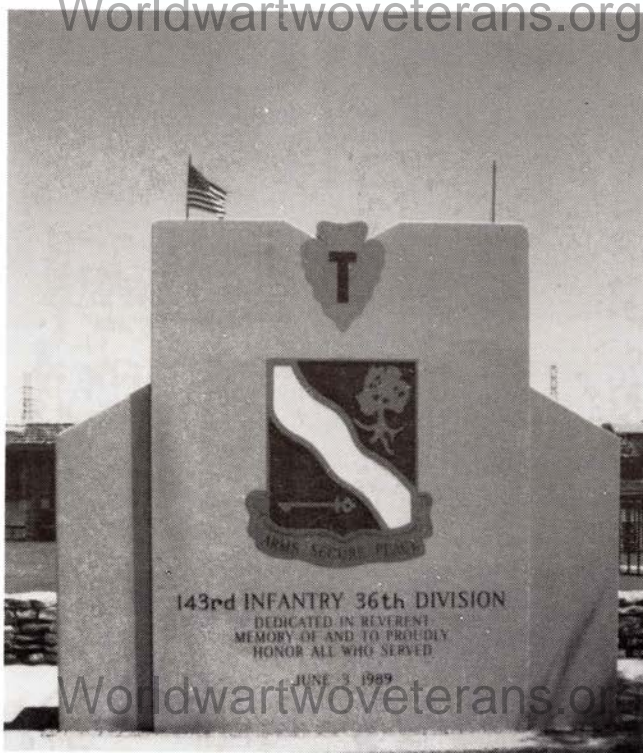


The Fighting 36th
HISTORICAL
Quarterly

Worldwartwoveterans.org



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36th DIVISION ASSOCIATION

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Q HISTORICAL
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'89

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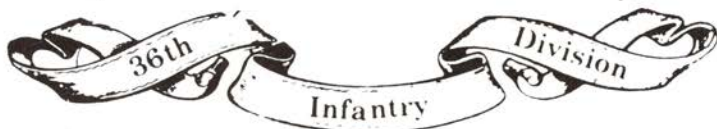
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Vol. IX, No.3 **Fall 1989**

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*36th Division
Association*

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Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

25 May 1989
1120 Colonial
Bellaire, TX 77401

Dear Hicks:

First of all, many thanks for your "volunteering" to take on the job of editing the 36th Division Historical Quarterly. You have some big foot steps to follow but I know you will do it with flying colors.

I was in Waco on May 5th and went by Fort Fisher to see the 143d Infantry Regiment Monument to be dedicated on June 3d. I hope to see you there.

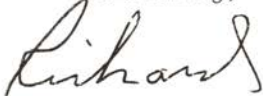
The monument is simply beautiful. It is clearly seen as you drive over I-35 when crossing the Brazos River. The obverse (south side) of the monument has an inscription and the Regimental Distinctive Insignia. The reverse (north side) side lists the units and battle honors of the Third Texas Infantry and the 143d Infantry.

I am enclosing a couple of photos which I made of the monument just in case you don't make it to Waco on June 3d.

Of course, I will be seeing you at the National Convention in Houston this Fall.

With best personal regards to you and yours, I remain

Cordially,



RICHARD M. BURRAGE
Honorary Colonel of the
143d Infantry Regiment

FORT WORTH

Twenty-Fifth — Post-WWII Reunion

1969

Aug. 29-31

BLACKSTONE HOTEL is headquarters for 1969 reunion. The old-standby, Hotel Texas was not available. This facility, feeling the effects of age, left a lot to be desired.



Amil Kohutek

Amil Kohutek President
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Nominations — John McKeel and Earnest Uptmore. Welcome committee — Robt. Childers, Frank Mosley and John Veal. Publicity — William Jary and Payne Rucker. Ladies Auxiliary president — Mrs. Ruth Fitts.

This reunion goes in history on a sad note. This was to be our beloved Gen. Fred L. Walker's last reunion. His Book — "Texas To Rome" was hot off the press and delivered to all, a project that was Col. Oran Stovall's great effort. Gen. Walker died only weeks after this meeting. Those who attended — have autographed copies. A rare treasure, today.

HISTORY to remember



Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

Salerno

Remembered!

With the American 5th Army

By Amil Kohutek



*Salerno, 12 Bloody
Days for Texas' 36th*

Salerno «»

The morning of September 9, 1943 dawned bright and clear, with a light wind blowing. The ocean was choppy; some of the landing craft were being battered against the ship's side. Allied intelligence, which was as good as possible at the time, but not entirely reliable, before the ships of the convoy dropped anchor, gave word that the Germans had three huge railroad guns in the vicinity. The guns were thought to be sited and aimed toward the British 8th Army which was coming up the Italian peninsula from Reggio and Bianco. Range of these three artillery pieces was estimated to be in the neighborhood of twenty miles. Consequently, our task force commander decided to anchor twenty-three miles from shore. Before it was known of the railroad guns, it was planned to anchor sixteen or eighteen miles off shore. This last minute change probably had much to do with the resultant discord in the delicately planned landing schedule. The first wave was to come ashore at 0300 hours. In the darkness of midnight members of this first wave began coming over the sides of the mother ships and into the landing craft alongside. The choppy water caused this to be a very hazardous operation; some of the men were injured coming down the rope nets; some, misjudging the distance down to the craft, turned loose and jumped prematurely, crashing on the deck below. Sprained ankles were common; some even missed the boat falling into the roiling water between boat and ship. How many men were crushed or drowned under these circumstances is not known. Eventually the boats pulled away from the ship and circled; the sea calmed and disembarking was resumed. One wave of thirty men from the 141st Infantry Regiment carried so much equipment that they had to ride the boat as it was lifted over the side by crane. This operation overloaded the crane, a cable snapped and the thirty heavily loaded doughboys were dumped into the sea. These men in the water and others on the nets awaiting the dangling boat had no way of returning to the ship, however, it is thought most of the injured made it to the beach somehow.

I had driven my jeep on the ship, name of which I cannot recall, in Oran, Algeria, some few days before sailing, separating me from my own Battery C, 132nd Field Artillery Battalion. With me was T-4 Sergeant Harold Pickard from Weatherford, Texas. We were assigned to the 142nd Infantry Regiment. Another jeep, driven by Private Virgil Smith, also from "C" Battery was there as well. He was alone, and I never knew what his assignment was. He might have been the driver for the battery executive officer, in any event his jeep was not equipped with a radio. I

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

believe Virgil was originally from Defiance, Ohio. Before our ship sailed from Oran, Captain Mark L. Hodges, our C.O. joined us, along with Sergeant Thelbert Wingate, Corporal Howard Shivers and Private Salvatore Alfano. As originally planned our group was to come ashore with an earlier wave, but that too was changed, and I learned that I was not to come ashore until vehicles were allowed on the beach, and I was to pick up Captain Hodges and spot gun positions.

The previous evening during chow, the ship's public address system began to snap, crackle and pop and soon we were told to stand by for an important message through the Armed Forces Radio Network. Presently the familiar voice of General Eisenhower announced that the Italians had surrendered. This news brought on a good deal of rejoicing and speculation as many thought that now our much dreaded landing would be unopposed. Our officers discounted any such possibility. Harold and I were not impressed with the speculations.

Soon after dark we noticed anti-aircraft tracers low on the southerly horizon. We knew that the British were moving up from the south and we suspected that they were drawing enemy air raids. The day before a lone enemy plane had been spotted and we were sure that our presence in the area was known by the Germans. The sighted tracers were too far away for the sound to reach our ears and we were not alerted and no enemy aircraft were reported in our immediate area. The armada, in dark and silent procession, moved onward towards its rendezvous with destiny.

I slept very little that night and spent most of it close to my vehicle. Sometime in the early hours of the morning I became aware that the reassuring throb of the ship's engines had stopped. Then shortly afterward I heard the rattle of the anchor chain as it sped through the hawsehole dropping the anchor into the water with a splash. Then, except for the slight rolling of the ship in the choppy sea, we lay almost still in the water. This caused an uncomfortable feeling as we had been told many times that a ship, dead in the water, is a prime target for submarine attack.

Allied intelligence, such as it was, first told us that only a weak coastal defense, manned by Italians, was expected. We were advised that the Italians would probably desert their positions rather than fire on Americans. We were also told that the Germans had as many as eight 88mm artillery battalions on the plains below Altavilla. This, as well as the railroad mounted cannons proved to be false. The Nazis, reeling from massive reversals on the Russian Front had shifted all possible units to that front and needed all available artillery to blunt Russia's thrusts in the east. Germany's design, at the time, was to hold on, fight a delaying tactic and try to contain the allied force below Naples while a hardened defense line was being established along natural barriers between that city and Rome.

There was considerable discussion, sometimes heated, about the 0330 landing by army troops. It was believed by many that no troops arrived on the beach at that hour. The distance from ship to shore, and the difficulties experienced in launching and landing craft makes that early hour very doubtful. There was, however, a naval beach battalion that landed on or about that time. All were armed with rifles and were equipped with radios. Some time later, exactly how much later is hard to say, some troops from the 141st and 142nd landed and dug in. The navy team was there and put their rifles to good use. The Germans had set some mines in the tall grass on the seaward side of the canal. Anyone diving into that tall grass was apt to land on a Kraut mine. Many casualties were caused by these mines. The canal ran parallel to the beach. The Navy was charged with the clearing of this minefield, which they did, but with a terrible price in casualties. Some of the Navy group's radios became water soaked in the landing and failed to perform; some batteries shorted out causing more trouble and as a result most of the early naval gunfire was directed by signal lamp or other jerry-rigged method. To add to the problem, smoke screens which were laid to protect the invaders blocked visibility and stopped the fire direction effort by signal lamps.

Sometime after midnight Captain Hodges had a meeting with the artillery group and afterwards I saw him briefly as he was about to board the LCI (Landing Craft Infantry) with the infantrymen, it was twenty-six years later before I saw him again. After this last meeting with him, I posted myself on deck and waited for my jeep to come topside. It was just breaking day. The sky was clear and a breeze off shore was blowing. In all aspects it promised to be a beautiful early fall day. The thought crossed my mind as I stood there viewing the distant shore for the first time, that for many, maybe even me, this might be the date they put on my tombstone. As we were about twenty-three miles off the coast, we could not see much, however, I noticed some smoke and I knew it was not a smoke screen. It appeared that there were a number of fires on or near the beach. Later, when the sun rose above the mountains where I expected Altavilla was located, my jeep arrived and was hoisted aboard the landing craft. It was, and probably still is, against the rule for personnel to be aboard a vehicle being lowered over the side of a vessel as was being done to my jeep. I was never too fond of rope ladders so I took a good look around to see who was watching, and seeing no one likely to stop me, jumped into my jeep and rode it down, I made it. Harold took the ladder down, along with about a dozen infantrymen of the 142nd. Every soldier on board the ship had been issued a life jacket. They were of a type using a compressed air capsule to inflate the jacket. The capsule is activated by pulling a trigger line. This jacket is supposed to keep a man afloat until rescued. Somehow Pickard managed to trip the trigger on his way down and it made him look so out of shape that his feet could hardly reach the ladder. Looking up at him from below, he looked something like a pregnant woman.

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An LCI is designed to carry thirty-six men. The one I was on contained another jeep besides mine, so we had twelve infantrymen, plus Baldy and me. The crew operating the craft were Royal (British) Navy. We pushed off from the mother ship and began to circle it. We made a number of these circles while waiting for the rest of our wave to offload. This took time. This marking time was exasperating; it seemed the whole invasion had come to a standstill. No one could account for the delay, we were hyped up for the landing and anxious to get on with it. There was some talk that we might not even make a landing.

I do not believe this delay was planned, the landing craft were urgently needed to make more trips back and forth. In their own good time the off-loading was resumed and eventually all boats were loaded and milling around the mother ship. At last a ragged assault line was formed and we were headed for the beach at full speed. The wind was in our faces as we leaned over the side to get a good look at what was going on. Our line of boats skirted an Italian town on our right, I believe it was Argopoli. We were so near the coastline that we could have been fired on by rifle or mortar. My boat was the last one on the left. Our British coxswain remarked something about not getting any further north as he was told there was still an unswept minefield in that direction. We did see some floating mines which he skillfully dodged. Someone suggested putting a rifle bullet through one, but was told not to.

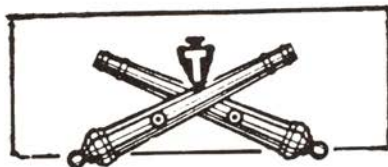
The roar of the craft's twin engines deafened us to all other sounds as we raced, full speed, toward the beach. It was not unlike scenes from a silent movie in that we could see the havoc going on before our eyes but could hear none of it. As we drew nearer the water's edge I noticed the coxswain at the radio apparently receiving orders. Immediately he put the helm hard about, as did our companion boats, as we did a "U" turn and headed in the opposite direction. The purpose of this strange maneuver was never made known to us. About this time we began to receive small arm fire. This turned out to be coming from a Kraut machine gun located in a tower slightly to the right of our beach. Along with the machine gun fire, artillery shells began to fall among our little flotilla; six or seven fell near my boat. Some of the shells were duds, but the shells that were not, exploded on contact with the water. From the way they fell, I judged them to be from the well known German 88mm Multipurpose Cannon which fires a high velocity shell with a flat trajectory, like a rifle and unlike a howitzer which lobs its projectile. The difference is noticeable. Before we had traveled rearward a mile, and with the same unexpectedness, we again did an "about face" and again headed for the beach. The artillery barrage lifted for no apparent reason and the machine gunner ceased firing as well. By now all passengers were flat on the deck—some had crawled under the jeeps—I won't say where I found myself, but the comforting feeling of no incoming attention was short lived as we bumped over the shoals; the noise of the engines died, the ramp came down with a splash, and suddenly the movie-like scenes

were REAL and with FULL STEREOPHONIC SOUND.

The other driver of the battleship gray jeep had told me that his job was to rig and raise some barrage balloons to protect the beachhead from low level strafing. He showed me some strapped on tanks that he said contained air. (gas?) This to be used to inflate the balloons. We had seen such balloons before, the British used them to protect ships in convoy. They were attached with the surface with wire cables which would entangle the attacking planes, keeping them at a higher altitude where their accuracy is not so good. Later, that day, I saw two of his blimps from a distance. One, obviously punctured, was hanging, half empty, the victim of some German target shooter. The other seemed to be doing O.K. and doing its job well. When the ramp came down I jumped into my jeep and started the engine as the doughs scrambled off and into waist deep water. The sailor in the other jeep drove off and nosed into water that covered his hood and drowned the engine. It had not been water-proofed. This gob, perched on his spare tire, had a surprised, hurt and puzzled look on his face as his vehicle almost disappeared in the surf. If he had thought that his cargo of air tanks would keep him afloat, he had good reason to look puzzled. I could not exit the landing craft until one of us shifted position as his sunken vehicle was completely blocking the way. For the first time I took a close look at our bareheaded Limey boat driver. He was young—maybe eighteen—but looking more like fourteen. But, nevertheless, he was a master coxswain and seeing my predicament, expertly maneuvered the boat in such a way to leave room for me to get out. Seeing the opening, I eased down the ramp and into about four feet of water completely covering my engine, but being water-proofed, my motor continued to purr like a well contented kitten and in a matter of minutes I was on shore, and dumping about a quarter of a ton of Mediterranean Sea on the dry shore of Italy.



Worldwartwoveterans.org



'Psycho-Joe From Anzio' Is Name Given To Infantry Sergeant From Mason

Worldwar2veterans.org



Sgt. Joe Kinyon

Dear Mr. Turner,

Is this the kind of story you print in the Quarterly?

If so, you are welcome to use this newspaper clipping from Mason County News, Mason, Texas.

It would please me and our family to see it printed again, since Joe passed away last year on August 8, 1988.

Joe was in Co. F. 141st. Inf.

Thank you,

Mrs. Joe Kinyon

205 S. Monroe, San Angelo, TX 76901

Joe Kinyon's mother died when he was three weeks old and his dad took over the job of raising him. That accounts for the way in which he addressed a letter to his father, J. M. Kinyon, recently. "Dearest Pop" is the introduction, and then Joe goes on to explain his experiences in combat. Joe's a staff sergeant recuperating "somewhere in Italy" after cracking up during the heat of battle. On reading the letter it isn't difficult to understand why boys in uniform, brought up in the peaceful surroundings of Madison County, will sometimes break mentally under the stress of shot and shell. He writes:

"Well, here comes Joe Junior again, Mr. Kinyon. I wanted to write you a letter yesterday but I was too busy all day.

"Boy, I haven't had a letter for almost a month now. I can't figure out why, either. Maybe I'll get one today. I sure hope so.

"I have acquired a new name, Pop. They call me Psycho-Joe from Anzio. That's where I went to pieces—on the Anzio Beach-head. I was there for the starting of the Big Push but I didn't last it out. Here is how it happened.

"The attack started one evening about 4:30. We didn't meet any resistance until just before dark when a couple of Kraut 'rat' guns broke the silence from the left. I had the left flank with a 12-man squad so naturally it was my job to get rid of Jerry and his two guns.

"That wasn't too hard, as I had eleven fighting men working for me. I got a pretty good burn there; a stray hit my left leg just above the boot top. It was just a glancing blow and nothing serious. That was as far as it went that night.

"The next morning just at day break it started. My first job was to clean out some houses, which we did and got four prisoners and three dead. All Germans. After that we moved about 100 yards forward with a gain of five more prisoners and two dead. One of the dead was a German captain. That gave us some valuable information in papers and maps.

"After moving about 50 yards farther it happened. I was cut off from the rest of the outfit by a German tank. It was firing at me from about 100 yards and hitting too darn close. I was lucky enough to get behind a brick construction or this probably would never have been written. That gave me my first shaking up. Later in the day I had my squad depending on me to get them out of a vineyard that was completely surrounded. After an hour we fought our way out of that, just to get into another storm.

"I was in seven concentrated artillery barrages without a hole, and surrounded twice. I had my squad looking to me for advice and it was a little too much for Joe.

"But here is a bright side of the story—in Jerry prisoners, 15 known Jerry dead and there were several more that we know were wounded. And when we finally did reorganize I still had my twelve-man squad! (Without the guidance of God, this never would have been.)

Your loving son,
Joe"

R and R Remembrances and Reflections

By Bill Eberle

November, 1944 in the Alsace sector.

The Purple Heart story of Rocco "Rocky" Branck.

"How I got wounded going to the rear or send me back to the front lines where it's safer?"

From Frankfort, New York at age 18 to basic training at Fort Eustis, Virginia, Rocky landed in Oran, North Africa in October of 1943 and was assigned to Battery A of the 133rd Field Artillery and joined the outfit immediately following the invasion of Salerno. In action all the way to the conclusion of the war thru the Italian campaign and the invasion of Southern France and the hundreds of days of combat, Rocky never got a scratch or never even made a sick call—healthy and strong as an ox and an expert at dodging incoming shells. However, all this came to an end during the latter part of the campaign in France. He came down with a severe case of boils and carbuncles covering his thighs, backside and neck. Elmo "Pop" Holloway, a native Texan from San Augustine, told him to put bacon strips on them to draw out the puss so Rocky took the well-intentioned advice. But then matters got worse as he layed down in the shade of a truck and went to sleep. As he lay sleeping thousands of red ants were attracted to the bacon and were biting him unmercifully causing infections. Rushing to first-aid for the first time in his army career, the medics decided to send him to the closest airport in an ambulance and then fly him to a hospital in Italy. Rocky takes over the story from here: "In the ambulance there were two men on stretchers and four or five of us sitting, two of which were German prisoners. On the road going back to the rear, the ambulance was shelled and a shell exploded several feet away from the side of the ambulance and sprayed a ton of shrapnel—large chunks were all over the place. Blood was all over. I can't remember if anyone was killed but we were all wounded as I got a small piece of shrapnel in the top of my head." Today Rocky is retired from the post office and resides with his wife, Gloria at 318 Main Street in Ilion, New York.

Colleen, the girl I planned to marry before entering the army dancing with the famous German rocket scientist, Werner Von Braun? Amazing but true. It was during the first few months of 1945 after entering Germany after the Haguenau sector when we were going thru Wissembourg,

Bad Bergzabern and thru the impregnable Siegfried line. A group of German rocket scientists, including the head of the German rocket program, Werner Von Braun, surrendered to the Americans rather than to the Russians. Many were sent to Wright Patterson Field in Dayton, Ohio as P.O.W.'s and were permitted one night a month out on the town escorted by the Air Force officers. Colleen, at age 17, had graduated from high school in New Philadelphia, Ohio and left home to go to Dayton to work at the Air Service Technical Command Headquarters. On this particular evening, the P.O.W.'s went to a movie and saw GILDA starring Rita Hayworth and later to a dance where Von Braun asked her to dance. And dance they did. What was your feeling dancing with a German P.O.W. when your boyfriend is in Europe fighting the Germans Colleen was asked? "A very strange and eerie feeling indeed" was her reply. "A very emotional experience that I'll never forget although he was a charming man." However the incident with Von Braun didn't stop me from marrying her so we tied the knot on September 15, 1946. Von Braun was considered the foremost rocket engineer in the world and directed the team that successfully launched the EXPLORER, the first U.S. earth satellite on January, 1958. Later he became director of the George C. Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama. He became a U.S. citizen in 1955.

My Most Embarrassing Moment—EVER.

May, 1945 in the Bavarian Alps in Murnau.

It was the morning of May 3rd or 4th just a few days before the end of the war. We were in the town of Murnau and I was getting ready to join Charlie Company of the 1st Battalion of the 143rd as a forward observer. Germans were coming out of the surrounding hills by the hundreds to surrender. I was thinking that it would be my luck to get killed just before the war ended. Incidentally, it was in this area where we discovered hundreds of Red Cross packages that were to have gone to our P.O.W.'s in the basements of the civilian population. But getting back to my story. Dawn was just breaking over the alps when mother nature called. I left our C.P. and grabbed a fox hole shovel, some TP and my .45 and went out several hundred yards to a ditch alongside a dirt road which led into our C.P. I no sooner had my pants down when about a dozen krauts walked right by me heading for the C.P. all in a single file and looking at me all with a --itty grin on their faces. Naturally, I assumed that one of our 143rd dog faces would be trailing behind the last kraut at the end of the line to bring in the prisoners. But, much to my dismay, there was no one trailing anybody. By the time I got my pants back up all the krauts had surrendered to the officers at our C.P. Gee, come to think of it, if I hadn't got caught with my pants down I could've gotten credit for capturing a dozen prisoners single handedly!

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

September, 1943 somewhere in the vicinity of Oran, North Africa

Remember how attractive our white muslin/cotton mattress covers were to the Arabs? The men would cut two small holes in the top for their arms and two holes in the bottom for their legs and wear it ever so proudly as a toga to attract all the ladies. This was high fashion indeed. The male Arabs would visit all the camps searching to buy G.I. mattress covers; they would do almost anything and pay any price for a mattress cover. We were traveling on a 40 and 8 cattle car in the middle of no-mans land and every time the train was halted (and that was often) the Arabs would descend upon us to buy mattress covers. So we got the bright idea of cutting them in half. We would then argue and barter and just as the train was pulling out we would strike up a deal and grab the francs and hand over half of one mattress cover. It was not until the train was well on its way that the Arab discovered, much to his dismay, that he only had a half of a mattress cover. Of course at the next stop we would sell the other half to another unsuspecting Arab. Needless to say, this kind of activity did not endear us to the Arab population and did nothing for public relations. Incidentally, my wife and I went on a tour last November to North Africa and I was grateful (and thankful) that no one recognized me.



Crossing Hitler's moat

The Fighting 36th

HISTORICAL  QUARTERLY



Us T-Patchers have a lot of pride. And, that's the way it outta be. OLD TIMER is asking for your help. We need to get more of our troops acquainted with the QUARTERLY.

Take Stock in the 36th!

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We Captured Hermann Goering

By Capt. Harold L. Bond



The revealing, blow-by-blow story of how the Nazis' fleshy Reichsmarshal reacted to capture—before he had a chance to get his guard up and put on a rehearsed show for the world.

On a morning early in May, 1945, the 36th Infantry Division Command Post was located in a Nazi school building at Kufstein, Austria. For the past few days we had been pushing the Germans back across Southern German and now they were retreating from the foothills of the Austrian Alps to the higher mountains in the south. We had taken a great many prisoners in the last days of the war, so no one was surprised to see a German vehicle draped with white flags drive up in front of the command post. But the German Major who got out was not surrendering. He wanted to see the division commander, and said he had been sent by Hermann Goering.

When presented to Major General Dahlquist, who was commanding the 36th Division, the Luftwaffe major stated his mission. He was under orders to contact the American commander of the sector and arrange for the surrender of Reichsmarshal Goering. After careful questioning and after the envoy's papers had been thoroughly examined, General Dahlquist concluded that the major probably was telling the truth. The major proposed to lead some Americans back through the lines to a castle two valleys away. There the Americans would meet Goering and bring the Nazi kingpin back to our side of the war—if we could believe the major.

I was working in my room when word came that the assistant division commander, Brigadier General Stack, wanted me. "Bond," he said. "go put on your surrender uniform. We're going out to get Goering."

In the last few days our division had captured many highly placed Nazis, among them Von Rudnstedt. We were inclined to believe almost

anything, with our fingers crossed. But if someone had told me we were going after Hitler himself, I couldn't have been more startled. I put on my battle jacket and included my ribbons. If we were going to get the bemedaled Hermann, a few decorations on our own uniforms wouldn't be inappropriate. General Stack told me our mission was to bring Goering back to the command post alive. It was only because we wanted the No. 2 Nazi alive that we were being sent into enemy territory to take possession.

INTO THE GERMAN LINES

We left at 1000 hours, taking a platoon of the 36th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop, mounted in their lightly armored reconnaissance cars and jeeps. We were all armed; the war was still on and we had no idea what we would get into. Goering's messenger led the caravan in his touring car and we followed in the general's sedan, with the reconnaissance platoon behind. A few minutes brought us to the town of Kitzbuhel. In peacetime this had been a fashionable winter resort. Now it was the last outpost of American lines. Two sentries stationed on the far side of town looked at us as if to disclaim responsibility for a foolhardy venture. "I guess you know where you're going, so you might as well go ahead," their expression seemed to say, "but don't blame us if you get into trouble." Those were the last Americans we saw that long, puzzling, anxious day.

We drove east up a rich Alpine valley. The sun was shining brilliantly on snow-covered mountains towering above us. The snow must have been melting rapidly. The river we followed on the valley floor was a rushing torrent. Except for nature's sounds, everything was exceedingly quiet. We heard no shooting anywhere as we passed across that undefined area sometimes known as no man's land. Near the end of the valley, where the road began to rise, we came upon the first German troops. A machine gun, carefully camouflaged, was pointing down the road directly at us. There seemed a fair chance that this could be the end of the line for us. We had seen Germans demonstrate a complete disregard for the white flag of truce which still adorned the major's car. Just three days before, a friend of mine had been seriously wounded when SS troops opened fire as he tried to rescue a wounded man under such a flag. But we kept going as the German major led.

Just before we reached the gun emplacement, a crew of Germans jumped up and saluted smartly. We began to run into German sentries stationed at intervals along the road, but each snapped to attention and saluted. They gave the Heil Hitler salute, which we did not return. Our Luftwaffe major seemed to have made good arrangements. We had no trouble whatsoever and passed through the lines—perhaps one of the most difficult jobs when a war is in progress—without once being stopped.

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At the top of the snow-covered pass, we crossed over into what is certainly one of the most beautiful valleys in the world. We were high among the giant white peaks and as far as we could see there was one huge mountain range after another. Many thousand feet below us stretched a green valley of small farms making a patchwork of varicolored fields. This wild Wagnerian beauty seemed an appropriate setting for the German army and its leaders to stage the last act of their *Gotterdammerung*.

We rode into the valley over a twisting road, and after having traveled thirty kilometers inside enemy territory, we came to a castle. It was an old building standing on a little rise of ground and overlooking a georgeous lake. A high ivy-colored wall left only the top story visible from the road. This was the rendezvous, but Goering was not there. We would to wait a little, our guide told us, because the Reichsmarshal was traveling over back roads in an effort to keep this trip as much of a secret as possible. That morning Goering had left a small town near Berchtesgaden where he had been living since the bombing of Hitler's mountain hideout. That was definite, the major said. But there had been no word from Goering since.

We deployed our one platoon of reconnaissance troops around the castle for our own security and went inside. It was not a large building, certainly not what you would expect for the luxury-loving Goering. It had been many years, apparently, since anyone had lived here. The furniture was covered with sheets, the paintings had been taken from the walls, all the shades were drawn, and there was a musty smell mixed with the sharp odor of camphor. The German major led the way and opened the windows in what must have been the dining room. We hauled the sheets from several shairs and a table, and made ourselves comfortable. The major excused himself, saying he was going to try to locate Goering by telephoning military installations at various towns through which the marshal would travel.

While we waited alone in the dusk of this deserted dining room, a servant appeared through one of the many doors and asked if we would like some wine. He was an old man and spoke no English, but "*Wein*" is one of the words a soldier learns quickly, and I knew enough German to say "*Ja!*" The wine he brought was superlative, which wasn't surprising, since the Germans had stolen the best from cellars all over Europe. We ordered something to eat. The old man nodded and disappeared silently through another of the many doors. Our interpreter joined us—a young sergeant from the division G-2 section—and the three of us sat there drinking excellent wine and wondering what we were in for. We didn't talk much. There wasn't much to say.

Actually, our position was rather uncertain. We were at least thirty kilometers from our own lines, with the war still in progress. We were drinking good wine in a strange, semideserted castle in the middle of the

German army. We had come on the unsupported word of one enemy officer. General Stack had been fighting Germans with the 36th Division for more than a year and a half in Italy, France and Germany. So had I. I had fought as an infantry platoon leader against Hermann Goering Division at Cassino, Italy, and learned never to trust anyone who had anything whatsoever to do with Goering. Being behind the German lines like this was a novel experience, and not necessarily enjoyable as far as I was concerned. The afternoon dragged on and still the major did not return. Neither did the servant who was seeing about our lunch. We knew German communications were in a confused state. It was logical that the major might have trouble phoning. But we began to wonder if this was a trap—a German trick to liquidate a high ranking American officer.

The three of us sat there smoking. We went through one package of cigarettes and walked down to the car for more. We came back. And now the vanishing servant appeared with lunch. It was belated, but the food was excellent and there was plenty. It was 1500 hours as we finished our meal—three in the afternoon, and no Goering. But our missing major showed up. One look at his face told us he was worried. The fact that he showed concern was reassuring. It seemed to indicate that he probably was honest. He had not been able to get through to any of the towns that Goering would pass. Besides being worried lest Goering was lost, he was worried lest Goering had been waylaid. He told us Goering was in considerable danger. SS troops had received orders signed by Hitler directing them to kill Goering, the major said, but their commander did not believe the orders could be authentic. He sent for confirmation, meanwhile preparing to carry out the order if confirmed. The aide went on to say that a company of Luftwaffe soldiers was prepared to defend Marshal Goering with their lives, while the company of SS troops was equally determined to carry out their orders or die.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

It all sounds fantastic now, but with German in chaos, it was entirely plausible that afternoon in the castle. We had a fleeting vision of a pitched battle between fanatics of the SS and fanatics for the Luftwaffe, with us in the middle. Another possibility worried the major. German morale was so low that he feared a group of embittered soldiers might have attacked Goering's car on the road. Having given us the facts to chew on, the melancholy major excused himself and went back to telephone again.

While we waited, one of our guards brought in two German officers. One was a colonel, the other a major. Their insignia identified the pair as belonging to the Florian Geyer Division. That was one of the divisions of the most hated of all German tongs, Heinrich Himmler's SS. The major was a hatchet-faced thug and the colonel was quite obviously a pervert. Both were a little bit drunk, and wanted to talk. They were feeling very sorry for themselves and for Germany. Now that the war was almost

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over, they were nervous about their SS connections and wanted to know what would happen to people in their shoes. They tried hard to pretend they had done nothing to merit punishment, but guilt was written all over their faces. The main theme of their conversation was that we should join the "glorious German army" in defeating the Russians. To listen was like listening to a phonograph record of Mein Kampf.

We neither answered their questions nor tried to argue. Finally, the general grew too angry to stand any more, and ordered them out of the room. We learned later that these two and a few others were all that was left of the Florian Geyer Division, which had been chewed to pieces on the Russian front. The colonel's brother, we were told, was one of Goering's arch enemies.

Our missing major reappeared at last with news. He had located Goering. The master of the Luftwaffe was on his way, but would not arrive for several hours. The major had time now to explain in a little more detail why Goering had got in touch with the Americans and arranged to give himself up. Goering was terribly afraid of falling into the hands of the Russians and of having his family captured by the Russians. But he was afraid of his own people, too. Above all, he wanted protection for his family, the aide explained, and, looking over the choices, decided that he had better take his chance with the Americans.

The afternoon dragged on, long, uneasy and irritating. We were getting increasingly impatient. The general was getting annoyed at having to wait so long. Finally, at about five p.m., he told Goering's aid that he would wait no more. We would go out and get the marshal on the road. There was too great a possibility of mix-ups, accidents, fights or just plain getting lost to leave things to chance any longer. Our mission was to get Goering alive, if at all possible, and we wanted to get our hands on him.

We left the reconnaissance platoon at the castle to maintain guard and prevent any Germans from moving in. The castle would be big enough to keep Goering and whomever he might have with him, and we would have them all in one building. The general, Goering's aid and the interpreter went first in the sedan, I followed in a jeep with a driver, one rifleman and a light machine gun. This gun, mounted on the dashboard in front of my seat, plus one rifle and three pistols, was the total armament of our task force.

Our road led through a deep gorge for several miles and then came to a fairly large town. Few civilians were on the streets, but there were many soldiers in ragged but familiar uniforms—British and American. The German major stopped to telephone again. While we waited, we were surrounded by the soldiers, who turned out to be prisoners from a large PW camp outside of town. Their guards had gone off and left the prison camp open that morning, and the prisoners were now free to come and

go as they pleased. Typhus had broken out in one of the camps, and most of them were worried about that, but the sight of our little party was good medicine.

They just wanted to look at us and touch us and see if we were real. They wanted to hear our voices and hear us speak English, and they asked us a thousand questions all at once. When we told them that the war would be over at midnight that night, a tremendous cheer went up that was almost deafening. Most of them were British soldiers who had been captured in the fall of Greece. We were the first Allied soldiers they had seen for years. I offered them cigarettes. Their pale faces lighted up at the sight of the package, but they were too polite to take any until I insisted. They wanted to know what they should do, now that the Americans had arrived. We had to tell them that they must wait a little longer until Allied soldiers in larger numbers got there. It was a hard thing to have to say, but they had been waiting so long they took it very well.

The German major returned with word that Goering was only about an hour away. We started off again over a back road that led up to another high mountain pass. The sun was going down, and when we got up near the snow, it began to get quite cold. We must have climbed 1000 feet, and then the road leveled out across a broad valley where we could see thousands of German troops and a very large number of German army vehicles. Most of these soldiers stared at us, but some of them waved happily, and a few saluted. They looked as if they were just as glad as we were that the war was almost over, despite the fact that they had lost. They were lining up their vehicles and equipment according to the terms of the surrender which was to be effected the next day.

The sun sank behind the mountains, and the valley was filled with blue smoke from hundreds of campfires. Then in the distance we could see a cloud of dust. A convoy was approaching us. As we got closer, I could see that there were about twenty vehicles in column. Most of them were sedans and shiny black limousines. We stopped and waited until the column pulled up abreast. I saw our German major get out of the car, followed by General Stack, and walk over to the limousine second in line. It was the famous Goering car—a Mercedes Benz with six wheels and a bulletproof glass two inches thick.

The door opened and Reichsmarshal Hermann Goering, one of the most hated men in Europe, right-hand man to Hitler, bomber of Warsaw, London, Coventry and hundreds of other cities, and the most notorious looter in modern times, lifted his big hulk down from the car. The young German major snapped to attention and raised his hand in a salute which Goering did not bother to return. He was almost immediately surrounded by approximately fifty Luftwaffe officers of various ranks who poured from the twenty-car caravan. Goering's wife also got out, and in the dark interior of the palatial car I could hear a little girl crying.

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Goering was dressed in a plain gray uniform, with a tremendous overcoat of the same color which hung open at the front and exposed his fat figure. He is a short man, not much more than five feet, but he more than made up for this in breadth. His eyes had something of that glazed expression peculiar to those who take dope. He wore the hat of a Reichsmarshal, but did not carry his marshal's baton. From a belt around his fat middle was suspended a small Mauser pistol. His face was flabby and heavily lined.

General Stack was introduced to Goering by the aide, and the first question he put to Goering was "Do you speak English?" Goering answered that he understood the language better than he spoke it. Then, through the interpreter, the mighty Nazi began to apologize for not being dressed in a better uniform. He explained that when the American bombers had leveled Berchtesgaden he had lost most of his uniforms and his medals.

The general and I started to laugh at this display of vanity, but Goering's wife, who had been on the verge of crying since she emerged from the car, burst into tears. Goering reached over and pinched her gently on the cheek. She tried hard to smile, and in a minute regained control of herself. Then the general told Goering what we were going to do with him. He was to follow us back to the castle where we had left our guard. Since it was so late, we would stop there overnight. Then Goering would leave his family and his caravan at the castle under guard and follow us to our command post. Goering wanted to meet General Eisenhower, and asked whether he would be taken to see him. The general told him we didn't know; that wasn't quite true, but it seemed better at the time to let Goering find things out for himself.

It was almost dark, so we wasted no time starting back. As I turned my jeep around, a group of German soldiers who were watching came up to me. A very young boy who spoke a little English asked if we were going to take Goering away. I said, "Yes, Herr Reichsmarshal is *kaput*," at which they burst into laughter. German morale at this time was not very high—nor did our exalted prisoner seem to inspire much devotion.

The general led the column, followed by Goering. I followed in my jeep with my one machine gun. As we passed German soldiers, I noticed that few rendered the Heil Hitler salute. Most of them gave the old army salute or none at all. That night we drove with lights on for the first time in a year and a half of fighting. As this was the last night of the war, we expected no trouble.

When we arrived at the castle, I gave orders to Goering's aid that all weapons were to be turned in at once. When they were delivered to me, we had enough pistols, machine pistols and rifles to fight a small war. I also got a list of the personnel Goering had with him, and it was long. There was Goering's nurse, his valet, his first chauffeur and his second chauffeur, four aides-de-camp, Goering's daughter, her nurse, Goering's

wife, his wife's handmaiden, Goering's own chef, plus a kitchen crew, several brigadier generals and a large array of staff officers, each with orderlies and drivers. The general and I took the best room in the castle for ourselves. We had a guard around the castle, and no one could leave or enter the grounds.

It was almost midnight when we had issued final orders for security and the same ghostly servant we had seen that afternoon materIALIZED again and brought us another bottle of wine. With this we toasted the end of the war, because at midnight hostilities in the European theater ceased. We gave Goering orders to be ready to leave at nine o'clock in the morning and went to bed.

At eight a.m., Goering's aide appeared and asked if the Reichsmarshal could have until ten to get ready. General Stack said no, and the aide went back with his message. A few minutes later, Goering himself appeared to ask for a postponement. He had to say good-bye to his family, and he didn't know when he would see them again. Furthermore, he wasn't used to getting up so early in the morning and he had to put on a clean uniform. The general still said no. Goering changed the subject. Should he carry his marshal's baton, he asked, or wear a pistol at his interview with General Eisenhower? Knowing full well that Goering would never get near Eisenhower, General Stack told him to use his own judgment.

We had a fine breakfast, cooked by Goering's chef and served by Goering's waiters. The food came from Goering's mobile kitchen. Whether or not Goering had time to eat that morning, I don't know. In any case, he was ready at nine o'clock, as ordered. I rounded up the SS major and colonel with whom we had had the unpleasant few minutes on the preceding afternoon and put them in a jeep under guard to take back to our PW cage. The rest of the German soldiers were left under guard at the castle, along with Mrs. Goering and her daughter.

We asked Goering if he thought Hitler was dead. He replied that he had talked with Hitler during the last week in April, and that Der Fuhrer seemed insane at the time. Goering felt sure that Hitler must have died soon afterward, and said the body would never be found, because arrangements had been made to burn it.

We allowed Goering to bring his fancy car as far as Kitzbuhel, where our lines had been stabilized and the division command post set up. We delivered our fat captive to the division commander, and our mission was completed. All during the time I saw him, Goering seemed to be trying to play a role. He put up a front of kindness and joviality, but he fooled nobody.

Shortly after this incident happened, newspapers began to run stories saying that Goering had been coddled and pampered by his captors. They made the point that we had shaken hands with Goering, that we fed him chicken and that we entertained him in a suite in the Grand Hotel in

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Kitzbuhel. To the handshaking charge, I say that it is not true. There was not a newspaper reporter within fifty kilometers when we took Goering. It is true that he had chicken at Kitzbuhel, but the stories failed to explain that every soldier in the division had chicken for dinner that day. Chicken was what the quartermaster supplied for that meal. To the charge of his being entertained in a suite in the Grand Hotel, I ask this: Should an American commander walk down to a PW cage to interrogate such a man or should the prisoner be brought to the commander?

There was no sympathy wasted on Goering. We had taken the No. 2 Nazi alive, and we were glad he was alive, but not out of compassion. We knew at the time he would have to face justice, and we were glad he would know the disgrace of having to account for his unbelievable crimes before a fair court. It seemed probable, too, that he would have to suffer the agony of waiting for one execution he could not take lightly—his own.

We rode into the valley over a twisting road, and after having traveled thirty kilometers inside enemy territory, we came to a castle. It was an old building standing on a little rise of ground and overlooking a gorgeous lake. A high ivy-colored wall left only the top story visible from the road. This was the rendezvous, but Goering was not there. We would wait a little, our guide told us, because the Reichsmarshal was traveling over back roads in an effort to keep this trip as much of a secret as possible. That morning Goering had left a small town near Berchtesgaden where he had been living since the bombing of Hitler's mountain hideout. That was definite, the major said. But there had been no word from Goering since.

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All Hell Breaks Loose

By Francis E. Healer



Worldwartwoveterans.org

Dear Editor:

Enclosed is my story for the 36th Historical Quarterly. My roots go back to 1936 when I joined Co E 142 Infantry and was with them when we mobilized 25 November 1940. I still have a great deal of pleasure, in that I am the president of Co E, 142 Infantry, here in Sweetwater, where we have a reunion every year, the 1st weekend in May. We will have our reunion for 50 years since 1940, next year. We had 80 at our reunion this year. Not bad. Enjoy all the quarterlies. I have all of them except about two of the first issues.

*Thank you,
F.E. Healer*

Even though I did not fight with the men of the 36th Division, I was there. I mobilized with Co E, 142 Infantry in 1940.

As many of the original men, know, the 36th Division went as Cadre to train other Divisions.

Because, being a heavy equipment operator, I went to Fort Knox, Kentucky, as a Cadre, and there trained men with the same training, I had received with the 36th Division, years before with The Texas National Guard.

On the morning of 23 November 1944, 2200 hours, after we had held 23 miles of the Ziegfried line, between Luxemburg and Germany, we were ordered out on assault. I was with the 709 Tank Battalion, attached to the 8th Infantry Division.

It was very very cold, with snow about 26 inches deep, mud and slush. It made it very difficult to maneuver. It was at this time the Germans, were using white uniforms to try to disguise us.

Myself and Doggie from Missouri had been standing guard and you could see the Ziegfried line over the snow. Lt. Ellis came and relieved us on the night of the 22 November, with two replacement guards. He had not been back over 10 minutes until these two guards let loose. I do not recall the names of the men, but they shot up about 1500 rounds of 45 ammunition with the Thompson Machine Guns. Our Lt. was very brave and went to check on the guards and found nothing for them to fire on. He came back and told me and Doggie to go back on guard.

The next morning as it began to be daylight, I looked off to my right, and I said, Doggie, there's the man they got scared of last night. It turned out to be an old stump and it really looked like a crouched man. It had a lot of steel in it.

Doggie was out of the foxhole and I heard an 88 scream, and ducked deeper in the hole. Three more screamed and ole Doggie did not show. I thought perhaps one got Doggie. About that time another screamed and in came Doggie head first. He said, Healer, did you hear that! And I said, Doggie, where have you been? That makes 5 of them. Doggie said, Hell! I didn't hear the others. This was the night of 22 and morning 23.

We were ordered on the night of the 23 Novmeber 1944, into the Hertgen Forest. There we were met with heavy resistance. It was Hotter than Hell the rest of the night. At 0700 hours on the morning of 24 November, being Thanksgiving Day, we moved back to gas up and re-ammunition up.

At 0800 hours we went back up front. At this time we were behind enemy lines, about 300 or so yards. I told the replacement Lt. on the intercom, this is for enough, it was Hotter than Hell all night. He said, drive on, this is a jumpoff. About that time wham! wham! Both tracks were blown off. Right in front of us no more than 60 feet, there sat a pillbox point blank. Wham! comes the 88 through the Star and out over the engine. Then came the Bazookas, 13 of them, barely missing the fuel tank. The 88 got my left leg, and as I tried to undo the escape hatch, in coming up I was in the right position for bazooka to catch me in the left shoulder. Thank goodness it was a dud. Another bazooka, caught my gunner between the chin and chest. We were done for in less than 10 minutes. This was the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge. Yes all Hell broke loose that day and stayed that way for about 3 weeks. What made it so hard, was, that the Germans had stole our equipment and uniforms, and we were fighting our own equipment. We didn't know just what to do.

KIA, is the way it reads in the daily record by the Department of the Army. Although it was as Hot as it was, 3 of us through miracles are still living.

Thanks to the training background of the 36th Division.



A Difference of Opinion

By William B. Mobley
142nd Infantry

*The editor appreciates the fact that a number of our members do not always agree with what is said in the articles run in the **Quarterly**, however, the article in question by Mr. Mobley was written by and about one of our deceased officers who cannot defend the statements in question. Mr. Mobley's remarks are taken by the editor to be corrective and not critical of another unit.*

Hicks Turner

In the article on Gen. Paul D. Adams in Vol. VIII No. 4, Winter 1988, I would like to correct parts of the second and third paragraphs on page 6, because I have a personal knowledge of some of these events.

Although I only met once with Col. Adams (his rank at the time), I was impressed with him. However, I was more than highly impressed with Col. Bill Martin, whom Gen. Mark Clark had replaced by Col. Adams. The replacement was for something that happened on the Rapido River. I believe that Gen. Mark Clark should have been replaced. His orders to make the Rapido River Crossing in the existing conditions were below what would have been expected of a High School R.O.T.C. student.

My regiment (142 Infantry) was not engaged in this exercise, but I, as Bn. Ex. O., was watching from a hill back of the river and praying for the men involved. I was hoping Gen. Clark would come to his senses and call off the operation before the 142nd Infantry was committed. Fortunately, he did.

In this second paragraph on page 6, it states that Col. Adams forces took Mt. Defensa all by themselves. However, I remember distinctly the 1st Bn. 142nd Infantry, of which I was Bn. Ed. Officer, climbing the almost perpendicular southeast corner of this fortress under enemy fire. The terrain was so steep in places that our men had to use ropes to scale it. It required as many men to carry supplies as were committed to the action. Being the Bn. Ex. Officer, I was somewhat to the rear of the attacking companies, but I remember a stream of German prisoners coming down the trail going to the rear. There was mortar fire coming in on us, one tree burst killing two men just ahead of me. I caught a small fragment in the leg at this time. Our Bn. made it to the top and cleared the enemy from the area. We took over an underground bunker for a C.P.

and stayed there a day or two. There were some German rations left in the bunker. I especially enjoyed the canned butter. While we were up there, I remember looking down on Mt. Lungo which we took a few nights later in another attack. I did not see any personnel from Sp. Sv. Force while we were on top of Mt. Defensa; they could have been there because that was a hell of a big mountain.

In the third paragraph on page 6 of this article, it states that the 143rd Infantry was outstanding in the defense of Monte Castellone. I would like to point out that the 1st Bn. 142nd Inf. had received orders to occupy Mt. Castellone, while attacking Mt. Cairo. We had to side slip to the left and move southwest along the lines under considerable fire from the right, which was the front line. As I arrived on this position, after it's capture, I was informed that the Bn. Co, Lt. Col. Amick, had been wounded and evacuated and I was the new CO. At this time, I was informed by Col. Lynch that we were to be temporarily attached to the 143rd Inf. I was ordered to report to Col. Adams at his Headquarters at the base of the mountain. Before leaving, I asked Capt. Price Middleton to come to the Bn. C.P. and act at Bn. Ex. O. (Middleton later became CO of the 2nd Bn. 142nd Inf.). I reported to Col. Adams and saw several of the 143rd Inf. staff, including an old friend, Maj. Rex Pinkley, who was S. 3 of the 143rd. After the meeting, I went back to my Bn. on Mt. Castellone.

I do not remember the dates of all of the above, but there were several relatively quiet days. Feb 12th—about three or four a.m. all hell broke loose in what Gen. Walker later described as the most intense barrage of fire he had ever experienced. As visibility became better, the German infantry made an all out assault on our B, C and D Companies who were the front line with Co. A in reserve. As the fight progressed, we were making frantic efforts to supply enough ammunition and grenades to the front line. Phosphorous grenades were in great demand; they were used to flush Germans out of the clusters of rocks. Fragmentation grenades were not as effective, the phosphorous grenades would burn the Germans and force them out. Lt. Albert Fisher was the supply officer, and he did a great job.

We received word, as the fight progressed, that the Germans were penetrating between our B and C Companies. Middleton and I decided to send our A Co., under Capt. James Minor (later Lt. Col.) to drive the Germans out; which they did very convincingly. Things were normal by nightfall.

In the morning of Feb 13, 1944, we were told by Capt. Fugate that some German officers were approaching our position under a white flag. I told our officers not to let them enter our position, but to meet them out front. Capt. Middleton and Capt. George C. Fugate, along with

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some others, were assigned to meet the Germans. They were requesting a truce period so they could remove their dead from our position. Arrangements were made by Div. Corps Hdq. to grant a certain amount of time for a cease fire; however an extension of this time was requested and granted by all higher Hdqs. We didn't allow the Germans into our area, but we carried their dead down to their forces. I believe around 160 dead were carried out by our forces.

I do not remember how many dead and wounded the 1st Bn. 142nd Inf. suffered, but I do remember it was extremely small.

I'm sure, technically, the 143rd Inf. was in command of the area, but I just want it understood that the 1st Bn. 142nd Inf. (attached to the 143rd) was the key to this great victory.

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The Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly has only one mission — to gather, compile, edit and publish stories written BY the men — who were there — in their own words. Plus, we have more and more from other T-Patchers who find news clips, and or write 'about' a buddy they liked and sent in their report.

MAKES NO DIFFERENCE... the objective IS TO GET THE STORY NOW, from or about this man. IF you put it off... it just may be too late. (The sands of time are now running out), but you know that.

Memories and Premonitions

By Joe F. Presnall



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These memories are dedicated to 1st Sgt. Grady Sandlin; Major Reemstma (Regimental Surgeon); and to my wife, Nina Welch Presnall, who was so patient in waiting for me to return from Europe.

I had great plans to be a vocational agriculture teacher in high school. In the fall of 1935, I entered Sam Houston State Teachers College at Huntsville. One of my agriculture professors just happened to be Samuel S. Graham, Commander of F Company, 143rd Infantry. Of course, he was always looking for new recruits for his National Guard Company. So I decided quick that \$4 a month would help my finances considerably.

In the summer of 1936, we went to Palacios for a two-week training period. The top sergeant hollered, "Fall out. I need a voluntary detail." Up went my hand! It had rained about four inches in the black mud. We went to the service company, loaded bed sacks full of GI shoes and came back to F Co. My last volunteer job!

We were mobilized November 1940 for a year's training. December 1940, I asked Nina Welch to marry me. She said, "Yes!" After that I borrowed \$10 from Erwin Teggeman. He and his wife carried us to Cold Springs. After the wedding, we had enough money left for hamburgers at the Raven Cafe. (After 48 years of marriage, I still don't know why she said yes.) Our first daughter was born February 6, 1943, and we left Staten Island, New York, April 2, 1943, bound for North Africa. It took 13 days and nights. Our helmets were used for anything that was practical!

After a period of time in North Africa, we moved to the Cork Forest. Captain Joe K. Emerson, Co Hq CO hollered, "Fall out and line up." Captain Emerson asked, "Is everyone getting enough to eat?" (And there is always one in a group). Cooper Johnson, in the rear ranks, hollered, "Capt'n, I ain't getting enough sups." I thought I was the only one who knew what ribbon cane syrup was. After the GIs were issued

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more ammunition than they could carry, the order came down to move. After the grave digging and burying the excess ammo, we were ready. Monroe Kelenski, Supply Sgt., would not take the excess ammunition back—he couldn't haul it all.

I need to go back to Cork Forest and mine all the ammo that was buried there and sell it to the Arabs—I could get rich.

Then Col. Martin lined up the 143rd Regiment for an inspection by General Ike. I overheard General Ike say, "Martin, are you ready?" Martin said, "Yes, General, I'm ready." I didn't know what he was talking about until three or four days later—September 9, 1943 at 3 a.m. I thought he was going to a party, and it turned out to be a whiz dinger. Grady Sandlin, 1st Sgt and I hit the beach together. The 88s began to explode around us, and I said to Grady, "I believe they are playing for keeps!" He agreed that when someone starts shooting at you your training period is over. Grady and I moved forward as fast as we could crawl. Joe Emerson, Roger Cannon, and driver Simon started toward the tobacco warehouse, promptly ran into some Kraut tanks and were captured. I was Hq Co Commander until Captain Atkins came from somewhere and took my place.

Major Reemstma, from New Braunsfel was our regimental surgeon. He and I were real good friends. When we were in the Louisiana maneuvers on a 15-mile march, I was complaining to him about a callus under the ball of my foot. He said the next ten-minute break I am going to cut that thing out. I'm tired of hearing you bitch about it. Someone said, "Fall out; ten-minute break." Major Reemstma (my friend) said, "Get under the pine tree." With no pain killer, he started his surgery. I saw the most beautiful stars in the afternoon sun. "Now you can finish the march, and I don't want to hear you bitch any more." I didn't lose any blood—I caught it in my shoe. Major Reemstma told me he would never make it through the war. I didn't know at the time what he meant until later when I also had a premonition.

I was told to carry a ½ million candle power light and set up to guide the bombers into San Peitro, but it just happened to be in sight of Mt. Lungo, which we had not taken yet. I turned the light on and in came the artillery. I jumped in a hole that someone had dug until the Krauts decided they couldn't hit the light. I cut the light off. I was looking around and saw a shoe. I looked closer and said, "Oh my God, someone's left a foot in it."

When I got back to Regimental C.P., the first thing someone told me was that Major Reemstma was dead. Forty-five years later I saw Father Roamer, Priest of the 143rd, and he told me that Major Reemstma wanted the last bullet fired in World War II. He hadn't told me everything.

After our Regimental reorganization and replacement of eleven hundred men, came the Rapido River Crossing and the monastery. I had the

best job in an infantry regiment, and I began to realize it after Salerno and San Pietro. My job was to see that our company functioned and to help any way I could in combat—like censoring mail, carrying food, being pay officer for the unlettered units, regiment's gas officer, and listening to GIs troubles. That is when I became "Holy Joe" to the men in my company. Hung on me by Captain Jimmy Still for Waco, at Camp

Blanding.

After the second trip to regimental headquarters at the Rapido to help feed Col. Martin and staff, with tears running down his cheeks he said, "Lieutenant, we have lost so many men. Why?" I also shed a few tears as I heard about some of my friends being killed—Milton Steffen, Capt. Bayne, and others. With our eleven hundred loss at San Pietro from the 143rd and more than that at the Rapido Crossing, I began to realize that West Point graduates hadn't been taught all there was to be known about combat. You don't learn about Rapido River Crossings marching up and down company streets at West Point.

After our failure at the Rapido Crossing, came the reorganization of the division. Col. Martin and Lt. Col. Carden from Belton were relieved of their duty to 143rd Infantry. Col. Carden came to the kitchen area and told me he had recommended me to Col. Adams to be the Company Commander of Hqs Company. I understand that Capt. Boyd S-1 recommended 1st Lt. Rufus J. Cleghorn from Waco to be Hqs Co Commanding Officer. You and I know that a new regimental commander is going to accept one's recommendation that is not being transferred out of the regiment. Old boyhood friends in Waco maybe? Some would call it politics in the service. No reflections, but just building for a point later. Second bypass to be promoted to Company Commander. And I thought I was doing a good job!

After the tragedy at the Rapido Crossing and the destruction of the monastery, we were pulled back to Naples and prepared for a movement to Anzio for reinforcements of the beachhead already established. There I got acquainted with Anzio Annie. After a few days, General Walker got permission to go to the right of Velletri through the mountains. We had a soul in our company by the name of Oswald P. Templett. In the mountain area, some sniper that was by-passed took a pot shot at Oswald. He had his mouth open, I suppose catching a few flies, and the next time I saw Oswald he had two of the prettiest dimples on his cheeks that I had ever seen. Not a tooth was missing.

With Duney and others leading the pack, we went through Rome on my 30th birthday. It was most beautiful! I don't understand how so much could have been accomplished in 2697 years. They must have had a lot of slaves mixed in with the artists, like Michael Angelo.

After approximately 11 months in mud, mules, and mountain country, we were pulled back to Naples for reorganization and a trip up the Mediterranean to the San Raphil area to make the Southern France Inva-

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sion. At least we had some help from the Navy, but not a shot was fired at Salerno before the landing (surprise, surprise). The Germans knew when and where we were going to land before we did (I found out later).

We were supposed to make the invasion, and the Free French were to attack through the 36th and go forward. One hundred thirty-two days later, we were relieved in the Strasbourg area, for five days rest and reorganization. In the beachhead area, we captured a French car. Boy, new transportation for 30 minutes. Word came down to turn in all foreign-made vehicles. There went our transportation. Somewhere along the line, our message center issued a motorcycle. No one wanted to ride it, so my private transportation turned out to be a cycle. In a burned-out warehouse just off the beach, the Krauts had burned the sugar and grain, but we found some four-star congac—the best that France had to offer.

In our transportation section, there were Dick Ledbetter, Arthur Helton and others. I handed a couple of bottles of congac to them and said as quick as we get to a rest area or relieved, we'll all have a sip to celebrate. At Strasbourg, 132 days later, I got them together and said, "Dick, break out the congac." They looked at one another and not a word was spoken. I will always wonder what happened to the congac!

We went north through Grenoble toward Switzerland and made a left hook and straddled the highway south of Montilemar and blocked the escape route for the German 19th Army being pushed by the 3rd and 45th Divisions.

On our way through a small town that had been liberated, I saw the townspeople crowding in toward the highway. I felt real lonely about that time on the motorcycle. I couldn't go any further, and they gathered around like I was a long lost son. I felt tugging on my left. As I looked around, a little short grey headed man with a long white beard was climbing up. He grabbed me around the neck and gave me a big juicer on the cheek. Then along came Leo Scharenburg behind me in a Jeep—to my rescue. He let me ride in the Jeep, and he worked his way through the crowd on the motorcycle. We arrived at this small town south of Montilemar where one of our aid stations had been established in a building. I just happened to be across the street looking at the wounded in front of the aid station when this artillery shell exploded in the middle of the already wounded. I looked down at my legs and saw a hole had been knocked in one of the trouser legs—but not a scratch. I never did have a premonition that I wasn't coming home. In fact, when we left Buzzards Bay, I told my wife that I wasn't going to let a little old war get me down. I didn't know how big that little old war was going to be. You have heard the old adage that there is not an infidel in a fox hole! I had plenty of help from upstairs.

Grady Sandlin was one of my best friends, 1st Sgt. of Hq Co. He and I hit the Salerno Beach together, and our work was similar in nature in the service. We confided in one another. I'll never forget one of his statements. "Lt. I'll never come out of this war alive!" Of course, I tried

to discourage him from thinking that way, but I'm sure I never did. He had a premonition that he would never come back home.

In Northern France somewhere, Pvt. Julius Ducker (French professor at Brooklin College) got Sandlin and me a bed to sleep in. The next morning leaving the area Grady said, "Lt. let me take your picture. There is the house maid standing there. Ask her to be in the picture with you." She came over, and I put my arm around her waist while sitting in the Jeep. Later Grady had the picture developed, and he said, "Lt. I dare you to send this picture to your wife!" Oh, I'll do that because my wife is real broad minded. After being gone two years and raising a child, I was sure she would be so glad to get the picture of me that she wouldn't notice the maid that just happened to be standing by the Jeep.

About a year later at home, Carolyn said, "Mamma, show them the picture of Daddy hugging Phench gal." After 48 years, I still haven't found out just how broad minded she was then or is now.

After the reorganization at Strasbourg, I was temporarily assigned as liaison between Division and Regimental Headquarters. Along in the Biswillar area, I was sleeping at division and delivering the General's orders to the Regimental Commander. Early one morning, I was riding along towards the Regimental Command Post when all of a sudden I had this premonition. I said to myself, "Grady got killed last night." When I got to the Command Post, I saw a small group of HQ Co men standing around a flat bed truck. I saw a pair of shoes sticking out from under this GI blanket. I walked around to look under the blanket. Someone said, "Lt. don't look. It is Sandlin." I found out later that he and Sgt. Red Mosley from S-3 were looking at the situation map and an artillery shell exploded across the street, and a slug killed Grady. He and Major Reemstma never did tell me any of their troubles, but maybe their troubles were unexplainable as most premonitions are.

A short time after that, Col. Adams was transferred and Lt. Col. Denholm was transferred from 2nd Bn Co to Regimental Co. The first items on his agenda was to rearrange his personnel, and I was at the head of the list. He promptly transferred me to F Co. I thought, "My gosh, I am going to wind up where I started from." So I reported to Major Parks Bowden (from Belton). Major Bowden said, "Joe, are you in pretty good shape physically?" I said, "Yes Sir, Major, considering all the fine living I've been doing in Hq Co." He said, "You can move your stuff today and report for duty in the morning and be ready to move out."

When I got back to Hq Co, there was a message saying to report to Col. Denholm. I snapped to and said, "Lt. Presnall reporting as ordered, sir." Col. Denholm said, "Lt. I have gone over the seniority list of officers, and I find that you are the oldest 1st Lt. in the Regiment. I have transferred you to F Co so you can get promoted!"

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I thought there was not a West Point school in Huntsville, Texas; only a National Guard Company where you could make \$4 a month. All of a sudden he was putting me up with the West Point graduates—that seemed their biggest ambition in life was to go up in rank.

After I finally collected my senses, I said, "Col. if I had been company commander material, I would have been promoted a long time ago. I have been by-passed twice—by Capt. Adkins and Lt. Cleghorn." He said, "Well, that is a matter of opinion." I didn't ask him if he thought politics could have anything to do with promotions in the National Guard division. As far as I was concerned, we were in a civilian army, doing a nasty job that had to be done. Col. Denholm said, "Well, if you don't want the promotion, I'll rescind the order." I said, "Col. if I have a choice, I had rather stay where I am." You can guess the rest. Three days later, I was 600 miles behind the front lines in an Italian battalion acting as S-4, which called for a captain's rating. After 335 days in a combat zone and being by-passed twice, I thought that maybe my wife could forgive me for not being overly ambitious, if I could only get back home.

One of my greatest disappointments in life was when I was transferred out of Hq Co. I will always wonder if I wasn't doing my job or if we had a regimental commander who thought that all officers should be as ambitious as he. He didn't want any officer in his regiment who was satisfied with what he was doing.

I'll never forget the men in F and Hq Co. I think that most of us were in there for the same purpose. I will always remember Wilcox Cook. When I left the company, he had tears coming out of his eyes, and so did I. He said, "Lt. are you leaving us?" I said, "Not by choice."

Our Italian labor battalion was commanded probably by another misfit Lt. Col. who wasn't needed in the combat zone.

One Sunday afternoon, my jeep driver and I decided to ride around a little so we went to town and walked the streets some. There sitting at a sidewalk cafe was a foreign-made Trooper smoking a Lucky Strike cigarette. I asked where he got that Lucky Strike. He threw his hands up like, look for your own. We started riding again, and at the edge of town (Marsailles), we came upon an American cemetery. We stopped and talked to the Sgt. in charge. I asked him if he was getting much business. He said, "We get two or three quarter master drivers a week. The ones that we get don't seem to be dying of natural causes. They have their heads separated from their bodies." He said they have the first choice at the cigarette issue and food unloaded at the docks. They confiscate the Lucky Strikes, Camels, Chesterfields, or any of the others that will sell good on the Black Market. But the shipment doesn't come very often, so by practicing the free enterprise system, they fudge a little. When they play out of cigarettes, they make the garbage cans, etc. and collect the

cigarette cartons, refill them with sawdust, and make the rounds again. The trouble was that they made the same round maybe the next night.

The moral of the above story is "don't ever let greed separate you from your head." It even works now!

After about two months in the labor camp, I heard the war was over. The irony of my military career was that my promotion-to-captain papers had gone to Washington to be approved. Of course, all promotions were frozen the day the war was over. Wouldn't it have been fun for me to have been promoted 600 miles behind where I had been transferred out of the regiment for not being ambitious. After 335 days in a war zone, I didn't want to start over in a line company just to get a promotion.

Julius Ducker, Private, was promoted to 1st Sgt. when Sgt. Sandlin was killed. I never did hear any regular Sgt. gripe about Ducker being promoted. Maybe I would be the last to know if there was any bitching. He had been used as the Regimental Commanders intreprerter.

In retrospect, I will always believe that we had the most to fight for of any war fought in the history of this country. When you think of the human beings who were destroyed and being exterminated by Adolph Hitler, it gives me a feeling that I will never forget. I will go to my grave thinking that he was 100% wrong. People with greed in their heart will always be losers.

I think Adolph Hitler was a direct descendent of the devil himself, probably a son of Lucifer, the Fallen Angel.

My biggest concern in my life now is that the younger generations don't seem to realize how expensive this freedom has been. It is so easy to take everything for granted. I enjoy seeing everyone prosper as long as they don't forget from where it comes—the Lord above. To quote my seven-year-old granddaughter. "That's Life."



Joe F. Presnall

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly

ALL WE CAN SAY
(Tune: Near to "On Top Of Old Smokey")

by

Sam F. Kibbey

Worldwartwoveterans.org

Light another candle
Play "Taps" once again
We gather together
To memorialize our friends
But thinking it over
All we can say
Is "We will love you forever"
And "We miss you today".

We were like brothers
Maybe we were much more
We shared the heartaches and hardships
That help win the War
Yet, here assembled
All we can say
Is "We will love you forever"
And "We miss you today".

Time has rolled on, we are now growing old
Your memory goes with us wherever we go.
These moments are precious
So we reverently say
"We will love you forever"
And "We miss you today".

Yes: "We will love you forever"
And "We sure missed you today".

--- Sam F. Kibbey
June 23, 1989

A Simple Monument

By R.K. Doughty
815 Stuart Ave.
Mamaroneck, N.Y. 10543



Worldwar2veterans.org



Major R.K. Doughty, AC of S G-1, 36th Division, speaking to the assemblage at Dramont, France, August 15, 1945.

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Just after the end of World War II, when I was assistant to Col. Bob Travis, G-1 of the 36th Division, a rumor came down from on high to the effect that there would be no monuments built by American military units below Army level, except with the approval of SHAEF.

Figuring that most Army rumors had some basis in fact, General Dahlquist, commanding the 36th Division, called a staff meeting and from it arose an assignment for the G-1 Section. "How'd you like to take a trip to SHAEF?" Travis asked me when he returned to his desk.

"What's it about?" I asked.

"Seems like the boys up there owe General Dahlquist a few favors. Before this thing about monuments gets set in stone he wants approval to build one back yonder where we landed in Southern France."

"What's the drill?" I asked.

"Better see him. I got to thinking about this war being over and how I'm going to move so far out in the boondocks when I get back to Texas I'll have to scrape the 'coon crap off the front porch each morning, that I missed part of what he said."

I stopped by General Dahlquist's office and told him that I'd been elected to take his message about a monument to SHAEF.

"It's gonna be kinda rough getting in there by plane," he said. "The Frankfort-Am-Main airport took a passing from our air force and is full of bomb craters. I made it a week or so ago and it probably hasn't changed much since then."

"Who do I see?" I said. He gave me the name of a well-known general who was G-1 of SHAEF. "Tell him," he said, "that I'm calling in all my markers for this one."

"What in blazes does that mean?" I asked. "Sorry, but if I get a wrong reaction, I want to be ready to move fast."

He smiled and said, "Nothing to worry about. He'll know what I mean. You simply ask him for an OK to build a monument to the 36th at Cap Dramont where we landed on the Riviera. If he starts to object, you hit him with 'all of Dahlquist's markers'—Got it?"

"You'll want something in writing, I assume," I said.

"Right and with his signature—initials won't do."

The next morning I took off for another light plane operation in a Division Artillery two-seater bound for Frankfort from Geislingen, Germany. This time I anticipated little or no difficulty except for the gem that General Dahlquist had dropped about the condition of the airfield at Frankfort. I had discussed this matter with the pilot before leaving Geislingen and he had responded with a terse "No problem." since, he said, he had learned of the bomb craters from another pilot and knew "what to do." He hadn't bothered to enlighten me.

We flew over the field at Frankfort and from my viewpoint, as a non-

professional flyer, the only safe thing to do was to return to Geislingen and report the failure of a mission. Whoever had bombed those landing sites knew their business. There was scarcely room to touch down before we began zigging, then quickly zagging, only to zig again and with no let-up in ground speed.

We approached the far end of the runway with the pilot working hands and feet to control the plane's route around the craters and at the last moment he performed what he later described as a "ground loop" when one wing-tip scraped the ground as he jammed on the brakes. We stopped, facing back the way we had been rolling.

"Piece of cake," the pilot said.

"Don't move the damned plane," I yelled as I got out. "I'll walk from here."

It was a bright, warm day but I saw no one on or near the airport. I gained a major highway and started to thumb my way toward Frankfort in the distance. Most of the vehicular traffic was military and shortly a lumbering command car stopped and a baby-faced Air Force Brigadier General, who couldn't have been more than thirty years old, said "What're you doing unarmed, Major? Don't you know there's a war on?"

He was wearing a handsome uniform with no combat symbols on it but he was armed to the teeth with two side pieces in holsters and two knives hanging in sheaths near each shoulder.

"Pardon me, General," I said, "the war is over or hadn't you heard?"

"Not here, it isn't!" he said.

"If you're going to SHAEF headquarters," I said, "I could use a lift."

"Get in!" he barked, with all of the wrong overtones.

The kid general, as I thought of him, leaned back in the rear seat and folded his arms much like Il Duce had done. Thinking to have some fun with him, I said, "How long have you been in Germany?"

"Longer than you have, apparently," he said.

"Oh! Then you came in with the invading forces," I said.

"You just got here judging from your lack of weapons," he responded.

"Hold on," I said and reached into my back pocket where I kept a Walther pistol. "I've just come from the 36th Division at Geislingen, Germany. We entered Germany through the Siegfried Line. We also captured most of the Nazi Brass including Goering, Max Amann and Dr. Frank as well as Field Marshal Gerd von Runstedt. We are presently processing thousands of prisoners and surrenderees. What's your job?"

He eventually told me that he was some general's aide and that he'd been in Frankfort about two weeks, having been flown in from the states!

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"Next time you see someone you think has no weapons, take another look," I said. "It's just that we've learned that it's a lot easier to work with a defeated enemy if he isn't reminded of his defeat every time he sees one of us."

With that, I asked the driver to stop since we were in mid-Frankfort, and got out of the car. The general's flicking return of my salute left a lot to be desired.

I found SHAEF in a commercial complex of buildings tucked away behind so many walls and barbed wire fences that it was a wonder communications could get in or out of the place. There was an air of trepidation about the MPs guarding the entrances and I had observed, as I approached SHAEF on foot, a certain truculence in the attitude of the German people that had been absent in areas nearer the front.

It took a while to locate the G-1 who was at a meeting but when I told him I was John Dahlquist's emissary, he gave me a fine welcome. I got into the reason for my visit at once, for it was plain that paper-shuffling in that enormous headquarters was measured by the ton.

"Look at this," he said, handing me an undated, official-looking document that, in about four paragraphs, corroborated for rumor regarding the prohibition against building monuments in Europe.

"General Dahlquist has a special message for you," I said. "He told me to tell you that he's calling in all his markers for this monument." A half-smile appeared on the G-1's face. "My God!" he said, "What timing!"

"It will take several days for these orders to reach our Division headquarters in Geislingen," I said. "In the meantime, a written OK to build a monument—a real simple one is what the General wants—with this day's date and your signature should do the trick. I'll fly back to the 36th at once and we'll start our monument team toward Cannes, France tomorrow or the next day. Otherwise, General Dahlquist is certain that the red tape involved in getting approval after your directive is issued, will kill our plans for a celebration next August."

The General sat at his desk drumming on it with a pencil and looking out of a window. "All of his markers?" he finally said.

"That's right," I replied, "but I haven't the slightest idea of what that means."

"Of course," he added, "if the local authorities disagree, that's the end of it!"

"Sounds logical," I agreed.

He started to write something on a pad of paper but I pulled out a paper I'd prepared for his approval and signature and said, "This is the only copy. We'll hold it at the G-1 Section of the 36th."

He read it a couple of times and then signed it. When he handed it to me, he said, "If any Division deserves a monument for all it has done, the 36th does."

I got a ride back to the airport through the intervention of the G-1 during which I had a couple of vagrant thoughts about how we might get off the ground again. My pilot, on looking around, had found another runway which had been partially rebuilt. In fact, it was about half a runway in length. He had the plane ready at the take-off point, there being no other air traffic in the vicinity, and by revving up the engine with the brake on hard, managed to clear some trees with a last-second lift of the plane.



The beach at Cap Dramont, France had been quarried so that there was but one exit from it at the northeast corner. The Germans believed it to be too small to offer a toehold on the continent, for casements guarding it contained fake guns. However, the only exit had been mined but someone missed his assignment. The whole division passed over this restricted and cluttered beach on D-Day, except for one battalion of 141 which landed on a small beach further east and blinded the German artillery by capturing its OPs. the LST stranded on the shore in the background was struck by radio-controlled bomb launched by a German bomber.

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After I reported back to the Division, an engineer party was dispatched at once to the beach area where the monument was to be built. I learned that I was to go to the Riviera to handle the political side of the matter, together with Captain Paul Lefort, French liaison officer who had re-entered France, in that capacity, with the 36th Division at the time of the invasion.

We set out a day later in a small Mercedes-Benz convertible sports car that had been the property of Herman Goering but which had been repainted and bore the identification "French Liaison" on its hood. General Robert Stack, Assistant Division Commander, his aid and driver, as part of the monument team, were to follow their own route to the Riviera.

Lefort, having suffered the loss to bombing of a family factory at Lille, France, was not inclined to be lenient with the Germans, although, generally speaking, he was professional and fair in his attitude towards them. This lack of leniency, together with a Frenchman's love of fast-driving, combined to give us trouble at the outset of our journey. We were rocketing along in the French-occupied zone of Germany, with the odometer reading 130 kilometers an hour, when Lefort spotted several German workers in a field off to our right. He spoke German fluently and, yelling and gesticulating, he tried to order the workers to stand and doff their hats as we passed.

Unfortunately, at that juncture, the road took a sharp-angled right turn and while Lefort reacted like lightning, he wasn't fast enough and for a second or two the car was air-borne as we sailed over the embankment, landed on a lawn and finally stopped with our front wheels ascending several steps to someone's front porch. All four tires blew out with resounding explosions when we landed and only tremendous strength on the part of Lefort stopped us in an upright position.

No one came out of the house even though the sound of our arrival could have been heard in the next county. There were exactly four old spare tires in the trunk of our car and we managed to replace the mangled tires with the old ones. From that point on we proceeded cautiously since there were no more spares and no operating garages along the route.

Near Besancon, France the inevitable happened and we blew two more tires crossing a railroad track. I rode to Besancon in a telephone repair truck that traveled at a ten-mile-per-hour clip. I found a French Army repair shop where I was able to borrow two tires with which, after securing a ride back to where Lefort was waiting, we managed to reach a hotel in which General Stack and party were ensconced for the night.

The next morning our tire problem, which had begun to loom large, ended for we located a tire re-capping plant that had been moved intact from the States to Dole, France, which was on our route. The Goering car took an odd-sized tire but in a field containing, we were told, a

million tires piled fifteen feet high over several acres, there was a cubicle that held nine of the correct dimensions. When we said we'd take all of them we ran into trouble with the sergeant-in-charge until he happened to notice a T-Patch on a blouse in the rear of the car.

"You with the ole 36th?" he asked.

"Sure thing," I said.

"Wish I had some more tires fer ye," he said. He had once served with the Division back in Texas.

We took the tires and had to stash five of them with some of Lefort's friends from whom we picked them up several weeks later. There was room in the car for only four.

The trip to Cap Dramont lasted several days since, once General Stack and his group left, Lefort and I took our time and stopped at Montelimar for several hours to re-visit old scenes and to look in wonder again at the tremendous damage the 36th had done to the German 19th Army there. While most of the evil odors of the place had disappeared, once the French people had buried the dead men and animals that had littered the terrain after the battle, there were still masses of rusting steel that marked smashed tanks, trucks, troop carriers, and cannons that had been bull-dozed into wind-rows of junk for miles along the main highway and in the fields.

Once we reached our goal and began talking with French authorities, we found that Lefort and I had a different kind of problem than we had envisioned. They not only approved of a monument at Cap Dramont where the Division had landed but the French Federal Government had held a competition over the previous year to obtain the most suitable architectural plan for such a memorial. In other words, there was no political problem and for all intents and purposes Lefort and I could return to Germany.

However, since General Stack could not understand French, we found a way to keep the conversations going with the French mayors and other dignitaries who were planning a big celebration for the first anniversary of our landing at Dramont. We pointed out to them that, while the Federal plan was a good one, it was too ambitious for what our General, who had led our invasion of Southern France, had in mind. It would take years to collect enough money to develop the eternal flame, the great central plaza, the circle of huge searchlights and the stylized tank at the water's edge that had been envisioned by the architect.

If they wanted the full cooperation of our Division, we said, it would be well to commission the building of a simple monument on a fieldstone base and to place two plaques on the monument which we would supply. After much discussion, they agreed to our solution as a temporary measure. They also said that, if and when the larger, more elaborate, work was ever accomplished, the 36th Division's plaques would go on the front of the stylized tank in the place of honor.

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That night I called General Dahlquist and told him what had transpired. He said he would have the Division staff prepare the bronze plaques and he would attend the memorial exercises on August 15, 1945. He also wanted some three hundred of our veterans at the unveiling of the monument. I told him there was much to be done to get the details handled and he told me to get cracking.

The plaques were produced by a German silversmith whose property the Division occupied in Geislingen. He not only cast the plates in his furnace from bronze taken from German guns but, in a number of instances, made corrections in the French grammar and spelling. The Division staff supplied the text which was the same on both plaques, in French and English, respectively, telling of the 36th Division's exploits from the day of the landing in France until the war's end.

The engineers, working with several hundred German prisoners to clear the landing site, were getting it ready for the many decorations that were to make the commemorative exercises so colorful. Lefort and I were lodged in the Carlton Hotel in Cannes, while General Stack was in the Hotel du Cap on Cap d'Antibes, a nabob's watering place reserved for the High Brass. We managed to avoid meeting him for about a week but then, one day, he insisted on sitting in with the several mayors with whom we had been talking. We had already told them of our desire to spend a little time in their vacationland. They were quite anxious to have us to do so. In any event, I hadn't told General Stack of my talk with General Dahlquist.

When we got together with the mayors in the office of the San Raphael mayor, Stack had already let it be known that, should nothing come of the meeting, we would close up shop and go home. The mayors greeted him with a great showing of respect and cordiality while he simply nodded and sat to one side while we talked.

After listening to our conversation for about a half-hour Stack finally let out a "W-e-l-l-?"

"It's good news!" Lefort said, as we had agreed he would.

"That's something, anyway," Stack said.

I told him of the plan to build a simple stone monument and as I was about to tell him of the expanded celebration and of my talk with General Dahlquist, he rose and said, "Let's go!"

"Just a second, General," I managed to say as he moved half-way out of the room. "There's no way we can leave here now." I told him of my talk with General Dahlquist and what he had ordered me to do.

"Why can't the French handle the programming?" he asked.

"They've asked our help," I said. "Besides, General Dahlquist ordered me to birddog the whole thing and unless you're countermanding that order, I plan to do so." That brought a pretty cool look to his face but he said no more and left.

With Lefort's help the planning got done to include obtaining 6 tons of newsprint, then in short supply in the whole of Europe, setting up accommodations for visiting brass, coordinating hotel space for the three hundred 36ers (men from the 3rd and 45th Divisions slept in tents), scheduling use of the Division band which played for several groups including one that headlined Bob Hope, selecting ceremonies that General Dahlquist, as General Eisenhower's representative, would attend, culling others that he would by-pass, orienting the French Press on American military personalities that would attend, scheduling speeches and writing some of them.

On August 15, 1945, four nations—the United States, Great Britain, France and Russia—supplied troops, planes and warships for the many formations that took place not only at Dramont but elsewhere later that day. Those in attendance could not help but sense the depth of feeling with which the French people regarded the men who had helped liberate their country. Even though transportation was still limited, hundreds of thousands—the official estimate was a quarter of a million—men, women and children from all sections of France blanketed the hills overlooking the beaches where the Division landed.

While the special stand in the center of the area, set aside for dignitaries, was colorful with its plumes and badges, its broad ambassadorial sashes and glinting swords, the thunder emanating from the hordes of people at the slightest provocation was the real voice of France expressing its gratitude.

Keeping the monument simple was, perhaps, the finest touch of all for among all the banners, the Crosses of Lorraine, the national emblems of the several countries, the religious symbols, the pomp and pageantry, the troops, the planes and the ships, the stone shaft on its raised platform spoke eloquently of those lying beneath other simple monuments along the Division's route to fame.

LEONARD WILKERSON, P. O. Box 2049
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VOLUME IX (1989) of the HISTORICAL QUARTERLY.

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No Roman Holiday

By R.K. Doughty

Catching sight of the enemy in combat was more often than not a momentary glimpse of hostile infantrymen moving from cover to cover while doing their best to prevent our troops from advancing. Seeing the German horse-drawn artillery in action was a rare event, if for no other reason than that it was usually displaced well to the rear of the German infantry from where it could, when threatened by our attack, withdraw to new positions. It remains, therefore, as a wild, even thrilling, memory to have witnessed a surprised retreat of massive horses, controlled by what looked like enormous men, as they careened up a hillside dragging canon at top speed.

It happened on the day our forces entered Rome in June, 1944. Those who were there will never forget that day! It was very likely filled with more improbable situations than occur in most men's lifetimes.

To begin with, for obvious reasons of control, we were restrained from entering Rome until morning having arrived at its southern borders in late evening. For part of that night several of us slept in a jeep that had been pulled to the curb on a bridge spanning the Tiber River. At dawn, some engineers came along and advised us to move as the bridge was fully mined and could have started us well on our way to the moon, if someone had pushed a plunger!

The order to enter Rome finally came and the ensuing mob scene of millions of elated Italians, emerging from their homes in all states of dress and undress to greet us, exceeded anything that Cecil B. DeMille ever put together for a Hollywood spectacular. It was almost stupefying to men who had been fighting for days on end to break out of Anzio and to reach Rome. Eventually the press of people, many of whom rode the hoods of our vehicles, was so great that it was practically impossible to maintain even a semblance of march discipline. All of which resulted in our column missing a turn and ending in a cul-de-sac. It took hours to get turned around and on the right road past Vatican City toward the northern limits of Rome.

It would be difficult to describe the utter joy of the populace as they surged along on all sides of us thrusting wine and flowers into the hands of dog-tired troops. Many of the people shouted that they had relatives in America and the mood, if it could be called that, of the millions was that of Mardi Gras. Even though the city had been declared "Open" by both the Allies and the Germans, we met gunfire at the northern outskirts and still the people moved with us in great phalanxes as though they were immune to injury.

The 141st Infantry Regiment on whose staff I served had taken over two gate houses of a civilian hospital for its headquarters on the premise, as I recall it, that we would spend some time in Rome. So many Italians were wounded by German artillery and mortar fire that we abandoned our CP early in the afternoon due to the need to provide room for the civilian wounded.

At one stopping place, a middle-aged Italian man came up to me and after we established that French was a common language invited me to visit his home in Rome whenever I could return. He had, he said, some excellent wine that he had saved from German requisition by having a brick wall built across a cellar passageway to hide his wine cellar. He was Count Pietro Mattaloni whose home I visited with other officers of the regiment a few weeks later. He and his Spanish speaking wife took us shopping and for a midnight tour of one of Rome's many catacombs.

At the northern perimeter of Rome I moved forward with the Regimental I and R Platoon and met with Regimental Commander. A column of U.S. tanks was halted along one of the main roads and heavy German artillery fire was falling on a road junction about a half mile ahead.

"See if you can find a way around that junction," my C.O. ordered. I climbed onto the broad back of a tank and spoke with its commander who was in touch with the lead tank by radio.

"What do you know about the Kraut positions," I yelled at him.

"There are some 150's off to the left behind those hills, I figure," he said. "They've got some infantry in front of 'em."

A look at a map showed a railroad track off to the right of the road we were traveling. The platoon took off with good separation between vehicles. I rode in the second jeep and maintained radio contact with the others. We reached the railroad and moved north along it to a point where we could turn west toward the hills where the German artillery was still firing.

At intervals along the way, a jeep was dropped off as a radio relay station to establish links with the Regimental C.O. We encountered no infantry but on coming to a small settlement, I signalled the lead jeep to reconnoiter the houses. Two men leap-frogged their way to one of the houses that stood on a ridgeline. Shortly I saw one of them waving from a second-story window. He gave the come-on signal but pushed both hand downward meaning to "Keep low."

I ran to the building and made my way upstairs. It was then I saw the stirring sight that was unique to my experience. There was a deep depression behind the house where the ridge dipped to a valley. Rolling uphill to the north from the valley floor was an expanse of fields that extended about a mile to a much higher ridgeline than the one I was on. Covering that expanse were dozens of artillery pieces and service wagons and hundreds of men in blue uniforms with red stripes on their trousers. Most of the men had shed their tunics so that their red suspenders were visible. What gave the whole scene a wild look was the fact that the drivers of the

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horses, that were hitched to the gun carriages, were running alongside and guiding their charges with reins that looked to be 50 or 60 feet long. The horses were bucking and lunging, carriages were bouncing and when one of them nearest to my position turned over the driver kept his horses racing while the gun tore great holes in the turf and finally broke loose. My instant impression was that the drivers were intent on racing each other to the far horizon while the traditional discipline of German troops was largely lacking.

Even so, the scene was one of tremendous strength and agility. The horses were of the Percheron variety built for endurance and heavy loads but the sight of the drivers bounding along in great leaps was spectacular.

It took less than half a moment to realize that this was a target for our artillery. By means of our I and R Platoon radio relay stations, we made contact with an artillery forward observer and gave him coordinates. Back came the reply, "Sorry! No can do! That's right on the boundary between the U.S. and French Armies." Some fairly blistering language went over the airwaves while the last of the German horse-drawn artillery, most of it 105's so far as we could make out, disappeared over the horizon to fight another day.

The hoped-for stay in Rome also went a glimmering as we were ordered to proceed to Civitavecchia on the west coast. By that time our troops were running off the maps that had been supplied for the advance on Rome. I returned to Division Hq. which was nicely established in what could only be described as plush surroundings in Rome. I not only obtained a supply of maps covering new territory to the north but was also given a new mission for the 141st Inf. This, of course, meant moving out in what was, by that time, full darkness to find my C.O. and the forward elements of the regiment that had pushed ahead after the German artillery high-tailed it.

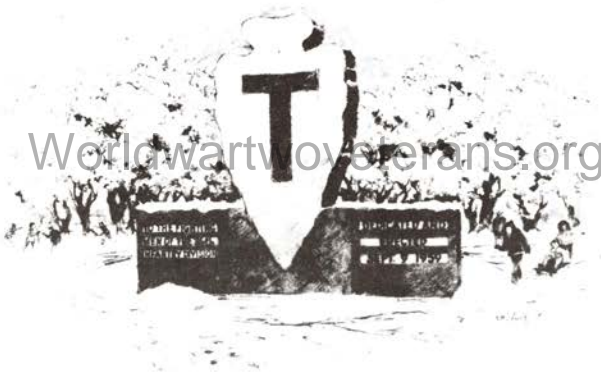
There was moonlight, as I remember it, and while one could not drive fast under blackout conditions, nevertheless the need to catch up with the advance troops had my driver moving right along. I had dozed off when I was suddenly thrown forward as the vehicle came to an abrupt stop. The I-beam with a notch at its top attached to the front of the jeep to cut hostile decapitating wires, had hit a cable stretched across the road bringing us to a sudden standstill.

A tank recovery squad had left the cable there for a short time while its members rested from trying to pull a tank out of a gully. Unfortunately the cable was still connected to a heavy vehicle at either end. We managed to get the jeep past it and after an exchange of pleasantries in which the term "Knuckleheads" was the nicest thing I could think to describe the recovery crew, drove on. It seemed that they expected no traffic on that road after nightfall.

To extend an already long day, we came to a burned-out bridge over a river where I found my C.O. He, of course, on learning of the new

orders, realized he would have to go forward with me to make new plans with the battalion commanders. The river was too deep to be forded by jeep so, taking a few maps in hand, I waded across with the Regimental Commander to start a long hike to the leading battalion.

There were hundreds of our troops asleep on the roadside. Some were sprawled in the roadway; some had rolled into the gutters on both sides. After we had walked for about an hour an armored car, that had found a fording place on the river we had waded, lumbered up behind us its wheels threatening death to the sleeping G.I.s at every turn. It was commandeered at once and through the use of its radio, contact was made with our forward troops. We finally reached our objective, discussed necessary changes of plans and returned to the burned out bridge where we released the armored car. Asleep in a shed near the bridge our rest was cut short after three hours when the shed caught fire as the wind stirred the ashes of the burned bridge and brought them to life.



They Didn't Carry A Gun

by Capt. Russell S. Kidder, M.C.



Worldwartwoveterans.org

One cannot, in any written account, do justice to the deeds of any unit in combat. It is only possible, for the author, to narrate the high points. In so doing, it is necessary to leave out the many, many personal sacrifices that are constantly overlooked; but which are the tiny pieces of marble in the over-all picture of the big mosaic. The Medical Detachment of this regiment, like that of all others, was considered with a suspicious eye, prior to combat. The riflemen, the BAR men, the mortar men, etc, knew where they fitted into the division picture, and each knew the worth of the other—but the medicos? Well that was something else—just where did all these medicos fit in? These were the days when they were known as the “Pill Rollers”. Sure, these medicos were pleasant enough guys, but how could they help win a war?

Their first overseas experience, that of Africa, near Arzew, was interesting enough and not too unpleasant. Here they got their first but by no means their last experience with malaria, the disease that had to be fought relentlessly from that day forward, even now occasionally raising it's head, as the unit prepares to return home. Diarrhea, always the scourge of armies in the field, was met here in Africa—another perpetual fight. For the medicos in Africa it was a fight with mosquitos, sanitation and diarrhea. They did a good job of it too. But still they were, as yet, the “Pill Rollers”, pretty good fellows to have around, but still looked upon with suspicion, because, “They didn't carry a gun”.

The next chapter is history to the world. But it was more than that to the division, and, of course, most of all to the medicos.

As a well trained, but untried division, they landed at Salerno Beach on that memorable September day in 1943, to prove to themselves, the world and certainly, to the German Army, what they could do. Describe what took place? Who can do it justice? It was bloody, confused, hectic—but the results—yes, the 36th Division had fought their way onto the soil of Europe and were there to stay! But what of the Medicos? They had fought their way into the hearts of their fellow soldiers—the men

with the rifles and machinguns and mortars. They showed them, the hard way, why they were there and what they could do. Casualties, day and night, exhaustions, pitiful broken men. Day in, day out, the heart breaking task of caring for broken bodies and shattered nerves, trying to be cheerful, and wondering whether it was your turn next. It was slow, gruelling, exhausting work. Tendon and then the Rouge Valley, where little Tommy Hammond showed what a good aid man could really do. When trapped behind the enemy lines with his company commander, who was shot through the thigh and had a broken leg. Tommy wouldn't listen to the words of his CO and leave him, but with rare ingenuity, stopped the bleeding, dressed the wounds, put on an excellent, but improvised splint and supervised the construction of an improvised litter. Several days later they made their way back into our lines, and the CO was in excellent condition; the splint perfectly secure, no evidence of infection, and he couldn't say enough in praise of little Tommy—"The perfect medic."

St. Marie, Selestete and the plaines of Alsace, Bischweiler, Oberhoffen and the push across the Moder and on into and through the Zeigfried Line; different names and different places, but always the same cruel pattern, broken bodies and shattered nerves. The medics didn't let their buddies down—they were real buddies now—yes, long ago the riflemen knew that their aid man was with them at all times—they knew he had "guts", and skill, and patience. They knew that if they were hit they would get fast treatment. Also, if at all possible, those litter bearers or jeep drivers would get them out and back to the Aid Station quickly, where they would receive further attention from their own Medical Officer. They all knew this, and it was a constant source of great comfort and satisfaction.

We had more than our share of decorations, Silver Stars, Bronze Stars, and Tec 4 Lanier has the honor of being the only medic with the DSC. No, they didn't get them for taking machine gun nests, or pill-boxes or towns, but the real judges—the riflemen—will tell you, they were hard earned, by bravery under fire, risking their own lives to take care of their wounded buddies.

We also had our share of the wounded, the missing and the boys that won't be back; those who paid the supreme price in trying to ease the suffering of others.

Electra, you can be proud of your Medical Detachment, and Texas, you can be proud of your boys, Col. Pate, Al Perez, John Pierson, Jack Beard, Joe Chainey, Aldrice Smith and all other gallant Texans, and yes, you can also be proud of all the other boys from the other 47 states, who put on the "T-Patch", the Red Cross and carried on with the same bravery, reflecting glory upon the United States Army and the 36th Infantry Division.

The final Chapter of the work done by these men is not finished, it is still going on, as the wounded they cared for are returning to their homes and families.



Does He Do A Good Job?...

By Rex Harrison, Jr.

Eleventh Field Hospital, Unit II was in direct support of U.S. 45th (Oklahoma) Infantry Division which was attacking on the road from Palermo to Messina, Sicily, when this little act occurred.

I was the Duty Surgical Technician in the unit admission tent. At that time, the unit commander permitted us to dress as we pleased. It was July. It was awfully hot in the tents and when not working, I would lie down on a cot and try to sleep. Anyway, my duty uniform consisted of a baseball cap, no shirt, cut-off O.D.s and Brogans (the kind worn with leggings, remember?)

Seventh United States Army Lieutenant General George Smith Patton, Junior, Commanding, had strict uniform dress codes. As you advanced toward the front lines, signs were posted advising you what the uniform would be and the dollar penalty should you not be so dressed. The codes were vigorously enforced.

About the middle of the afternoon, no patients. I'm sacked out on a cot. Suddenly a voice yelled out, "Attention." I jumped to my feet, assumed the position and peeked out of the corner of my eye. I nearly crapped in my cut-offs. It was God, Lieutenant General George Smith Patton, Junior, himself, in all of his glory, spit shined all over. I immediately calculated that I was at least two-hundred bucks out of uniform.

T-Patchers please believe me when I tell you that this General did not speak like George C. Scott. He had a high, shrill, squeaky voice which irritated my ears.

The General looked me up and down. He turned to the Medical Officer, Major Bowen, who commanded our unit, and asked, "Is this the uniform that you permit your troops to wear?"

The Major replied that since personnel in this particular tent were on 24-hour duty, he permitted them to wear comfortable clothing in this heat.

General Patton inquired, "Does he do a good job? Is he qualified in this position?"

Major Bowen replied, "Yes, he works hard. He is well qualified. We have no complaint with his work."

The General then said, "I don't care if all he wears is a red feather stuck up his ass, as long as he does his job."

As the General left the tent to return to his command car, the other technician, Private First Class Merl King, said, "God, what a man."

Smart-Aleck me said, "Why don't you go and get his autograph?" He did. I didn't. Therefore, I have only memories of this encounter which I wish to share with the T-Patchers. Merl King has the autograph.



KERRIGAN'S KORNER

A Few Fractured
Foxhole Fables



My Day in the Sun

By George Kerrigan

November, 1943 in the mountains of Italy, was a nightmare; it was the rainy season, and we were shelled constantly, our only protection was laying among the large boulders up there, and most every night, Jerry tried to push us off.

After about twenty rainy days and nights, the sun finally came out. I immediately pulled a Madam Godiva, and spread my clothes all over the rocks to dry.

Five minutes later I heard a verbal message from 1st Lt. Jim Minor, Company Commander being relayed up my direction, "Who is that nut up there, with clothes spread all over the mountain top?" I said tell him it's "Kerrigan from Brooklyn." I was sure that message would make the Texan happy. The next message that came up was "Tell that crazy Yankee to get those clothes off the rocks, does he want the Germans to know we are up here?" I yelled back, "Tell that Rebel that if the Germans don't know we are up here, he should check with the Russians as someone is pounding Hell out of us every day." It was relayed back down to Lt. Minor. (Conversation was ended, but not forgotten.)

A Comedy of Errors

By George Kerrigan

After busting out of the "Anzio Beachhead" May 27th, 1944, we wound up infiltrating a whole Regiment (142nd) over Mount Artissimo one dark night. Our Platoon set up the Road Block to cut off Velletri, then Rome was ours for the taking.

Our casualties were very light (A-142), so naturally we got cocky as old Hell, it was just like in the movies.

This day we were clearing some woods, when I heard a motor start up. Thinking it was a truck, getting ready to evacuate a bunch of Jerries, I yelled, "Let's go men, before they get away." So I took off like a rabbit, towards the motor noise, the woods were very dense. Then about 100 yards in, I ran into a clearing, and Lo and Behold, instead of a truck there was a large Tank (German). Luckily they were facing away from me, but started to swing the turret around towards me. I put the brakes on and caught my Gang just coming out to join me. I screamed, "Back, it's a Tank!" Needless to say we moved fast, before they got the 88s in line with us and opened up. The dense woods saved us.

When we were far enough away, we rested for about an hour, still in the woods, when suddely one of my men said, "Hey Sarge, there's a load of jerries over there behind the trees." Sure enough there were a load that I could see. So acting very casually, I called my Runner, "Werner Loeb" who was born and raised in Germany, to tell them we had them in a trap, to surrender or else, as we had three hundred men. So the Jerry in charge, asked if we would give them time to talk it over. I agreed to give them 15 minutes.

Then 15 minutes later as I was dreaming of a new World War II movie, "Sgt. Kerrigan Strikes Again," the German yelled back again (in German of course). I asked Werner if they were quitting. He said, "The German said we were a bunch of God damn liars. You only have 13 men." They counted us.

So still acting very casually, I told the men to open up when I yelled, and then run like hell, which we did.

So all in all, it wasn't a bad day, as we had no casualties, but no one was fighting to get into Kerrigan's Kommandos either.

P.S. See Werner Loeb's 1946 letter regarding the two incidents.

The Odd Couple

by George Kerrigan

As we entered the Vosges Mountains of "Alsace Lorraine", Northeast France in September, 1944, the fighting got increasingly bitter. After chasing Jerry from "The Invasion" at the "Riviera", and moving at a great pace, we arrived at the next Natural Defense line of the Germans, and we didn't know at the time, but we were in for it.

"A" Company 142 was sent up to take a high hill which we took, then were told to dig in on the forward part of the hill.

After we finished the holes, our Platoon Sgt. (later K.I.A.) moved us about 100 yards, and told us to dig in again — this was repeated 12 more times. (I found out later, they wanted to let Jerry think that we had a few thousand men up there.)

After the 14th hole, I said to my Buddy "George Richards" (a professional fighter from Boston), "I'm not digging any more holes, I'm going down to the bottom and get some sleep, Jerry must be miles north of here." Richards said, "I'm with you." So down we went, not a soul in sight.

By then it was dark, so I picked out a nice spot, against a high rise to my left, and laid down to sleep. Richards said, "Aren't you going to dig in?" I said, "What in hell do you think I came down here for? No one can see us here".

So I laid down and Richards behind me in a nice hide out, and I went to sleep at last. Later on I felt Richards poking me. I looked at him and he whispered "Look". I then saw a line of Jerries on the ridge above us to our left, swinging my rifle around, I got ready for some easy duck shooting, as George grabbed me and whispered, "I've been watching them go up for 15 minutes, there must be 100. If you shoot, I'll kill you, let our Gang get them at top."

I saw his wicked punch in action a few times, so using discretion, instead of valor, I laid back down while the last man passed up silently. Now we had the best B.A.R. man in the whole U.S. Army, Deodato Ruiz, with his assistant, B. Shellhart, and they were wide awake and ready, and waiting at the top when Jerry arrived.

They shot hell out of the Jerries, and down they came running all over the place, and falling all around us to save their lives. George had me by the throat, to make sure I stayed down.

When they all passed us, we started up slowly and as dawn breaking, I yelled up from behind a big tree, "Hold your fire, it's Kerrigan and Richards." To this day I can hear Ruiz shouting, "Don't shoot, it's Wrong Way and Richards."

It was a happy reunion as they had given us up for goners. Someone said, "You must have had good cover down there." And Richards said, "The only cover you'll get with that crazy Irishman is a smile." End of quote.



An Old Soldier's First Duty on the Continent



Worldwarveterans.org

Clayton Grinnage, Sr. 111th Engr. Co. A

After nearly three years to the day, I was once again assigned, all by myself, to be a guard on the troop-train taking us to God-knows-where, from a pitifully inadequate, muddy encampment on a cliff overlooking (Le Havre) the scene of our debarkation from a sloppily maintained, rat-infested, overly subsidized (by US Army) excuse for a troop ship, called HMS Exchequer. The Thanksgiving dinner we should have been served on the docks at Portsmouth, was "poured" along with many feathers, bones, and skin, mixed with whatever Her Majesty's Navy cooks called dressing, into our mess-kits (Yes, Clyde, I know where "mess" originated, in the English language, uniquely alone). To this was added a freshly baked, (at least HOT) individual loaf of very good-smelling bread! I opted for "Bully-Beef", but when I opened the bread, the weevils had hatched into WORMS, still squiggly, and very much animated!

We had all been issued arms, as well as all the ammo we could carry, a wise way to get stuff transported, without overloading the already stretched out supply lines of the armies already ashore. In this case, if I had been as "Rambo" then as soldiers are nowadays, I would possibly wound up on one of those quaintly named devices referred to in England as a "gibbet". It never entered my mind at the moment, and never has 'til this very moment, but I should have been terrified, if I had been the Commanding General (British, naturally)! Just seconds after I determin-

ed that these varmints were indeed in every other fine loaf, just out of the oven, I was stiff-leggedly hoofing it to the Officer's Mess, where all present were chowing on T-Bone steaks with french fries, cocktails, and everything else long relegated to rationing, even in the stateside situation of the '43 AD American? Of course, there was no problem, the "good Old Boy" was also an inveterate politician, who knew high waves at this time were the last thing he needed? Would you believe that I don't remember whatever cooled things off, probably seasickness (not ME, as I never was affected, afflicted, infected or whatever it is that causes such horrible conditions inside one's body) I have seen all kinds of fevers, but this affliction is the most baffling to me! (Another reason for my guard duty, I was nearly always the only one on his feet, as well as his feed.) We debarked without incident, from landing nets, into some kind of craft, and we all felt like Mac Arthur as we disembarked on a still-mined beach, carefully (we were assured) swept clear of all but the also carefully marked "too dangerous to remove" and thru the courtesy of some now-forgotten Amphib engineers! We reached the bivouac area just in time, as the food must have been spoiled, the first thing I did was head for the latrine area. An exact copy of the one my uncle has depicted, back in France, WWI! A long board on two chunks of wood, at the teetering edge of a "slit" trench. Honest to God, I believe that the same old lady could have been the one he described, as she tried to sell me an egg, or bread, by the loaf. All this while attempting to modestly take care of nature's call, however, aided by the cramping, nagging pain one never wishes again to go thru. I think we were there only one night, but the train pulled out (40 & 8 again like WWI) and I was still in possession of the Thompson, so they loaded me, and my upset stomach, which I had dosed with massive amounts of sulfaguanadine. My Latin never was very good, but I think I have finally snapped to the "guana", especially since getting a basic Spanish education at the hands of my latest spouse. I also took aspirin by the 3's as I was very sick with fever. It was a great respite from the "cattle-cars" the rest rode in, I have been assured! I was, you see, permitted to be Baggage Guard and slept resting on hundreds of duffle bags, a very soft and cozy nest, believe me! We clattered thru several well-known and historic places on the way to and thru Paris marveling at the damage our troops had wrought to the Normandy countryside, especially that part we were entrusting our ever loving butts to, the French National (SNCF) Railways. They were really shot up, and to see bullet holes all the way thru 100 lb rail was a sight I would have doubted before. We had no idea of course what had done it, but they probably were RAF or USAAF, possibly even 20mm or larger, certainly AP. Our Garands never did that well, for sure, as good as they were.

After what seemed like a long ride, we wound up in Paris where we travelled many, many miles both forward and back, from one siding to another, and finally popped out, we thought in an area we later learned

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was called Etampes, a small suburb of Paris, and not too far from our final destination of the Replacement Depot at least 3rd in our journey to the front, and next to the last, which was Epinal. The payoff, as far as Guard Again Grinnage, (as I had been aptly named by one of my buddies, just recently deceased), was the duty? At the halting of the troop-train in this suburb, several of the men went AWOL, or even deserted, which the Train commander left to the area MPs, as we were very unfamiliar with the area, except one rather dark, olive-skinned comrade with a name which could have been French, who made no bones about the fact that since he had been born and raised in Paris, it was his "destiny" to join the ones he had known before going stateside and getting drafted. In case any of the rest had ideas like the bunch before he had taken thru here, the Lt. detailed me and my "Tommy" to again guard *something*, this one in particular being a very fancy "something", an honest-to-gawd, no-fooling, maison de femmes, of the very plush variety, and declared off-limits by Etousa, whoever he was, to all except field grade or higher officers of Allied Command, all very officially posted and countersigned by Lt. Gen. John C. H. Lee! Since they were all yankees (by birth, as well as nationality, in many cases, it took no small persuasion to say "to Hell with Lee!" thus the guard). In any case Guard-Again was posted right beside the Kilroy sign, on the very sidewalk of the premises and in plain view of the ladies of the establishment. It was not long before a delegation was sent down the walk, under the arbor of roses, etc. dressed in their best "shortie negligees" and nothing else.

This was not the first time I had met one, but it was the first time I had been close enough to speak to one, let alone in the very suggestive and intimate (I thought) way the French have. As I learned later, after getting a better working knowledge of their lingo, it was certainly good for PR, but hardly the innuendo I had thought it to be! Just naturally a very musical, poetic, and romantic language, no sex necessarily intended. That could have been their intention, but the real cause for concern was they they wished me to tell all those I turned away that there was a concealed rear entrance, just thru the gateway down the street. And they had no reservations about rank, just dollars, which they would rather accept than invasion money. My payment was to be invited inside for a drink. Inside would surely have looked like heaven, had I not been a bridegroom of merely 6 months, for there was all kinds of liquor, varieties I had never heard of, as well as champagne, and all the pastries, as well as foods that France, and especially this area is so noted for. The war never reached some of these people, for sure, and I often wonder if stopping the train for those several hours was not part of a deal "under the table" by someone who maybe got a bigger payoff than I was offered. Of course I explained very carefully that somehow, the GI's seem-

ed to find their way out, thru an entrance that I surely would allow no one to pass thru! I had guarded the very first troop-train I was on, thru the South from Louisville-Shreveport, the very first week of service, long before qualifying as Expert with .45 Cal Auto, again because of illness (chow). Life deals many hands the same way, more than once to the same player it seems.

44 Years Late

Another by Grinnage

The beginning of this quite amazing tale is (as every other word, to the best of my own certain knowledge,) really the truth, and can be confirmed by a few surviving people who are all members of the Association. I am hoping for some of you who might read this to write to me in this regard as well. It begins with what was farcically called a rest period, and escalated to a holding and occupation situation, while those in charge deliberated upon, and waited for the next move from Jerry Commanders, actually just puppets of Hitler. We of course, as Allies, did not know how badly off they really were, and caution was by far the better course.

We were sent off one morning early, demounted after untold miles, and marched through knee-deep snow in quite cold, though not as bad weather as we had experienced before. Most of the column marched in two or three abreast groups, unencumbered with usual Engineer equipment, as we were to erect what turned out to be miles and miles of 4 or 5 foot high multiple strand barbed wire fence, complete with 60 degree aprons, the common type used for tank entanglement, as well as anti-personnel, which could be easily booby-trapped with several available types of explosive devices, though, I do not believe we got to that part, at least not our team. We had air-compressors, mallets, (large wooden metal hooped affairs that did the job better, having a larger striking surface in relation to the weight). Being one of the shorter, stockier men of the group, I opted for the air-hammer with clay spade, which we soon found to do better than the smaller chisels! This pretty much explains the picture as shown in the month of December in our 36th calendar, but the details were rife with unusual and even humorous events, like very few occasions allowed in combat, especially. We were not fired upon, though we had a tank along for support, as well as our own weapons, which had been exchanged for various other tools, including very heavy leather gloves, which we wore when tying the wire. It was fastened with running

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loops, wrapped around the post, then around the line of wire and so on. I excelled at this, as well as the hammer (air), and eventually we assembled the operation to par excellence.

It seems that there is always a person in every group that has everything that can happen, do just that, a sort of "Murphy's Law" advocate, to which I answered the description with thoughts in good humor. This first part of the day, the march to the actual site, where the trucks had gone on ahead, and we trailed through the woods in a scouting role as well, one of those events occurred, which I could have regretted, but did no harm, since I had the new shoe-pacs, and was familiar with snow problems having spent all of my life where a white Christmas was a sure thing, even a snow-falling Thanksgiving Homecoming football game, was never without its accompanying frosty, often snowy evenings. I was not walking in the footprints of whoever it was ahead of me, but a few inches to the left, possibly rather picking my own odds of hitting a mine, but in any case, the rest must have been still on the roadway, while I was on the berm, or shoulder, if we could have seen under the 2 feet of snow. In any case, the snow began to get appreciably deeper, and since silence was a must. I made no comment, when suddenly I thought I had tripped, when in reality I had only slid down the side of a frozen snow-filled streambed. Gazing skyward I saw nothing but white snow which had been somehow arched over the stream leaving a large dome which I was under. I could hear voices and I must believe they were concerned or why would they worry whether I had disappeared or not? The only time I think anyone vocally demonstrated in my behalf I merely walked up the other side, and reappeared as easily as I had vanished, to the intense humor of the whole gang. I never heard otherwise from any in charge and assume the good showing we made with the fence did no harm to the squads further reputation. I got so involved with the jackhammer that I could feel the vibration for at least the rest of the night, and at one point we were getting so carried away, I removed my outer wear piece by piece until I was bare from the waist up since we were sure we would not see any vehicles with flags in front this day. We all thank whoever it was who had foresight enough to send in the press, as it was a helluva day.

The amazing part I think I am that person in the calendar photo, if not it could not have been more real if intentionally phoned up nor more illustrative of our own squad action, and may well be the photos made every group that day, but it is our picture whether in reality or symbolically. I hope everyone in that position that day will scrutinize it carefully and attempt to place the correct people in it. Please remember that it was nearly 44 years ago and few of your faces are anywhere near the same to any of us, but I think the other two are both named Green, the one with the maul and the one just reaching for the air-hammer. I am in the center, and it was set up just this way, by the man who said he was from LIFE.

Close Shave

By *Lem Vannatta, Svc. Co. 143rd*

I'll mention things in this tale that aren't combat related but was part of the big picture. I will use a lot of heresay, as my daughter does my typing and I wouldn't want her to think her father would be interested in such, as I was married when we were in Europe. The story will pertain to the head shaving of the ladies of leisure in France. Not connected to the story is a saying the English people said about us American soldiers. They said we were "Over Paid, Oversexed, and Over There."

The French people had caught it for a long time so they played it safe after we arrived. They wanted to be sure the German Army wasn't coming back. They would wait 'til the front line was five or ten miles north, then they would get tough. The free wine was over, they put a price on it, and it went up each day.

They went around town and caught up all the girls who had slept with the Germans. They then had a patriotic meeting, usually at the town square center. They all made speeches condemning them, etc., then they dry shaved their head, usually bring some blood, they rocked them out of the crowd. I witnessed one such show and never made anymore. I couldn't see the sin, even a German could hanky panky? These girls were unpopular as a bastard at a family reunion.

I mentioned Shorty Lee in another story. I failed to mention he was bald headed, this could have some bearing on this part of this story. We stayed in a town on the Moselle river named Cheminnel for a week or so. We didn't get there good 'til Shorty got him a girlfriend, she was a howyal type about 35 years old. You could tell she had been around. The snipers had been cleared out and you could hear our artillery firing a few miles north. We watched Shorty kiss his gal goodbye one morning she walked off toward the center, we could hear all the yelling and going on. We saw Shorty's gal coming up the street wearing one of our fatigue caps with blood running down her head. Shorty met her and helped her back into her house. Shorty said her being bald didn't affect his love for her, after all he was bald, too. We always referred to her as Baldy of Cheminnel.

We moved out north in a few days. Shorty forgot "Baldy" and went on new conquests. Shorty was a great lover.

In another town in France, our ammo dump was on the town square and we witnessed the local heroes locking the girls up in preparation for the shaving. We saw a jeep drive up, a drunk G.I. got out with his pistol drawn. He went into the jail, you could hear the row take place, he came out with a shapely blond. He made a speech in English and the French crowd belittled them for wanting to punish the gals for wanting a little sex. He loaded the girl in the jeep, said he enjoyed a woman more with

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hair on her head. After he left the French tried to line us up as witnesses. Of course, we told them we didn't see anything. We had a big laugh as I think of it now, it is still funny. See, I've always had some larceny in me.

P.S. My name is Valerie Hardy and I am Lem's daughter. Since I type all of his stories, I am sure that we don't get all of the story. It is so nice that he had friends to tell him about all of these occurrences.



Twenty years ago, a photo like this would have been unheard of. But, now after 37 years post-war—we have here at right, Harry McGowan of Co. D, 141st (San Antonio) with former-foe, Herbert Pieler, now a sports writer for the Kassel newspaper, one of the seven Germans who attended the 36th reunion at Houston. Pieler was a 1st Lt. with 15th Panzer and was captured at Nettuno, spent the rest of the war in a Tennessee POW Camp.

Photo above was made by Bennie McLenore, and we sent xerox to ole Mac, for comments. His reply was: "The 141st went back in the line, Nov. 15, 1943 in the Lungo sector. After a fashion, we were surprised to find, that we would be relieved by a Battalion of Italians."

"Well, we were in our holes, and loe and behold, here the 'Ities' came . . . it was like a circus!! Smoking and talking up a storm. I told the honcho, who was to relieve me, to get those damn monkeys quite and to get into position before we get a hell of a shelling."

After I told Herb Pieler this story, he said he was a little surprised when, early that AM the Italians attacked. Herb said the Italian CO blew his whistle and they formed up. He gave the order to attack, and he looks behind him, and he was 'all-alone'. Peiler added — we just busted out laughing!

From Salerno to Anzio

An Italian Wartime Memoir

Part I

By William D. Broderick

142nd



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I—SALERNO

On September 20, 1943, eleven days after the actual invasion, I landed at Salerno, Italy, with several other radio operators who were temporarily attached to Fifth Army Hq. We had been on the boat five days, after leaving Oran, and during this time the news of the young beachhead had been none too good. Therefore, everyone on our boat had been informed where we would land and how to get to the assembly area; also we were issued K-rations and told to be ready to come off fighting, if necessary. However, the situation was not as bad as had been anticipated. We left our Limey ship for the decks of an LCI and from it were carried onto the sandy shore by ducks. The sand was not yellow, as on bathing beaches; rather a dirty grey, spotted here and there with growths of marsh grass. Walking was difficult. The beach itself seemed to be the home of confusion. Ducks and jeeps dashing around madly, LCI's unloading, troops marching, an occasional Spitfire or P-40 taking off from a nearby airstrip—all these added to the impression of heterogeneity one received. The day was a bright, sunny one, and quite warm. Inland at a distance could be seen the mountains—mountains which in a few months would become hated and full of tragedy. But on that day they merely seemed picturesque.

Finally our group was organized and moved off down a dusty road. We were continually harassed by passing trucks and jeeps. Before we left the area I had eaten my first K-ration and enjoyed it—a taste which soon left me. Eventually we reached the Fifth Army Hq. bivouac area in time to prepare for the night. The area was a tree-filled olive grove; two of us picked a tree beneath which we slept, but not before digging ourselves our first slit trenches, as the Luftwaffe had been very active over the beachhead area. This was our first but far from last adventure in sleeping on the open ground.

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The next morning the seventeen of us, all radio operators, were bundled on a truck, and after travelling through Corps and division channels, seeing my first Italian, and stopping for a while in a tobacco warehouse, I came to the 142nd Regimental Hq. of the 36th Division, a Texas national guard outfit, which saw its first combat at Salerno. Here I met Lt. Terrill, regimental communications (como) officer, for the first time, and was assigned by him to the third battalion hq. co., to which I travelled by jeep.

Off the road about two hundred feet was a narrow smooth-running creek, and here battalion headquarters had been established. The battalion had just been relieved from the line the day previous, and were now resting. I was introduced to Lt. Ashcraft, the como officer, a small, slightly built man with almost effeminate features. We discussed my qualifications as an operator; after the talk he indicated to me where the radio section was staying, and advised me to dig myself a slit trench, near the spot where I slept. At that time I probably would have built a tree bunk if someone had suggested it, since in my greenness, I was in no position to refuse the advice of veterans.

First I met Harold Stratton, a tall, blond, bronzed youth from Portsmouth, Ohio, the section chief. Later I came to know the rest of the communications platoon, many of whom were to become my very good friends; George Rowell, Charlie Cozby, "Static" Mizell (Static was his legal name, by the way. He acquired it in his pre-radio days due to his talkativeness, and later had it legalized in court); and Ernest Werner, of the radio section; Bobby Cecil, George Schubert, and John Brumley of message center; Tony Hernandez, Fletcher, Silva, and Pabalon from the wire crew, and many others.

Well, I fixed up a bed, and though I saw that no one else had done so, dug myself a slit trench. It came to a quick end anyhow, because Bobby Cecil, heeding the calls of nature, mistook it for the latrine which had been dug nearby; thus we were forced to fill it up. This remained a standing joke for some months to come. At that time we were eating 5 in 1 rations, which we prepared ourselves, five men being fed for a day from one box. Gasoline was our fuel, and by using empty C-ration cans as fuel containers, supported by a few rocks, we could make some very efficient stoves.

The day after my arrival, I seized the chance to bathe and wash my clothes in the cool creek. Time passed quickly and enjoyably as I learned the ropes and got acquainted with the gang. On my first Sunday with the unit, I attended the Protestant service, where I had my first glimpse of a very remarkable man. He was Chaplain Franklin, a Georgia Baptist, who concealed beneath his joking and homely exterior a fine mind and a heart of gold. I never suspected when I heard him preach that day what a remarkable man he was. From his sermon you could tell that he was a born talker, as contrasted with an orator, who knew how best to appeal to the average soldier by a skillful blend of religion and good humor. In

appearance he was of middle height, rather stout, and partly bald. He seemed old for a chaplain. I later learned he was 42, with a family of five,

During this period we were going on problems almost daily. Nearly all of them were directed at Hill 424 and the village of Altavilla on the side of the hill, where the third Bn had encountered so much opposition in the actual combat operation. For us the problems were easy, since we had the radios mounted in jeeps, one going forward and one remaining in the rear. One day though, they changed the plan and we had to carry the set. We were due for a wild night.

We had moved from the creek bed and had spent a few days guarding 5th Army hq. While there, Static, Grider (the platoon sgt.) and I took the jeep and made an abortive attempt to shanghai some 5 in 1 rations, as we were then eating Cs. We were almost successful. Grider was standing on top of the fence around the ration dump, reaching to grab a box when he leaned too far and fell, bringing the rations down on top of him. About that time the guard woke up and began to investigate, so we had to make a hurried withdrawal.

At any rate, we left here and moved to another area, which happened to be almost in the backyard of an Italian farmer. He was none too pleased to see us, but became resigned to the inevitable. His wife, however, a big husky solid woman, was not so philosophical. Though her disapproval was expressed in Italian we had no doubt that it *was* disapproval. We all had tents pitched, and wanting to sleep comfortably, we began to attack the farmer's hayloft for mattress material. He couldn't see eye to eye with us on the subject. One lad who could speak Italian learned that, before our coming, fifty percent of the farmer's earnings had gone to Mussolini. So we told the old boy we were merely taking Mussolini's half of the hay.

It was here that Static bought a young pig which we proceeded to slaughter and butcher, in preparation for the royal feast we had the next day. The decision to buy the pig came after we had witnessed (over our stew-filled messkits) the sight of the officers devouring chicken. We came to the conclusion that we too would live like kings when we could.

Shortly after this, the Colonel, who had seen our point, bought a steer for the whole company.

Among the other attractions of Little Caesar's backyard was a small brick building where we deposited our radio equipment, and, much to our later sorrow, where we sat holding a bull session on evening. I say sorrow, because the next day everyone, including the chaplain, had in his possession an innumerable crop of tenacious fleas, which refused to be dislodged. Mine very inconsiderately kept me awake all night, until liberal dosto of DDT powder finally eliminated them.

In the morning we took off walking on an all day problem. Shortly after we had begun the heavens opened and the rain descended. Just in case we weren't wet enough, we were forced to ford a hip-deep creek in order to attain our objective. When the objective had been reached, we

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set the radio up on a very damp and leafy hillside, and gave an effective simulation of digging in. Meanwhile, the rain was steadily increasing, turning the already horrid Italian roads into veritable quagmires. The problem ended at 1630 hours, but the trucks which were scheduled to haul back our radio equipment had not yet arrived. The bad roads had delayed them. Unfortunate as always, the rifle companies and part of our own had to walk back, but I wasn't about to begin walking again with that fifty pound radio (being the junior member of the radio station, naturally I was elected to carry the heaviest part) so I waited. Eventually after darkness had set, in Willy Green arrived with the radio jeep, and we bundled ourselves and our equipment into it; the chaplain we installed in the front seat. We moved in a convoy with the others commencing the most memorable jeep ride I have ever taken. The rain was now descending in sheets. Fortunately I had a raincoat, but since it had been used earlier for shielding the radio, I was thoroughly soaked already. As I sat miserably huddled in the back seat, the lightning flashes gave me an occasional glimpse of the tortuous, narrow rutted road we were travelling, and the high banks on each side. Driving that night called for skill of the highest order and Willy had it. We rocked and bucked; skidded and slid; sped and crawled. And then came a crisis. The stream we had waded earlier was now a raging torrent and we had to get the jeep across. The storm was at its height; every lightning flash showed barren trees standing out starkly against the black night, looking for all the world like a Thomas Hart Benton painting. It was a grimly fascinating sight.

Lt. Francis and his Pioneer crew were directing the trucks across the shallowest spot in the stream; the lieutenant himself stood in the middle of the torrent, shouting directions, and looking rather fantastic. After we had succeeded in crossing, the worst of our trip was over, and the ride back to camp was comparatively smooth sailing. It was as miserable as I ever expected to be, cold, wet, hungry, mad, tired and several other things. My only desire was to crawl between those warm woolen blankets on top of that nice soft straw. But here again I, and several others, were doomed to disappointment. The rain and inundated the farmer's backyard, and some of our tents were now merely canvas covered puddles. Static and I, after looking at ours which wasn't as bad off as some, dragged another bale of straw from the barn, piled it about a foot deep on top of the wet straw, pulled off our clothes and went to sleep. I was beginning to realize what endless misery and discomfort would mean. Formerly, if I was wet or cold I could always look forward to getting home to a warm fire and dry clothes. This time, I was lucky enough to come back to a pup tent and half-dry blankets. But there were days coming when the end of one day of utter misery, weariness, and cold brought only the prospect of another day which could easily be worse. It is this endlessness and lack of hope that makes the life of the infantry on the line so wretched. Finally even misery becomes habitual and can be laugh-

ed at and joked about—rather bitterly, to be sure. Also, one develops sort of a numbness and deadening of the senses to anything but the primitive means of existing and fighting. Even the habit of speech becomes forced and halting. The lips seem to require special direction to be moved. Everything turns inward.

II—THE NAPLES AREA

Our next move took us about eight miles north of Naples, where we bivouacked in a large apple orchard. It was early October, and the trees were full. It was an apple-eater's paradise. We had come through Naples and other small towns, including Battapaglia, which had been completely flattened in a downpour, and thus weren't able to see much of the countryside. However, we did begin to realize that the mountains were all over the place, not merely around Salerno. In the orchard Rowell, Cozby, Frank Guerriero and I chose a likely spot and pitched a four man pup tent.

In this area, as in others, we went on problems, took stamina runs (I did when they could find me) and did calisthenics. Passes to Naples were being issued, and I eagerly took one when it was offered to me. They were only from 1 to 6:30 in the afternoon so there wasn't much opportunity for sightseeing. Parts of the town along the waterfront had been severely bombed, and though the rest of the town had suffered, it was far from being a total ruin. In the few hours I had I walked around the main part of the town, just looking. At that time very few of the modern shops on the Via Roma had re-opened, and those which had, had very little to offer, at very high prices. Even then, as later, there was no shortage of children wandering the streets, asking for chewing gum, cigarettes, or "caramelli." The bootleggers were abundant, with bottles of cheap cognac or cherry brandy hidden under their coats or carried in a small bag. They were especially numerous in the area where we parked our trucks, the square bounded by the Duomo (cathedral), the royal Palace, and the opera house.

In the course of my wanderings, I entered a church, of St. Anthony, on one of the side streets. While I was looking around, a priest who I discovered was the pastor, beckoned me into his office in the rear of the church. He had with him an Italian boy of perhaps 21, who could speak some English and another priest. An indirect conversation began, and I soon decided that I could do more good with my meager Latin knowledge than the boy was doing with his English. So in a strange mixture of Latin, Italian and English, we had a congenial chat. They told me about the effects of the continuous American bombings, the damage done to some churches (including slight damage to his own), the poverty of the Italian people and their hatred of Mussolini, and many other things. The pastor, a short, dark, enthuasaistic man, seemed full of energy and cheer; he was laying plans for an order of church sacristans he was planning to found after the war.

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In the ensuing months I was able to see him three or four times, being greeted each time very affectionately. On one occasion in March 1944, I went to confession, in Italian to him, and later served his Mass and received communion. The last time we met was in July, after I had been wounded, and just before we came to Southern France. Rome had been liberated and he showed his happiness by kissing me on both cheeks. I remember one discussion we had, in which I tried to explain the position of the American Negro. He told me that several had visited his church, and all were very reverent and devout. He could not understand why they for them, saying they were no good. When I tried to compare them with our Negroes, he denied that there was any comparison.

Back in the apple orchard, it looked as though romance was blooming. On day two young girls, about 16 and 21, came around soliciting laundry. Frank Gletterio, since he could speak Italian, was our interpreter. Frank was a good looking young lad from the Bronx, with a pleasant personality, and immediately made a hit with Flora, the youngest of the two girls. Flora had a very perfect and beautiful young face, set off by long wavy black hair, and she was just developing to maturity. Both girls were quiet and aloof until we came to know them well enough to joke with them. After their first trip, Flora's mother, a small old lady, always came with them to make the rounds. Frank and Charlie Cozby visited them at their house a few times, where they all joined with the rest of the large family, in singing English and Italian songs. From them we learned that in Italy the really respectable young girl never goes out without a chaperone, and that their idea of a big evening is to have a boyfriend over to the house for the evening. The family, incidentally, actually lived in Naples, but was staying in the country for the apple picking season. Frank and Flora got on famously, he teasing and joking with her, and she always having a girlish comeback. Tony Hernandez meanwhile had been making some headway with Maria. After a stay of about three weeks the time came for us to leave the orchard and move north, because it was just about time to go back to the line. The whole family was there to see us off; we all stood up in our jeep seats watching Tony kiss Maria goodbye. This in turn brought Frank a lot of kidding, since we wanted to know why he hadn't followed Tony's example. Finally he told us that he had already kissed her goodbye the day before. So that was that—apparently the end of an interlude.

Before our leaving here, though, the radio section had undergone a slight change. Stratton, our section leader, while an excellent radio operator, had become more and more indifferent to his duties as head of the section. One day he stayed in bed while the rest of us were out on a problem, and this caused his downfall. He and Lt. Ashcraft didn't get along very well to begin with (very few people got along well with Ashcraft), so he went to the orderly room and requested a bust. I later learned that he had been given the choice of doing this, or being busted

for inefficiency. The other noncoms in the section were Cozby, a T-4 and Rowell, a T-5. Ordinarily there would be no question about Cozby being the new chief, but in this case there were special circumstances. Charlie was a married man with a baby, and was a very nervous, high-strung fellow. During the Salerno fighting he was nearly broken himself for refusing to get out of a foxhole. He was just afraid, that's all, and he knew and admitted it to me in private. I sympathized with him, especially as he was always taking a riding from Static, who seemed to have no end of volume, and who I soon learned was one of the most habitual, if harmless, liars I ever met. So, Lt. Ashcraft made George Rowell section chief. I was very pleased with the choice, because I liked him very much, and knew he was a cool and fair person. From Mississippi, fair haired, but getting a little balk, he was 26 years old. He had an endless line of interesting stories about his life, and an infectious laugh. He occasionally let his temper come to the surface, in which case he was indeed wrathful. Cozby, if he was jealous, gave no sign of it, and congratulated Rowell on his good fortune. Stratton was shortly after promoted again to T-5. Static managed to wangle a driver's job for himself, becoming the second radio driver.

While on the outside, the appearance of the section seemed to be one big happy family, I found that beneath the surface there were some jealousies and animosities, petty or otherwise. After his reduction, Stratton, who was a little vain, and may have had some idea that he was indispensable, remarked to me a few times that many in the various line companies still called him sergeant, and looked upon him as the actual section leader. Static was Stratton's chief crony, and once, after Rowell had made sergeant, told me how Stratton's generosity had first made Rowell a T-5 (he intimated that he himself could have made it) and later, in Africa, kept Rowell from being busted. I later learned very different and much more plausible stories about both incidents from others in the platoon.

Static was quite a character. Formerly a medic, he had joined the section and learned radio chiefly through Stratton's sponsorship. According to Rowell, who could have been a bit wrong when he said it, it was Static's lavish spending of money back in the States that earned him Stratton's friendship; they had always gone around together. Static could put up a good front; if you let him he could talk you out of anything you owned. I once gave him a good lighter which I had received from home; later I learned that he had traded it to a British officer for a couple of bottles of gin and small powerful generator. He was just the man to sell Ice Boxes in Alaska. Though he always denied he could ever be more than a Pfc, in reality he was very anxious to get some stripes. When Rowell was chief his chances were nil, for there was no love lost between them. Static had backed a losing horse. Realizing this, he made

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no objection when Lt. Ashcraft (who didn't get along with Static either) converted him from radio operator to truck driver. Driving a truck is a snap job when the division is fighting—at least that was the case in Italy, for due to the mountainous terrain they had to remain several miles behind the lines. If nothing else, Static was an opportunist, so he accepted meekly. As I said before, he was always taking sly digs at Cozby for his nervousness. Personally, I got along with him fairly well, though he could get a little unbearable at times. Frank Guerriero and I, since we had just come to the outfit recently were not involved in any of these minor feuds. Werner, the other driver, was a short heavy-set man from Wisconsin, a former logger. I used to enjoy riding one day with him, when he would tell me all the dirt and scandal about Static (he told me once that, in spite of his blowing at Cozby, Static himself was so slouch at running for cover), and then the following day, while with Static, listen to him make condescending remarks about Werner.

After leaving the orchard, we stayed for a week in another area, which was close enough to the line for an order to be issued that we would strike our tents every morning, to prevent being spotted from the air. This we took with fairly good grace, till one day, a field artillery unit moved in across the road and proceeded to set up large pyramidal tents quite in the open.

III—TO THE FRONTLINES

However, these minor troubles soon became a thing of the past, for the inevitable time for us to hit the line arrived. One afternoon, after getting ready all day, we loaded on 6 by 6's and began the journey to the front. It was a dismal rainy day, and as night came on the weather grew worse. After quite a long ride—it had been slow since we were in convoy—we dismounted and began our walk; I use the word loosely, for towards morning it was more of a stagger. I was carrying the radio, which weighed 47 pounds, my M-1 rifle, a gas mask, and wearing a heavy overcoat. Naturally the load didn't get any lighter through the night. We were on a main highway, but soon began to cut cross-country. Before us, through the darkness, loomed several large and forbidding mountains. As we were walking, a battery of Long Toms suddenly belched forth into the night, scaring everyone out of his wits, and causing several to jump for cover. The distance we covered couldn't have been more than ten miles, but because of our zig-zagging, and also because the officers leading the column got lost several times, we didn't reach our destination till six in the morning. The fields were very muddy, and walking was difficult. Everyone was tired and tempers were very short. John Brumley, in particular, got on everyone's nerves by his continual bitching and crabb-ing, but I think we all secretly sympathized with him. Towards morning, much of our march was uphill. The nearer we got to our positions, the worse the mud grew. Our halts grew more frequent and prolonged. From

our viewpoint, the situation seemed normal snafu. On one particular narrow muddy pathway, after at least one company had traversed it, someone stepped on a bouncing betsy anti-personnel mine, and caught a few pieces of shrapnel in his rectum. By the time we reached this far, we were all dead tired—it was about four-thirty a.m.—and a little disorganized.

After a long wait when we sat on the wet ground and dozed off in spite of our chilliness, we started off again, passing between two high ridges down a rutted, narrow road, which was a sea of mud. At the end of this little canyon we came to a small swiftly-flowing creek, which we had to cross on a none too firm log which was being used as a bridge. We were relieving the 7th regiment of the Third Division, who were still there, leaving very little room for us on the small piece of land formed by the curving of the creek. The position had been picked to prevent being spotted; there were hills all around it, and a plane would have to fly straight up the narrow gap formed by the hills to spot us. (One day two planes did just this, and later a few shells fell in, but didn't do much damage). The rain had stopped, but kept off on on during the day. The legend of Sun-ny Italy soon became the object of many sarcastic remarks, which continued all winter; it never did stop raining. FIGHT 51 6

Rowell and I picked out a spot which we hoped would drain away most of the water, pitched our tent and camouflaged it—and then tore it down. We were told by Lt. Ashcraft that the radio section would operate at the rear CP about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile back up the way we had come, across the creek and through all that mud again. Also, I had just carried two armfuls of straw down a very steep hill, and was highly PO'd at the whole idea. However, the idea was to operate the radio from the jeep, where we could use the dynamotor, and thus avoid using the hand-cranked generator for our output power. We had to begin a 24-hour watch immediately. So Rowell and I, Stratton and Cozby, dug our sleeping hole, covered them with our shelter halves, and prepared to be miserable. I should explain that we were really the lucky battalion in the regiment, because we were in reserve. The other two had to go on far past where we halted, and relieved two battalions of the Seventh high up on Mt. Camino; we later found out what a hell of a mountain it really was. We were unhappy enough to suit men, though, just as we were. After one night in our wet holes, alternating on set, we moved about 200 yards to a cave where the rear C.P. was located; the radio was dismounted from the jeep and brought there too, for some shells landing nearby convinced us that safety was preferable to the labor saved by using the jeep's dynamotor. It's fortunate we moved when we did, for the next day a shell landed directly in the hole Rowell and I had slept in, and later a shell fragment hit one of the jeep's tires. There were only about 10 of us altogether at this rear CP, the rest of the company, including Frank, who was the battalion commander's radio operator, were down at the creek.

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Lt. Lowry, the assistant operations officer kept us all amused with his wisecracks and stories. He was a born wit, and knew how to treat enlisted men on an equal basis, man to man. Very few officers I've met have this quality. In a few days the time came for us to go up the mountain and relieve the first battalion. Naturally the move was to be at night. After we were all packed ready to go, for some forgotten reason Cozby and I were to stay behind till the next morning, and come up by ourselves. Since I wasn't anxious to begin stumbling around in the dark, this suited me fine. We went back and went to bed.

The following day we rolled our packs again, and piled in Werner's jeep to go up to the C.P. After some rough up-hill, deep-mud driving, Werner reached a fairly good road and drove us up to a farmhouse situated about 500 yards off the road, and very much in the open, with the mountain about a mile directly in front of it. Here we learned that this building didn't house the communications section, but only the forward supply dump, run by Lt. Haaland. So, since a jeep could go no further, Cozby and I shouldered our heavy packs and headed for the mountain, following Sgt. Morrow, the sergeant major who had volunteered to take us up to the C.P., since he was going himself.

We proceeded cautiously scattered out, since we were in danger of observation from the peak of the mountain, which at some points was controlled by the Germans. We went through open fields, crossed a creek which ran through a small ravine, circled haystacks and scattered buildings (one of which housed M Company's mortar section) until we reached the actual foot of Camino. Then our work began. The climb was steep, there was heavy foilage wet from recent rains, which soaked us pretty well; our rifles became cumbersome, our packs like lead weights. At the end of a half hours climbing we were both wringing with sweat. Then to our disgust we learned that the radio section was not here; that they were located back down the mountain and far over to the left; headquarters had been divided into forward and rear C.P.'s and we were at the wrong one. After resting and heartily cussing Sgt. Morrow, we started back down the hill. As we were re-crossing the open fields, two German Messerschmidts suddenly zoomed out of nowhere directly over our heads. The silver streaks came so fast that we didn't even think to take our M-1s off our shoulder till they were far out of range; little good they would have done anyway.

When we arrived back at Lt. Haaland's dump, Werner was still there, so we were re-directed, and took off down the road in his jeep to the actual home of the communications platoon.

After driving through more nice slimy mud, we came to the place; it was located in an old, rather large building, in which some Italian civilians were still living. The switchboard and radio were both set up here, the former down the cellar and the latter in a room on the top floor, housed in the same building was the battalion aid station, and since they

had a large red cross displayed on the roof, it was actually a breach of international law for us to be in the same place. However, nothing was said. I never did acutally understand why, when all the rest of the battalion was forward, we remained back at this house. It may have been for convenience and protection to the switchboard, but it extended wire lines much farther, and threw an extra burden on the linemen. I think Lt. Ashcraft's timidity was the main factor. FIGHT52 6

Cozby and I went upstairs to the room the section occupied, where we found the rest of the gang. The radio was open, and setting in a corner; the others had arranged their beds on the floor around the room, so we did too. Our meals were C-rations, which we heated over small cans half-full of gasoline. These did the job, but threw a good bit of smudge in doing it. We had no cause for complaint, since most of the others were sleeping outside in the damp ground, and often had their rations cold, as we learned when we joined them. Since we had wire communications with regiment, all we had to do on the radio was call in every hour to check. The rest of the time we spent writing, reading, talking, and wishing for mail.

Every day a few shells landed close by to liven up proceedings. And quite often, Frank, Nick and I, being the privates, were called upon to run messages to the C.P. up on the mountain, or to guide someone there. Getting up there and back was a good half day's work. First there was a long gently rising approach to the mountain, runniing through a ravine; then, after a steep climb there was an open clearing of about 300 yards which had to be crossed, before one came under protection of the hill. Several persons were hit by shell fragments in crossing here. A narrow muddy path, but level, followed for about 600 yards, and then the real climb began—almost straight up. Only by clinging to roots, small tree trunks and wire lines running upwards could it be scaled. The C.P. was reached after about 300 yards of this climbing.

IV—MIDNIGHT REQUISITIONING

One evening at dusk, Lt. Ashcraft called Cpl. Bobby Cecil and me into the crowded, dark half-stable, half-room, where the wire section slept. He told us that there were some signal flares down at regiment which were urgently needed and that we were to go down after them. Neither of us had been there before, but it would be easy to locate, he said, since they were on the banks of the same stream we had left, only a little further down. After trying unsuccessfully to talk him out of the idea, we got ready to go.

It was raining even harder than usual, so we put on our raincoats; we hadn't been issued galoshes, so we wore just shoes and leggins, and set out on our miserable journey. Bob had a flashlight, but we hesitated to use it for fear of observation, so we went off down the road, stumbling into each and every mudhole. In the blackness, it didn't take us long to

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get lost. Soon we found ourselves walking across a field without the slightest ideas as to where we were going. Slowly we felt our way along, talking to each other to keep contact. Suddenly Bob wasn't in front of me. "Where are you?" I called, and from somewhere below me he answered, "Down here in the mud." He had nonchalantly stepped off a ten foot bank. More cautiously I got myself down beside him.

On a little further we discovered a road, but we were on another bank about twelve feet above it. I let myself down on some vines growing out of the side of the bank. That is, I let myself halfway down; then the vines pulled out and I fell—the rest of the way. I caught Bob as he came down, and we started out again. Soon we were blindly staggering down a poor excuse for a road in mud which actually reached almost to our knees. Every step was a battle; with each step our feet got a little wetter, and more mud crept into our shoes over the leggin tops. Along this road off on a hillside to the left, we located someone living in pup tents, but they were from a chemical mortar outfit, and didn't have the faintest idea where regiment was. So we went on, through the mud. Finally by pure luck, we ran onto a regimental wire team which had been out checking a line, and were on their way back. They volunteered to guide us, so we joined them. In spite of our being lost, we found that we had been heading in the right general direction.

Our troubles weren't over yet, though, because the wiremen took us back only to where the switchboard was located, and where they stayed. From them we got some vague directions about finding Message Center, where we had to go to find the flares. Again we started out, following the creek. We reached the kitchen (regiment was far enough back to set one up) and past it a short ways we located the message center chief. We woke him up, got the flares, exchanged bitches and started back. On going only a few yards, we ran into Schubert and Szezch, battalion runners who stayed at regiment. It was about midnight then and still raining, so we asked them what they were doing. They poured forth a tale of woe. In an apparently choice spot, they had pitched their tent, but the rain that night had swollen the river; it rose, and took their tent right with it, and soaked them in the bargain; now they were seeking a place to sleep. Bob and I, thinking that we could get something besides flares out of this deal, suggested that we all go over and reconnoiter the kitchen; and George and Szezch could also sleep under cover of the tent flap which protected the officers mess. So while they were fixing their beds Bob and I slipped into the pyramidal tent which housed the kitchen proper. There was a cook inside but he was fast asleep. Both of us snagged cans of milk, some tomato juice, a big can of pineapple juice, a couple of loaves of bread, and a large can of cocoa, the biggest treat of all. Burdened down with these goods we started on our way back. By now the moon was out and we could find our way easier; but we still had to wade

through the deep mud, heavy with our ill-gotten gains. About two in the morning we arrived back at the building, plenty worn out, and immediately hit the hay.

Next morning we gave the flares to the lieutenant—they were never used—and proceeded to enjoy the spoils. There was one disappointment, though. The can of cocoa turned out to be full of book matches.

After about a week, Cozby and Stratton decided that the top floor was too liable to catch a passing shell, so they moved downstairs. The rest of us weren't any braver than they, but we figured the place was pretty safe. As it turned out, we were right; two days after we left the building, a shell came right in through the wall of Cozby's new room.

WorldWarVeterans.org End Part One

William D. Broderick of Arlington, Va., sent in his story of his experiences during the Italian campaign, stating that he wrote these observations in the Spring and Summer of 1945. He writes: "I was wounded in the leg on May 31, 1945 at Anzio during the drive to capture Rome, and rejoined the 36th in time to take part in the invasion of Southern France; I stayed with the Division as it moved north through the Rhone Valley into the Vosges Mountains until, in October, I again contracted hepatitis and returned to the hospital—this time for four months. I was evacuated to England and later reassigned to the Air Corps, and spent the final months of the war at an air field outside Paris. I have not attempted, 36 years later, to complete the memoir in any detail because, although I have vivid memories of much of it, the immediacy and freshness of a 20-year-old's account would be lacking."

Broderick's story is detailed and rather lengthy and your editor is dividing it into three parts. Parts II and III will be run in subsequent issues.



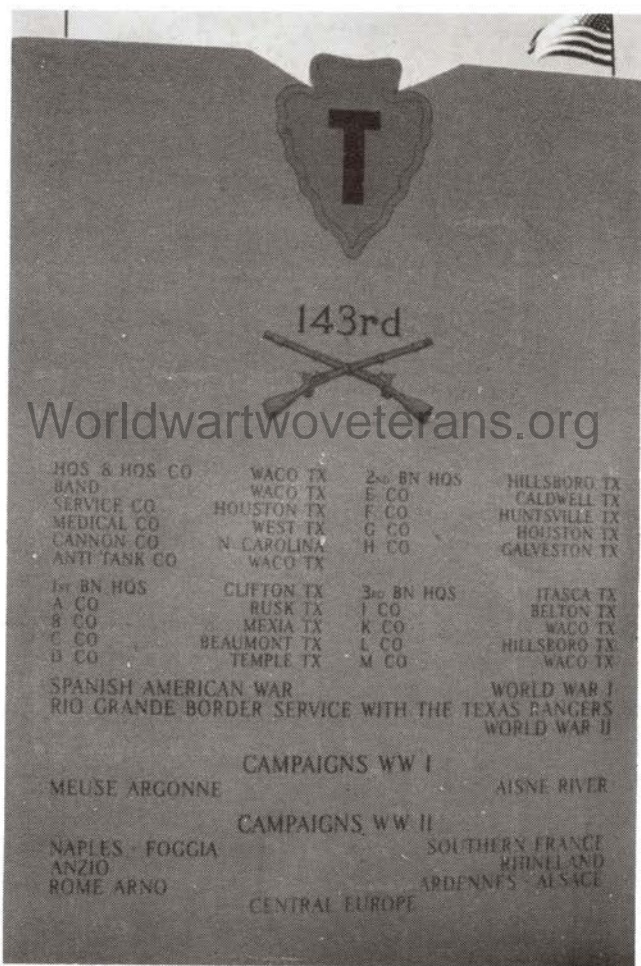
NATO, 155mm Howitzer M109



A most prolific contributor to the QUARTERLY is Ross Doughty, pictured as he appeared during WWII while serving the 36th Division G.I. See page 42, "Simple Monument."

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Obverse (front) of 143rd Infantry Regiment Memorial, Fort Fisher, Waco, Texas. Photo by Richard M. Burrage

Reverse of 143rd Infantry Regiment Memorial, Fort Fisher, Waco, Texas. Photo by Richard M. Burrage.