

Twenty-nine days ( December 16 to January 16 ) We left Bastogne and most of us will probably never see Bastogne again. On January 16, CCB (Combat Command B ) in a raging blizzard, left Bastogne. That night we bivouaced at so and so then pausing at Metz for only thirty minutes, we continued onto the area of Fifteenth Corps in the Seventh Army where we were firing for the 71st Infantry because their Artillery Units did not come on the same ship. In a period of 30 days, Combat Command B had been assigned to the Third, First and Seventh Armies.

Every Unit in the area covered itself with glory, and no one division was the whole show. Combat Command B did not win the battle of Bastogne alone, but many military students believe that without our armor, Bastogne would have fallen to the Germans immediately. They would have been free to control the vital highways leading into Bastogne, free to smash their way west to create, perhaps, another "Bastogne" elsewhere in Belgium. The importance of Combat Command B's effort is already a matter of record in military history.

For Combat Command B, the credit due the three task forces of Desobry-Hustead, Cherry and O'Hara cannot fully be measured. When the chips were down, those forces reacted magnificently. Not to be overlooked is the first-rate support received from the sharpshooters of the 705th Tank-Destroyer Battalion, the superb 420th Field Artillery, tough Ninth Armored fighters, the dead-eye 609th Tank - Destroyers, the tiny group of stragglers from many other units, and most of all, the help obtained from those rugged paratroopers of the 101st Airborne Division. Of the troopers, Colonel Roberts had this to say, "Those 101st men were absolutely tops -- they were taught to fight surrounded -- and very few Divisions could have accomplished the same success. Their Officers and the staff of the Division were superior in every respect. They didn't scare easily.

20 January 1945 - Motor marched from Metz, France at 0710 hours, arriving at tactical bivouac area at Farschviller, France at 1345 hours, which is  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile West of Bourig, Germany. Distance traveled 39.5 miles. Weather is cold with light snow. Roads covered with snow and ice. We immediatly went into a firing position and the forward observer began adjusting artillery fire on the targets he thought he might need. He's a young Second Lieutenant and I think this is his first combat experience. The 71st Infantry is to begin attacking tomorrow, our firing Battery is supporting the 71st and the Second Lieutenant is anxious to see some action. The 71st Infantry needs some combat experience also.

We will be supporting the 71st Infantry until 11 February 1945.

21 January to 11 February 1945 - Our gun position is just outside the town of Farschviller, France. The Captain picked a house for himself and me that is occupied by an elderly couple named Maria and Jacob. Jacob is a retired Railroad Worker. They own a goat that they keep in a small shed and from whom they receive their daily supply of milk. For breakfast every day Maria makes me a bowl of warm milk and dark rye bread cut into small cubes. The first morning Jacob offered me a glass of Schnaps (a clear liquor made from potatoes). I guess, for him it was an eye opener and a good way to start the day, but for me, I consumed it gradually and from then on I thanked him but declined the offer. The Captain slept on a full bed with a full feather bed cover and every evening Maria would fill the metal bed warmer with hot water and place it under the bed covers. I slept on a lounge which is a long couch with no back and having a headrest at one end. Just like the one we had in our home in Manayunk. I keep thinking that the one in Manayunk was wider, but I was just a small boy and it only seemed that way. The lounge was placed in the kitchen and Jacob used it to take afternoon naps. To conserve electricity Maria and Jacob used a gas-lamp so we supplied them with small containers of fuel for their lamp; Every time the howitzers fired Jacob would ask me, "Edward, is das Boche?" and I would reply, "No Jacob, das is niche Boche, Das is American." and he would say, "Oh! American.



22 January 1945 - Since the forward observer was new, the Captain picked a house for him , just two houses away from our house.

Gun crews and the other sections would alternate and spend a day or two in one of the homes across the street. That would give them the opportunity to shave, shower and change their clothes. The young children who lived in the homes across the street would entertain our soldiers by making small boxes from fancy post-cards, punch holes along the edges and connect them with wool yarn. That and other handcraft.

Farschviller is less than five miles from the German border, as a result, every time the border changes, the language changes. Jacob and Maria speak German, their children (now the parents) speak French and their children (the children now) speak German.

This morning the Captain and I were standing on the red brick side - walk in front of Jacobs house. He was with us. Pointing to the damaged sidewalk, he said, "Edward, all is kaput." Well, probably one of our tanks was forced to go on the sidewalk since the streets are so narrow. Pointing down the street to the corner house with the second floor wall knocked out and the bath-tub exposed, I said to Jacob, "all is kaput" Well, that's war and I'd say, "Jacob. you're a lucky guy if all you're worried about is your side walk".

25 January 1945 - When the gun crews weren't firing we all used that time to scrape the Bastogne whitewash off the vehicles (used as camouflage in the snow) for now we are in the mud. We also found a French coal miner's locker room and shower room nearby. I can't wait to take advantage of that opportunity. It's been almost a month since my last shower.

#### A LESSON ON FRENCH CUSTOMS

An elderly American absent-mindedly arrived at French Customs at a Paris airport and fumbled for his passport.

"You have been to France before Monsieur?", the customs officer asked sarcastically.

The ancient Yank admitted that he had been to France before.

"Then you should know enough to have your passport ready for inspection", snapped the irate official.

The American said that the last time he came to France he did not have to show his passport.

"Impossible, old man. You Americans always have to show your passport on arrival in France".

The old American gave the Frenchman a long hard look and said, "I assure you young man, That when I came ashore on Omaha Beach in Normandy on D-Day in 1944 there was no Frenchman anywhere on the beach asking to see my passport!"

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The coal miner's locker room was a very large room with row upon row of ~~high~~ metal lockers and benches in front of them. The ceiling was at least ~~XXXX~~<sup>thirty</sup> feet or more in height with metal frames holding up a glass roof. Each locker had a rope attached to it that went up to a pulley attached to the metal framing at the ceiling. At the other end of the rope was a three or four pronged hook used to ~~XXXXXX~~<sup>hang</sup> the miners working clothes to air dry. ~~XXXXX XXXXXXXXXX~~<sup>with XXXX enough</sup> ~~XXXXX~~. The shower room was connected to the locker room ~~XXXX~~<sup>showers</sup> ~~XXXXXX~~ to accommodate all the miners and all the G.I.'s .

As the battle of the Ardennes wore on the Germans began diversionary attacks in Alsace. They were not in great strength but because the Seventh Army was weakened ~~XX NXX XXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXX~~ in that area the situation had to be carefully watched. That's ~~XXX~~<sup>reason</sup> the Battalion Artillery was sent to support the 71st Infantry Division.

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I took a shower in a mine. Not ~~as~~ certain if it was a coal mine or a mineral mine. But we went to this large building, about twenty or thirty feet high with row after row of wood benches. In front of the benches were row after row of metal lockers, two high. To each locker <sup>handle</sup> was tied a rope that went up to a pulley attached to the ceiling with three or four hooks at the end of rope. On the hooks were the miner's clothes hanging to dry. ~~and~~ Of course we didn't use the hooks, but next to the locker room was the shower room, with rows and also with high ceilings and concrete walls.



28 February 1945 - 10th Armored and 94th Infantry Divisions, which had been quietly assembled in jump-off positions at Nennig-Tettingen, 12 miles southwest of Saarburg, launched a co-ordinated attack. Our assault was preceded by a ten-battalion artillery and Time on Target preparation, the first fifteen minutes of which were concentrated upon enemy Command Posts and communications installations.

Later, Prisoners of War stated this blasting had created chaos in their lines, killing regimental and battalion commanders and disrupting wire communications. We were in total blackout. That meant we had to paint out all Division Markings on the vehicles and tanks and remove the Division Patches from our uniforms. All phone and radio communications was silenced. My Captain was in the first halftrack and I was in the last Jeep, but we couldn't use the phone or radio.

Attacking in two enveloping prongs, we and 94th Infantry Division made rapid gains against scattered resistance. More than fifty towns and villages among them Saarburg, were seized in the first two days of the advance. Immediately the 10th Armored struck on tottering Trier.

1 March to 15 March -

In mid morning as the light snow flurries ended and the warm sun turned the roads and fields into clinging mud, the 10th Armored with 376th Infantry were ready to storm the important communications and supply center of the city Trier. By noon, Combat Command A and Combat Command B had swept into the outskirts of the city from the south, captured five strongly defended villages and hundreds of prisoners of war. Combat Command B alone took 800 prisoners.

This is where we captured a busload of German soldiers. While the soldiers were being marched out and searched, I went into the bus and searched it for weapons. To my pleasant surprise, I spotted a black holster on one of the seats. I quickly opened it and noticed it was a P-38 in perfect condition with two loaded cartridge clips. I quickly shoved it under my jacket just as if nothing happened and said nothing. I later learned if you were in Paris you could get 1500 dollars from a soldier in the Air Force for such a gun, because they did not routinely come across these "souvenirs,"

On the hills surrounding Trier were a number of German camps where over 50,000 Allied Prisoners and slave laborers, chiefly Russian and Polish, had existed in horrible squalor and starvation.

Later, these hellholes, with their German signs still untouched, were used by our outfits as its PW cages, for the tens of Thousands of German prisoners were processed through these same camps. Before the Germans knew what happened, the 10th Armored Division had tanks all around them, but we were after the two bridges. Our Combat Commander was informed that Trier was to be hit that night by the entire Division. At 2200 on March 1, we darted towards the city. Despite murderous enemy fire, the entire Division is moving in for the kill at the important communications and supply center of Trier. While we are racing for the northern and southern bridges, Col. Richardson decided to check the northern bridge first. When the team arrived at the bridge, they found it was already blown, whereupon Richardson dispatched the other team post haste to get the other bridge. When they got to the site, they saw that the bridge was still intact. They radioed Richardson, "Bridge



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Intact. Am receiving small arms fire." Richardson gave them instructions, dropped the phone and dashed to the span to direct its capture. He sent a

platoon of tanks and a platoon of infantry speeding across to the western side of the bridge. They expected the structure to blow up in their faces, but death took another holiday, fortunately, and they safely reached the other side where they tackled a Major and the five Germans who, too late, were hurrying with detonator caps and an exploder. The Great 2000 year-old Homer Bridge was ours!!

Because of the speed with which we were able to capture Trier, our combat operation was extended to include crossing the Moselle river to launch an armored drive north to capture the city Wittlich. We, with Combat Command A, rumbled over the Homer bridge, wheeled eastward and by **March 8** had battled our way to within six miles of Wittlich. The weather again was so bad ---rain and fog --- that tactical aircraft for the second day could provide no help; but we scarcely needed it, for the Germans were in a state of confusion. Germans in great numbers sometimes numbering in the hundreds, streamed from hills, woods, and villages to surrender. Combat Command A sealed off Wittlich from the east while we barrelled ahead and on **March 10** fought our way into Wittlich. From Wittlich we went ahead an additional ten miles to Bullay in an attempt to seize the bridge there, but the Germans had already blown it. We must have had the luck of the Irish because we were able to snatch a column of 50 German vehicles, near the Moselle river containing ammunition and other supplies. **On March 12** the mission was ended and we returned to Trier for a four-day rest. During that time we visited the old Roman Coliseum, the Porta Nigra Arch and other historic Roman remains in and around the once-beautiful city of Trier. All the men found a city rich in historical and religious lore. The city, known to the French as Treves, is considered Germany's oldest and contains more important Roman remains than any other place in northern Europe. Its oldest and best known remains include piers and buttresses of the Homer bridge over the Moselle river said to date from 28 B.C. Combat Command B and the reserve Command rumbled over the centuries-old bridge built by Augustus Caesar's Tenth Legion. At last we also had the opportunity to take a hot shower, a change of clean, dry clothes, shave and even get our hair trimmed. One of our Sergeants has a pair of manual hair

clippers and a set of hair trimming tools and he is a darned good barber, I'll have to admit. We also have the opportunity to clean our firearms and the men who are members of a section must clean their halftrack or tank and the weapons mounted on it.

16 March 1945 our brief vacation has ended. One of the most successful and spectacular battles of the war was over. The 10th Armored's combat performance in this operation was eminently successful. Detailed planning, high morale and fighting ability all contributed to the significant victory in the Saar-Moselle Triangle and in the capture of Trier. In a signed statement at Nurnberg later, Marshal Herman Jodl declared that, the capture of Trier was one of the three most important phases of the entire war. The other two, they believe, were the successful Normandy Invasion and the speedy crossing of the Rhine river.

Trier and all the heavily fortified sections of the West Wall around it ----- all were captured. We were now able to go southeast and get behind the pill boxes in the West Wall, or make a dash for the Rhine river before the retreating Germans got there. General Patton's orders were "Go for the Rhine". After we, with the 376th Infantry Division, captured Trier, General Patton put his whole Third Army into "Fast Forward Drive" for the Rhine River. 12th Armored teamed up with 94th Infantry, 4th Armored with the 5th Infantry, each team with different objectives but all going East for the Rhine River.

A few months back in the fall with all the rain, the skies were overcast and the ground was soft and muddy. During the winter it was the snow and ice, fog and wind and freezing weather. The Air Force couldn't give us Air-support and the tanks had to keep to the hard surface roads. As a result we were gaining only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 miles a day, but now we are advancing as many as 20 to 25 miles a day. Virtually all German resistance is at an end; What remained of the German Armies had been destroyed.



Acceptance of defeat was now apparant amongst the regimental officers; the NCOS and enlisted men were indifferent. Many of the soldiers were young boys who still haven't begun shaving or older and overweight men who were rejected at the beginning of the war. Our planes were dropping leaflets, signed by General Eisenhower promising the German soldiers , that if they surrendered they would be treated fairly and under the rules of the Geneva Convention. There were many who took up the offer, coming up and waving the leaflet above their head. Some fanatics in black uniforms of the of SS Divisions rather than the Gray-Green of the regular Wehrmacht were loyal and dedicated followers of Adolf Hitler. Most of the SS troopers were surprised when captured or were not ready to fire their weapons. They would have preferred to sacrifice their life than be taken prisoner. Some even demanded they ride in the jeep rather than walk with their hands raised above their head. That's O.K., when they get in the P.W. camp, they'll eat the same food, do the same work, sleep in identical beds and wear similar outfits with large P.W. painted on the back like the rest of the prisoners. Now that Trier was captured our next objectives were St. Wendel and Kaiserslautern. St. Wendel is South East of Trier. By 17 March we were within ten miles of St. Wendel the Projected Contact Point of the Third and Seventh Armies. By 19 March the combined power of our assaulting forces drove the Germans out of St. Wendel. By 20 March the attack was fast producing a rout as the enemy fell or retreated and we made a drive for Kaiserlautern.

20 MARCH

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The big industrial city was in the path of Patton's streaming tank and infantry divisions. Formerly a supply center for the German army, it's population of 100,000 was left for the "dough-boys" of the 80th Infantry Division which mopped up after the Tiger Division. Before Kaiserslautern was captured however, forces of both the Tenth Armored and 80th Infantry Divisions raced eastward on all four lanes of Hitler's famed Autobahn in an effort to be the first to enter that city. Separating the superhighway's lanes was a broad grassy area which was utilized by the retreating enemy who waved little white flags at the "dough-boys" and the tankers as they streamed past them. First to reach Kaiserslautern were the Tigers of the Tenth who slammed through the city and continued the attack to the east. The Division's G-3 at this time prepared a message for Corps stating that the Tenth had captured Kaiserslautern. However, General Morris insisted that the message be destroyed so that the 80th Infantry would be credited with the capture. The Division Commander felt that since the "dough-boys" had done the dirty work of mopping up the city, they should be given recognition for its capture.

When we were going through Kaiserslautern, it was like a ghost town. Not one soul on the streets. All the doors and windows were closed. White bedsheets and pillow cases hanging from the windows, blowing in the breeze, indicating surrender. Two machine gun nests on the hilltop that we knocked out with one of our tanks, and three German soldiers crawled from out of a large sewer pipe beside the road and surrendered voluntarily. We did not go through a door to door search, that was left for the 80th Infantry. They are better equipped to handle that duty. An Armored Division's objective is to go out in the open terrain, create havoc, break German phone communications, attack and destroy convoys bringing supplies or additional troops. Capture bridges before they are destroyed. Two days later I read in the Stars and Stripes (that was the daily newspaper published by the U.S. Army) that the 80th Infantry was fighting door to door in the city of Kaiserslautern. The Germans would not come out when they saw the tanks and Armored Artillery.

## GHOST TOWN

One day we were going through a small town, like many other towns in the heart of Germany, only because it was on the way to our objective. Every house had a white pillow case attached to a stick like a flag or a white bed sheet draped over the window sill, but I ~~XXXXX~~ could not see one person walking or standing in the street or even looking out the window or the doorway. There was no resistance, not one shot was fired, it was like a ghost town. We continued on the road to our objective with the infantry leading the way until we came to the next town that was much larger. The infantry met some resistance, but they got through with not too much difficulty, then the tank battalion started through. ~~XXXXX XXXXX XXXX XXXXX~~ Suddenly sniper fire started coming from third and fourth story windows and rooftops. ~~THEY~~ The snipers were firing at the tank commanders, mostly officers and noncommissioned officers, who were standing ~~ME~~ to assist the tank drivers ~~XXXXXXXXX ME XXX XXXXX~~ or half-track~~X~~ whose peripheral vision was limited because of the small opening. If the tank commander wanted the driver to veer to the left he would tap the driver on the left shoulder, if to the right, he would tap the right shoulder, to stop, he would put slight pressure on the back of the drivers' head. As soon as the task force commander heard what was happening, he ordered that no more troops enter the town and the artillery battery get in firing position. When all was set, firing on the town began and continued until ordered to stop. We then went through the town and almost every building on both sides of the street was on fire, and the air was so hot I had to raise <sup>my</sup> ~~MY~~ hand to my face to shield it.



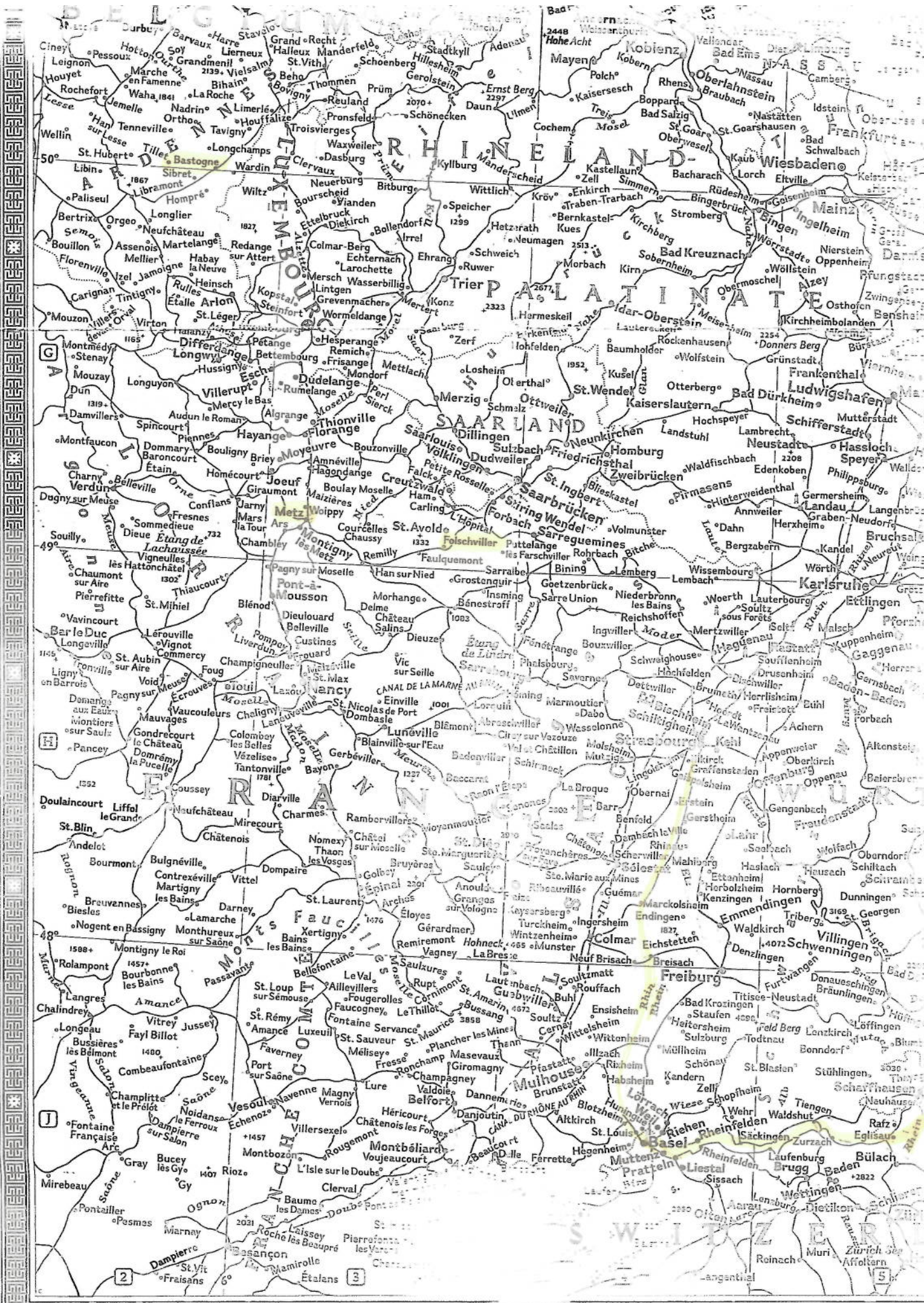
20 March 45 - We reported to headquarters that we reached our objective. Kaiserslautern was under our control. What is the next objective? General Patton replied, "keep going Southeast until you come to Neustadt then turn South to cut-off the German troops that are retreating to the East bank of the Rhine River or until you run out of gas. To follow Gen. Patton's orders, there is only one way and that would be through the HAARDT MOUNTAINS. The HAARDT MOUNTAINS are thick with pine trees that you'd think are touching the sky. No sunlight comes through and it is as dark as night. The roads are narrow and the valleys are deep, but it is the best road if you must get from here to there in a hurry. We went only a short distance when we came upon a U.S. Armored Unit. We know we had protection on the right flank, but we didn't know it was our own Combat Command. It was Colonel Wade C. Gatchell Commander of Combat Command Reserve. He tells us they are low on gas and are waiting for the supply trucks. Our Captain thought we better check our vehicles before we continue any further. All the gas tanks were low and he wasn't certain how much further we could go, so he decided we better stay put and wait for the supply trucks.

One of the men asked our Captain if our gun crews were good at Direct Firing? That's firing the howitzers at a target they can see, because most of the firing they do is indirect firing, that's firing at a target they can't see. They have to convert inches into centimeters and feet into meters. It's a complicated system, but once your men learn the system, it's no problem. The most important thing, you must have good forward observers that can estimate the distance to the target in feet or yards. A forward observer that's flying in a piper-cub plane over the target or one who's in a tank or half-track or right with the infantry. I remember, when I was in the States on maneuvers and the Colonel was testing a group of forward observers. There was one that was short, then over, over then short, too much to the left, then too much to the right. Finally the Colonel shouted. "Handyside, get rid of that man." Handyside said to the Colonel, "Yes Sir, What shall I do with him?" The Colonel said, "I don't give a damn what you do, just get him the hell out of here."

20 March 45 - Regarding the question, "Are our gunners good at direct firing?" Well, I wouldn't say they're experts, but they're good enough and I have much confidence in them. Then our Captain said to me, "Solarz, come with me." "I want to inspect each section to be certain they're ready for any emergency." We had two anti-aircraft sections from an anti-aircraft battalion always attached to us for defense incase of an air-attack. He put one section that had four synchronized 37mm anti-aircraft guns mounted on the vehicle at one end and planned to put the second one at the other end of the column. We went and checked each section until we came near the end when I heard a voice "Who goes there, friend or foe?". I saw a figure, but I couldn't identify it. "Friend" said the Captain. "Lucky," said the figure. (that was the password and it was changed every day) but I didn't know the counter-sign since it was early afternoon and we usually got the password late afternoon. "Solarz, do you know the counter-sign"? "No Sir," I said. "AW, SHOOT THE BASTARD" said one figure to the other. Without hesitating, the Captain said, "Don't shoot, Don't Shoot, I'm Captain Lane, Battery "B", 420th Field Artillery Battalion. So the two figures lowered their weapons and identified themselves as guards from the Combat Command Reserve, 10th Armored Division. We later found out the password was "LUCKY STRIKE" (The name of a popular cigarette most of the soldiers smoked.)

Leaving the task of capturing Kaiserslautern to the 80th Infantry Division and turned the 10th Armored Division south and southeast into the Pfälzer Forest with the objective the West Wall and then the crossing of the Rhine River.







20 March 1945 - Shortly after the Captain finished the inspections I heard a vehicle coming toward us with its headlights on. I thought, who in the world would be driving here with the headlights on? He wasn't going very fast, but when he got near the first anti-aircraft section, the guard ordered the driver to stop and identify himself. The driver stopped the vehicle and after a few seconds I could hear German voices. Without hesitation the crew of the anti-aircraft section opened fire. With one burst the four synchronized 37mm guns went off, ripping into the vehicle. The firing stopped, the headlights went out, all was quiet. Two men from the gun crew went to the Jeep to check it out. One of the Germans was an officer, the second was the driver and the third was a General with important documents on his person. These were taken immediately, by messenger, to higher headquarters. I guess it was at least two hours or more before the supply trucks came up. Our gas tanks were filled and in no time at all we were on our way.

I guess the German General never expected to see American Armored Forces that far behind the front lines, but that's how Gen. Patton operates and the tactics he uses. There was a Disc Jockey in Germany who was called "Berlin Bessy" by all the G.I.'s. She was a "Propaganda Queen", but all the soldiers listened to her because she played all the good and popular songs. She would mention where different American Divisions are fighting or "Why don't you surrender G.I. Joe, your girlfriend is back home waiting for you." You know, propaganda like that. Well, she would mention the 10th Armored Division, but she called us the "Ghost Division" because she never knew where we were. She thought we were in one place when the next minute she'd find out we were at some other place.

We were surrounded in Bastogne, we were miles behind the front lines in this Pfaelzer Forest and I wouldn't be surprised if we were ever surrounded again.

20 March 1945 - During the night of the 20th the rest of the SS corps began to pull back. The German problem was to get the survivors of both the XXXV Corps and the XIII SS Corps through the Pfaelzer Forest despite three dire threats: One from the closely following troops of the American Seventh Army; another from the 10th Armored Division which was in position to swing south and southeast through the Pfaelzer Forest and cut the escape routes; and a third from the Argus-eyed fighter bombers of the XIX Tactical Air Command. It was the last that was the most obvious to the retreating Germans. They had to retreat as quickly as possible by day as well as by night, thereby exposing themselves to airraids.



21 March 1945 - We are continuing East toward Annweiler. The forrest is thinning out and the sun is beginning to shine through. I guess we must have traveled at least 100 miles in this rugged Pfaelzer forrest. We are moving right along when suddenly the column ahead of us comes to a sudden halt. What's the problem, what's the hold-up ? It's a German horse-drawn column retreating to the Rhine river but Three of the wagons have problems that can't be repaired. The road is so narrow a tank and one of the German wagons could not stand side by side or pass each other. The German soldiers are taken to the rear by the Military Police as PW's, the soldiers that refuse to become PW's are shot point blank. Since we cannot take care of the horses, the most humane thing we could do is to shoot them at point blank range, then push them and the wagons over the cliff, into the valley. I am proud that we captured the supply column, but I am sorry for the poor creatures. We call it "DEAD HORSE VALLEY"

I can't forget, as we race toward our objective, Annweiler, the close cooperation between the XIX Tactical Air Command and the Third Army. We work as one. Their reconnoissance aircraft is an essential aid in advising us what is ahead of us, the fighter bombers attack the German troops as they try to withdraw, but most of all they deny the use of the airways, over the battlefield, to the German Luftwaffe.

22 March 1945 - On the morning of the 22nd We moved astride the main highway through the woods and emerged on the flatlands at Landau waiting for the Germans to come out of the forest. Any Germans who got out would have to avoid the roads individually or in small groups.



**23 MARCH 1945** - After the capture of Landau, we streaked out to the south to set up radio contact with the Seventh Army's 14th Armored Division which was driving north. All during our drive through the forest and south to Landau, we found ourselves completely out of the U.S. Third Army boundary and in the Seventh Army area. It was evident to higher commanders that steps would have to be taken to straighten out the situation. Consequently, **on March 23**, our division was transferred to the XXI Corps of the Seventh Army. In the big switch, the Third Army got the Sixth Armored Division. General Patton said to us "Stay with the Seventh Army, when I need you I'll call you."

**24 March 1945** - Left position at Siebaldingen, Germany at 1700. Arrived at billeting area at Roschbach, (near Mannheim, Germany) at 1815, Distance traveled 9.1 miles. Weather clear.

**25 March to 28 March 1945** - Billeted at Roschbach, Germany for rehabilitation and restoration.

~~28 March 1945 - The Seventh Army engineers had completed two bridges across the Rhine river at Worms and on that date we crossed over the pontoon bridge in anticipation of the final clean-up drive that was to take us to the Austrian and Bavarian Alps.~~

~~27 March 1945 -~~

27 March 1945 - U. s. Seventh Army was ready to cross the Rhine river. The 3rd. Division was leading off at 0230 H-hour. The vigilant German guards detected movement on our West bank. Immediately, the Germans opened fire with mortars and antiaircraft guns seriously hampering our engineers who were trying to move assault boats to the water's edge and to shave the steep banks for the amphibious vehicles that were to come later. In over 30 minutes our and the rest of the battalion batteries expended more than 10,000 rounds of artillery. That was our sign of returning the favor. The artillery support had done its job well. The first wave of "Storm boats" (metal pontoons propelled by 50-hp. outboard motors) took less than a minute to cross the thousand feet of water. Close behind the infantry, amphibious tanks were "DD" (duplex drive) tanks. M4 mediums equipped with twin propellers for propulsion in the water and with a normal track drive for overland. An accordion-like canvas skirt enabled the tank to float. Of twenty-one DD tanks, fifteen made it across the river. Of the six that failed, one was destroyed by shellfire before crossing, one stuck in the mud at the water's edge, the canvas on two was badly torn by shell fragments before the crossing, and two others sank after fragments punctured their canvas during the crossing. The next day indications were developing that the Germans were giving up. All artillery, supporting the infantry crossing, were across.



28 March 1945 - Having crossed the Rhine at Worms and having established breakout conditions in the bridgehead by nightfall, General Patch of the Seventh Army, gambling that the Germans had little for defending the Odenwald Forest, sent armor rather than infantry to lead the way through the rugged terrain. With the 10th Armored taking the lead, the 63rd and 100th Infantry Divisions followed to mop up. By 30 March we emerged from the Odenwald Forest into relatively open country, and to a gun position at the Mannheim Airport 10 miles SE Mannheim. Weather light rain. 31 March - a patrol of the 63rd Infantry Division waded across the Neckar River and walked into the university city of Heidelberg. Since this was declared a free city, not a shot was fired. A few minutes later, the Tenth rolled in and established its headquarters in the city but caused no damage. When we rumbled into Heidelberg, almost the entire populace turned out to cheer us and tossed flowers in our path. (It reminded me of Luxembourg)

Now that the last obstacle has been overcome, the drive to meet up with the Russians can begin. The American 1st Army with the British troops will drive for Berlin, General Patton's Third Army will drive for Czechoslovakia, the U.S. Seventh Army with the First French Army will drive south to Bavaria, the Alps and Austria. Now that we are deeper into German territory and more American soldiers are fighting in Germany, the nonfraternization policy is being imposed. Under the terms of General Eisenhower's directive, all fraternization with the German people is forbidden. There is to be no mingling with Germans upon terms of friendliness, familiarity, or intimacy, individually or in groups in official or unofficial dealings. The policy soon broke down. Given the generally friendly disposition of the young, healthy American soldier or the German child-  
ren quickly learned the art of begging for chewing gum and candy. Of course, German girls weren't on the top of my list when there were so many Polish and Ukrainian displaced girls. Many times we would be moving from our gun position to a new one closer to the front lines. The column would stop and we would stop exactly at the corner. "Ask the girls the way the Germans went and were they marching or riding and what type vehicle," the Captain said to me. He knew the girls were Polish or Ukrainian because they had a four or five inch yellow, cloth diamond with a purple K or F sewed to their blouse or jacket. They must also have them sewed to their under-garments (they told me). That was to keep them from entering the theaters, dance halls or other places of entertainment. When we were fighting in France, one of our men wanted to marry a French girl. He asked our Captain for authorization, but that was only the first step. His request for authorization had to go through the chain of Command up to General Eisenhower and back to our Captain. You can imagine how long that would take. Well, our Captain signed it and it was sent forward, but we never received it signed by General Eisenhower. I think that was just a courteous and polite way to let this guy know that he had more serious things to think about right now.



1 April 1945 - We hardly noticed that we just completed six months of rugged combat, but it clearly showed on wear and tear. At the start of the new campaign, it was far below par. We have not received combat replacements since February 20, 1945 and we are actually 50% below strength. The reason we weren't getting any replacements was :

- ( 1 ) all the replacements were going to the infantry
- ( 2 ) it takes longer to train a replacement for the armored Division than the infantry Division.
- ( 3 ) General Patton finally put out an order that directed all armored soldiers able to return to duty be returned to an armored Division.

1 April - Any retreat into the mountains of southeastern Germany will hardly be voluntary on the part of the German leaders. Although some of the Seventh Army officers thought many of the reporting fanciful and exaggerated, enough hard evidence existed to indicate that Hitler was consciously planning a final stand in the Alps. Even though a formal plan might not exist, the Alps represent such natural fortress that it would be well to launch an attack as soon as possible to prevent major German forces from retiring into the region.

4 April 1945 - After we crossed the Rhine river we turned South toward Manheim where our Forty-Fourth Infantry Division was in its final stages of sweeping the Germans out of there so we could pass right through and plow our way to Heilbronn, our objective 23 miles southeast. The small enemy groups, we mopped up on our way, but the strongly counter-attacked sections by the crack 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division we managed to widen, but it was tough.

7 April 1945 - On the night of 7 April sped 70 miles in

darkness over poor roads and in less than 36 hours to get the Division 35 miles behind German lines. Crailsheim was the high-point of our rempaging tank and infantry attack ---- for this town was the key to a triangle formed by Heilbron, Bad Mergentheim and Crailsheim. We were now less than 100 miles from Munich and only 40 miles southwest of Nurnberg. The surprised Germans reacted quickly and threw planes and ground forces at us in their greatest display of strength since the <sup>battel of the Bulge</sup> in an effort to halt the dangerous threat to the German rear. So important was the defense of Crailsheim, that they committed their newest weapon, the ME262. <sup>The first jet plane I ever saw</sup> Heavily armed and able to fly over 500 miles per hour. The roads leading in and out of Crailsheim were like Super Highways with thick pine trees <sup>right</sup> up to the highways, <sup>German</sup> the infantry dug-in and 88's well camouflaged. The Germans on April 7, sent as many men as they could to stop us from using any of the main roads leading into or out of Crailsheim. <sup>I heard</sup> A ~~XXXX~~ column of <sup>our</sup> supply trucks hauling gasoline and ammunition was speeding down the highway at 60 miles an hour. The four truck <sup>was</sup> convoy, about 15 miles from Crailsheim <sup>when</sup> a German 88 boomed out of a corner of the woods some 400 yards away. The German gunners scored a direct hit on the convoy and immediately exploding gas cans sailed over and into the fields on either side of the road. Men from the convoy scattered in all directions I heard that one of the men was a very good friend of mine, a battery <sup>"A"</sup> liason named Hector Lopez, we called him Chico. He said that meant "Little Kid" ~~THAT WAS ALL I COULD LEARN ABOUT HIM~~ ~~XXXX~~ Always ~~XXXX~~ on maneuvers or field problems we would stay close to the Colonel's Command Post. Chico the Battery "A" liason, me the Battery "B" liason and Bishop the Battery "C" liason, with our drivers. If our Colonel wanted to give our Captains instructions, directions or information he would pass that information to us <sup>and</sup> ~~or~~ we would go back to our Captains and relay the information to them. As a result, Chico and I spent much time together. I just pray he got away. That was all the information I could learn about him.



7 April 1945 - We were fortunate we found this open ground for our gun position, There are fir trees all around but they're at a distance and will not prevent us from firing in any direction. This must be a farm because there's a house and a couple of smaller buildings near'by. As soon as our guns were in position and in contact with the forward observer the men began digging their fox holes. We began digging ours and for the outposts at night. Not all the Germans ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ knew we were in Crailsheim because several planes landed at the nearby airfield, while a German train churned into the town from the East. On occasion through the day German planes strafed and bombed our area, but fortunately not any of our men were hit. That afternoon, to my surprise, four young Displaced girls were coming toward us. I noticed immediately, from their patches, they were Polish and Ukrainian, about fourteen to sixteen years of age. I immediately went to them and asked ~~XXXX~~ what they were doing here? They said "They were replacing the men that worked here but now are in the Army. Only the father lives here and he's too old to serve in the Army. They also told me the Father doesn't give them enough food. They took me to the building the size of a two car garage, opened the doors and to my surprise there were shelves along the walls with quart size jars filled with various fruits and vegetables. There was even a medium size wood barrel filled with fresh eggs in a saltine jelly preservative. It was only a few minutes later that the father came to us and asked in simple German words, "Is there a problem "? I told him what the problem was and ~~XX~~ he should help them. ~~XXXX~~ He agreed to it, then I told the girls they are permitted to have more, but they must not waste a thing. At that moment I could hear the German planes strafing our Howitzers and I hit the ground. They also dropped bombs in the middle of our gun position. After the planes flew away I looked up and every-one of the girls and the man were gone. Probably down in the basement of the house.



6 April 1945 - We finally captured Hollenbach just before darkness on 6 April/  
By noon 7 April we captured ten towns before we reached Crailsheim and the  
airfield nearby. Every step of the way was hotly contested by the Germans.  
Resistance mounted as our whole Battalion (420th) leapfrogging its batteries,  
was forced to occupy 18 firing positions in one days advance. We immediately  
organized a defense of Crailsheim and three hours later Combat Command A  
joined us. The purpose of the new operation was to seal enemy escape routes  
from Crailsheim, outflank and surround the crack 17th SS Panzer Grenadier  
Division. The 17th is a good outfit and we came in contact with them a few  
times, but We'd like to get rid of them.

8 April 1945 - I just heard the news about Hector Lopez the Captain's liason  
from Battery A. Yesterday, 7 April, he was in a supply column that was hit by  
a German 88 and while trying to escape, he was killed by a sniper's bullet.  
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Many times we slept near the Colonel's when we were  
on maneuvers or ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ in combat. He was from Texas,  
a straight shooter, a good friend. He had a pretty girlfriend, she'll miss  
him, I'll miss him.

Don't  
READ THIS

"CHAILSHHEIM "BASTOGNE NO. 2"

9 April 1945 - "Crailsheim, seized two days ago was described by members of General Morris' staff as Bastogne No. 2"

9 April 1945 - Early this morning enemy planes flew back and forth over our area strafing our gun positions but luckily <sup>we</sup> escaped without serious losses. Evidently they were young pilots <sup>with</sup> little service, little training, and little experience.

9 April and 10 April 1945 - 50 C-47 planes yesterday and the day before landed supplies of gasoline and ammunition for us within 1000 yards of the front lines. The planes were heavily escorted by P-47 fighters and landed on a strip marked with yellow panels by our engineers. Besides gas and ammunition supplied by air, five cub planes flew in a medical team and medical supplies and evacuated a seriously wounded man.

Crailsheim 10 - 11 April 1945

A new German weapon the Messerschmitt Me-262 twin-jet fighter, capable of flying at more than 500 mph. If this had appeared earlier the B-17's and B-24's would have had a hard time.

21A) - The two vital junctions at St. Vith and Bastogne are still being held despite deeper penetrations all around these towns. If the Germans are to develop their offensive much farther they must do so quickly before the weather clears. To maintain the momentum of the attack they must take the road junctions so they can speed their main forces and their supports forward.

A two man foxhole is better than one. The body heat from one helps to keep the other one warmer.

11 April 1945 - The Battle of Crailsheim is now history but to us who fought there and to the wounded who were tended by the tireless and valiant medics it will remain an indelible mark on their memories.

11 April 1945 - This morning our Captain advised us that we will be pulling out of Crailsheim, but not until after dark.

11 April 1945 - This afternoon the girls asked me if it was true that we are to be moving out? I was so surprised. What made them think that? With a blank expression on my face I asked them "Why are you concerned that we may be leaving Crailsheim?" They ~~XXXX~~ replied "The German soldiers said, if they return and we ~~are~~ are still here, they will kill us. What could I say? I can't tell them, " yes, we are leaving Crailsheim after dark." I can't jeopardize the life of every soldier, so I just changed the subject.

~~That evening after dark we began lining up our vehicles with the vehicles without 50 or 30 caliber machine-guns sandwiched in between the vehicles that day.~~

That evening after dark, we began lining up our vehicles on the highway. The vehicles with 50 or 30 caliber machine-guns were sandwiched in between the vehicles without automatic weapons. When all vehicles were in position and weapons in automatic fire we began down the highway leaving Crailsheim. Both sides of the highway are lined with tall pine trees. . This is a good cover for the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division, (A very good outfit) during the day, but at night, <sup>/when they fire</sup> it only gives away their position and then they become a good target. We are leaving at normal speed, but no shots are fired and I keep thinking about the girls still in Crailsheim. I don't think the same troops would return to the same place in Crailsheim, or would they???



15 April 1945 - Fired harassing fire and preparation fire. Weather clear, moral excellent. Division mission is to Destroy German 17th SS Panzer Division.

17 April 1945 - The flow of prisoners continued. young men, old men, arrogant SS troops, paunchy reservists, some carrying black bread and wine.

Walther P-38 ) - one of the war's most prized souvenirs. [ 20/5 MARCH

22 April 1945 - Seventh Army units cross the Danube at Dillinger and Baldingen.

23 April 1945 - (One) Russian crossing of the Danube after Patton quickly eliminated that river as a factor in the operation. The 10th Armored and 44th Divisions (VI Corps) over three captured bridges near Baldingen on the 23rd.

24 April 1945 - To the south of the Danube Ulm is taken and in the Black Forrest area the French First Army continues its its advance.

24 April 45 - When our Battery got into position to fire and a short time after, people came running out of the woods and down the slope, cheering, shouting, and yelling when they saw the white star painted on our vehicles and tanks. In fact they came running down so fast they rustled some of us right to the ground. They were so over-joyed. They were Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, and dis-placed refugees. That's how I met Johnny(16), Zygsont(17) All the guys called him "Joe" and Johnny's Sister(14) I don't remember her name. They wanted to join the Army, in fact, they begged me to intercede for them. I explained the situation to my Captain and due to the fact that we didn't receive any replacements since February 20, 1945 he thought it over then he decided to go along with the idea, but they cannot wear any Army clothing, must obey all commands and orders and avoid alcoholic beverages. We could use them as ammunition handlers. What about your sister, Johnny? Oh she'll be fine. She can take care of herself.

25 April 1945 - Third Army crosses the Danube near Hegetsburg, which is attacked.

26 April 1945 - Third Army units take Hegetsburg while other parts of Patton's force enter Austria. French First Army reaches Lake Constance.





CONTINUED

28 April 1945 - As a result, GARMISCH PARTENKIRCHEN looked just as attractive 10 years later when Jean and I made a trip to Bavaria to see the PASSION PLAY at OBERAMMERGAU. We spent the night before, right next to it at UNTER AMMERGAU and I'm certain, that today, Garmisch Partenkirchen looks ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ JUST AS ATTRACTIVE, QUAIN, AND PICTURESQUE AS EVER.

29 April 1945 - The concentration camp at Dachau is liberated along with 30,000 surviving inmates by troops from U.S. Third Army. The advance then goes on toward Munich. South of the Danube US Third Army units reach the river Isar. US units continue their advances in Austria and Bavaria.

*1st. MARINE*

*1st. MARINE*

30 April 45 - The Captain and I and the Jeep driver were riding up the hill when we came upon a group of Officers looking down into the town of ~~XXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXXXX~~ Garmisch-Partenkirchen

Despite

~~XXXXXX~~ the way I felt about Germany being the Axis Country, the enemy, the country we wanted to destroy, the people we mistrusted, misunderstood, I created a foxtrot for helping wine and one of the most popular songs the soldiers loved to hear and sing, if they knew the words, was "MARIALE"

The German Colonel said they would surrender the town Garmisch-Partenkirchen because of the 5000 or 15,000 wounded soldiers in the hospitals and hotels, but any other land beyond that we would have to fight for.

1 May 1945 - In the south, Seventh Army had captured Nurnberg and Munich, after short but violent battles, and was penetrating the Redoubt area. First French Army had captured Karlstruhe and Stuttgart, trapped and destroyed a large enemy force in the Black Forest, and was pushing into western Austria parallel to Seventh Army.



6 May 45 - Seventh Army captured Salzburg and Berchtesgaden, and its patrols probing south through the Brenner Pass contacted advance elements of Fifth U.S. Army near Vipiteno.

3 May 1945 - In Austria Innsbruck falls to the US Seventh Army while other units advance near Salzburg.

7 May 1945 - Admiral Friedeburg and General Friedeburg and General Jodl sign the unconditional German surrender at General Eisenhower's HQ. British, French, Soviet and American representatives are all present. Operations are to end at 2301 on 8 May.



apple brandy and other fine wines, and so were the other three cases. There was a bookcase in the kitchen, so we immediately transferred ~~the~~ one for the other, put a white bedsheet over the bookcase and no one knew the difference. Of course, we would offer <sup>a</sup> a bottle to the Captain every other day and he appreciated it, but he never had the slightest idea what was going on.

While we had some free time at Bichel, we decided to develop a baseball field on some level ground just on the edge of town. While we were in the process, I heard the sound of hammering on metal in the direction where we parked autos and trucks we confiscated temporarily. Autos and bicycles were confiscated from all people in order to keep them in one place until all displaced people are returned to the place they were displaced from. Only farmers, and people that repaired foot bridges, roads and other utilities were permitted to drive vehicles or bicycles. When I came to the spot where <sup>was coming</sup> the noise from I saw soldiers from the 1st French Army removing wheels from some of the vehicles, and trucks. I don't speak French but I learned the basics while we were fighting through France. "What in the world do you think you're doing"? I said. "We need these wheels for our vehicles," they said. "Remount the wheels to the vehicles they belong to and in a hurry" I said. and when they were finished I said "Now get the Hell out of here. I don't want to see you around here again." They are attached to the Seventh U.S. Army just as we are, so they must be camped close by. Back on 23rd March when we were fighting SouthEast toward the Rhine River we got into the Seventh Army territory by mistake, so Gen. Patton said, "Stay with the Seventh Army, I'll call you if I need you." That's when we would hear the French soldiers <sup>on the radio</sup> talking and laughing mostly laughing. The civilians were good to us when we were fighting through France. They let us sleep in their barns and basements under the hay and they gave us apple cider, but calvadose, the Boche all kaputt The French underground were the best. They gave us valuable information and they risked their lives if caught.



We were in Bichel only a couple of days when the Captain walked in the office and said, "Solarz, I want you to come with me." We went outside, got in the Jeep and the driver took us out to the edge of the town when we came to some railroad tracks and a railroad siding. There were three or four passenger cars on the siding, but beyond the cars were some wood barracks-like buildings with a high wire fence around it. The driver stopped the Jeep, the Captain and I walked through the wire gate and into one of the barracks-like buildings. There were men and women standing around and some sitting on wood cots with dirty bags filled with straw that were intended to be mattresses. The Captain told me all the people were either Russian or Ukrainian. Most of the men needed a shave and the women had that disheveled look on them. There were no screens in the windows, no air conditioners, just a couple light bulbs hanging from the ceiling. He knew that I spoke Polish because he asked me many times when he saw a group standing on the corner, especially if they had the yellow, diamond shaped insignia on the left side of their shirt with a purple letter "P" embroidered on it, that they were forced to wear at all times. He'd tell me to ask them "In what direction did the Germans go and what equipment did they have?" But this time he said, "Solarz, Tell them that the Doctor will be here tomorrow morning to give them all a physical. They're to clean up the barracks, take a shower and shave and wear their best clean clothes. One of the men told me there were two women living in one of the sleeper cars so the Captain and I went up to investigate. Sure enough, there were two women, but there also were two infants. We gave the women the same information and told them we'd return with the doctor tomorrow.

20 May 1945 - The next day as planned, the Captain, the German doctor and I went to the concentration camp. The German doctor was a prisoner of war and he spoke English very well. He examined all the inmates including the two infants. I gave the two ladies six cans of condensed milk and told them the milk was for the infants only, otherwise they will not receive anymore. The Captain then asked the doctor about the condition of the inmates. The doctor thought they were underweight, suffering from malnutrition and covered with lice. "How about the buildings, what's the best thing we can do about that." The doctor said, "the best thing you can do about that is to burn them to the ground. The buildings, and everything in them, are infested with lice.

In a few days three Army trucks arrived, all the inmates were sprayed with D.D.T. (a colorless contact insecticide ~~panned in the United States for most~~ then they were loaded use since 1922) (I think it's the best for that purpose) ~~loaded~~ on the trucks and driven away in the direction of the next assembly area heading toward Russia and the Ukraine. The barracks type buildings were burned to the ground and the wire fence removed. " Alis kaput concentration camp. "

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While discussions and plans regarding the concentration camp were going on, plans regarding troop movement were also going on. Every soldier would fall into one of three categories. The first group (Those with the highest points) would be the first group to <sup>return</sup> ~~XXXX~~ to the U.S. for discharge from the Army. The second group (Those with the lower points) would remain in Europe and function as the Army of Occupation. The third group (Those with the lowest points) would be returned to the U.S., get a thirty day leave (vacation) then proceed to a designated camp for C.B.I. (China, Burma, India Theatre) training in preparation for the invasion of Japan. That meant almost every soldier would have to be transferred, and that involved <sup>would</sup> a great deal of time. The Captain asked me if I would be willing to help him, but that would mean I'd be one of the last to be transferred. I thought about it for a minute, "Certainly, then said ~~XXXX~~, I'll be glad to do it ".



I don't remember how many points each category was worth, but the number of months in the service was worth so many points, the number of months overseas was worth more, if you were married, if you had children, the more children, the more points, if you were awarded the purple heart, etc. Some of the men were in the service before "Pearl Harbor". I was in the service three years, overseas one year, I wasn't married, had no children, as a result I was classified for the third group. That meant I would be transferred to another Division that was slated to go to ~~XXX~~ Japan. I with two other men and the Captain ~~XXXXXXXX~~ began transferring men that were qualified for the openings. That went on for about a week when the Captain said to me, "Solarz, here's an opening for a clerk with the 45th Infantry Division. If you wait until all the men are transferred, I can't ~~XXXX~~ ~~XXX~~ <sup>guarantee</sup> what opening will be available. While I mulled that over in my mind, the Captain said "You've seen enough action, if I were you I would take the transfer." I didn't hesitate - - - I've known him for almost three years. I was his liason agent. I saw how he made his decisions. How furious he was when he ~~XXXXX~~ learned that the Sergeant was shot in the leg at Bastogne, taken prisoner and later died of gangrene due to lack of medical attention. Or the time the Jeep driver found a German pistol, ~~XXX~~ was taking it apart to clean it and shot himself in the thigh. The Captain took away the pistol, I could see his blood pressure going up, his neck turning red, he ~~XXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXX~~ <sup>took the pistol</sup> apart and threw ~~all~~ <sup>the</sup> pieces in all directions. He wasn't furious at his men <sup>he</sup> was just angry that such things happened to good men. X ~~XXXX~~ ~~XXXX~~ Although he would be losing me, I knew he suggested the transfer for my benefit. ~~XXXX~~ ~~XX~~ ~~XXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXX~~ ~~XX~~ ~~XXX~~ ~~XXXX~~ ~~XXX~~ ~~XXX~~ ~~X~~

I became one of the first men to be transferred out.

So it was toward the end of May 45 that a truck came to transfer me to the 45th Infantry Division. I thanked the Captain for ~~XXXXXXXX~~ all his kindness and guidance, he was like a father to me ~~X~~(and all the men) to

(18A) Said my farewells to my buddies( a great group I'll always remember )  
The drive to the 45th Infantry Division would be a short one since they were stationed near Munich,Germany. A few days later I was transferred to the 45th Infantry Division, but I didn't do much since the older ~~XXXXXXXX~~ soldiers were being transferred out to be sent back to the States or transferred to another unit as part of the Army of Occupation. ~~XXXXXXXX~~ Those who remained were slated to ~~XXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXX~~ get some C.B.I. training and eventually go to Japan. After a week or so the 45th Infantry Division was sent to Camp Lucky Strike that was close to the port of Le Havre located in north France along the English Channel. This was one of three cigarette camps ( the second was Chesterfield, but I don't remember the third. ) They were set up as staging areas for the troops that were waiting for the ships that would return them to the States. It was, while at Camp Lucky Strike, that I ~~XXXXXXXX~~ <sup>was awarded</sup> The "Bronze Star Medal" during a formal dress "Retreat Ceremony ". The citation was printed in the Manayunk Review and this is what it read:

Cpl. Edward P. Solarz, son of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Solarz  
4406 Mansion Avenue has been a member of the armed forces three years and overseas since September 1944, fighting through France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany and Bavaria.

A member of the 10th Armored Division and General Patton's Third Army he also was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation , Good Conduct medal and the European Theatre of Operation Ribbon with three battle stars. The citation: The Bronze Star Medal has been awarded to Cpl. Edward P. Solarz, Btry B, 420th Armored F. A. Battalion, United States Army, for heroic achievement in connection with military operations against the enemy of the United States at Bastogne, Belgium on 22 December





group of guys discussing what it might be like back home or what we'd like to do after being away for all these years. After a week on the high seas we were now nearing the U.S.A.

On 12 September 45 as we were nearing New York, any tugboats, passing by, would blow their foghorns, welcoming us back home. As we got closer, two harbor boats came alongside our ship. They were decorated with red, white, and blue flags and the decks were covered from bow to stern with pretty, young girls cheering and waving as the harbor boats escorted us toward the pier, but the most exciting moment came when I saw the "Statue of Liberty". She looked so beautiful, I would have kissed her if I could. I was so proud to be an American. The ship was finally tied to the pier and a group of reporters boarded and interviewed some of the soldiers ~~XXXX~~ <sup>they were</sup> where ~~they~~ <sup>were</sup> they from, where did they serve, etc. I don't remember the ride home, but it must have been by rail and a short one at that, since it was only from New York to Philadelphia. My family was so glad to have me home and they were even happier when I told them I would have a forty five day leave and then be eligible for a discharge. My father kept a scrapbook for me, showing the progress of General Patton's Third Army through Europe. Well, ~~XXXX~~ <sup>we've</sup> been Through France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Germany, Alsace, Lorraine, Bavaria and Austria. During my leave, I had the opportunity to catch up with some of my friends who were still around and see if my civilian clothes would still fit me. I don't remember how I traveled to Indiantown Gap Military Reservation, but when I got there, we were seperated into groups of ten or twelve and a soldier from the Reservation was assigned to ~~XX XX~~ guide us through the process. The usual tons of paperwork had to be filled out. Fortunately I was familiar with personel records so I knew most of the answers except the dates of the tetanus inoculations. We had our lunch and toward the end of the process we were measured for and received a new uniform. The men who worked in

the kitchen and the tailor shop were Prisoners of War, but they had a good detail. They worked in buildings that were clean, warm and they were well fed. It certainly was not forced, hard labor. In fact, I heard ~~XXXX~~ they did not want to ~~XX~~ returned to their country of origin. Finally we received our muster-out pay, our discharge ~~XXXXXX~~then papers and the officer asked me if I would ~~XXXX XX XXXX XXX XXXX~~ be ~~XXXXXX~~ interested in joining the Army Reserve ? and I replied "I don't think so." A guide from another group approached us and asked, "How did everything go? Are there any questions? Did ~~XXX~~ your guide help you ~~XXX~~ in the process? We told him everything went off smoothly. Each one of us put a contribution into the hat and thanked him for everything.

I don't remember exactly how I got home, but I think there is a small railway station near Indiantown Gap

Oh! there are many things that I forgot and friends wh's names I don't remember, but I'll never forget Joe in Bastogne, Chico Lopez in Chrielsheim, Col. Brown, who during our first combat experience, walked calmly from his halftrack, crossed the field and came up to us lying in the gutter beside the road, calmly telling us to stay right where we are until our artillery knock out the enemy tank-destroyers and flatten the pill-box down the road. Renne, the Belgian Nurse, and Captain Lane, my Captain, who was like a father to me. The girls in Chrielsheim, who I hope and pray that they were able to return to their homes and families. Even today, whenever I think of them, I must hold back the tears, and there are some memories that I'll just take with me.



When we were stationed at Camp Gordon, Georgia, that was after our Tennessee maneuvers. We were told we would be going over-seas. I was told to make a large chart, ~~the~~ with the name and rank of every soldier and in our battery, every requirement they would have to meet. That chart was about 4ft x6ft in size and hung up on the door in the orderly's office. The Captain's office was also in that building. Almost every day, at one time or another during the day, I would make entries to the chart. It reached the point where I knew not only the name, but also the middle initial of every man and there were about one hundred forty men in the Battery. Today I've forgotten the names of most of the men, but Joe Majaka, Chico Lopez, Harold Gibbons, Col. Brown, Tim Cohen and Renee LeMaire, the Belgian Nurse, who volunteered to attend to the wounded I'll never forget. Those I will take with me.