's grave. His body had already been moved to St. Avold, France. I didn't get there until Gladys and I visited Europe in 1987.

Some time in the fall the Army set up a store for us to purchase gifts to send home. I purchased a lamp made of a wood frame with pressed

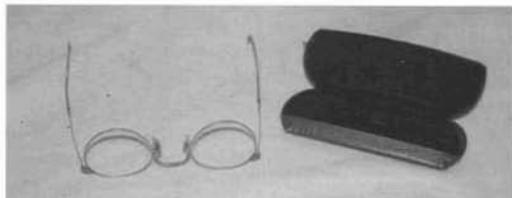


Lamp

flowers between panels of opal flashed glass inside and clear glass outside. When the light was on, the designs of the flowers showed through. Very unique. I also sent home a three-piece set of furniture. A flower stand, a tea table on wheels and a sewing cabinet that folded out to be able to reach storage space inside. The unusual feature was, each piece had wood pegs that were threaded like a bolt and held the parts together. I sent the lamp to Mother and Dad, but the furniture to my house, intended for Gladys and me if we were to marry. I also sent Gladys a jewelry box with a hand carved scene on top, partitions inside divided it into sections and the lock was two knobs in front. When the knobs were pulled out the box could be opened. We now have all of these as keepsakes.

October 1945, "The Society of the Sons of Bitchie" was formed. (H- pg.198 & 200) Membership was open to all Centurymen who had participated in the capture of the stronghold of Bitchie and the surrounding Maginot forts. The Century Association was formed October 12, 1945. (H- pg. 202) I am a member of both.

I had so many severe headaches the medics x-rayed my sinuses and declared them clear. I have been bedeviled with them the rest of my life but they didn't find the problem. They finally gave me glasses to relieve the headaches on October 23, 1945. They didn't help even though I tried them. I kept them and believe they are just plain glass in frames. (L)



My glasses