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Donald Joseph Carner Papers

**Unedited and Unpublished Memoirs of Military Service
251st Coast Artillery Regiment (Anti-Aircraft), 1938-1944 and
42nd Infantry Division, 1944-1945**

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Historical Record – Do Not Destroy



MILITARY SERVICE PART 1. (Rough draft, unedited)
Btry. F, 251st CA (AA)

My name is DONALD JOSEPH CARNER, born December 11, 1920, at 5101 Meade Street, Denver Colorado. This was the home of my mother's sister (Caroline) and her husband, Mr. And Mrs. William Sears White. My father, Ray Hurst Carner, and my mother, Josephine Agnes Edge, had a farm just west of Arvada, Colorado, (location approximately west of Indiana Street and north of 80th Street). My brother, Alford Addison Carner, born August 18, 1910, and my sister Helen Rae Carner, born October 26, 1912, were both born in Muskogee, Oklahoma.

Our family moved to California in 1924. Most of my school years were in Long Beach, California.

In 1938, one of my high school friends, George W. Meylink and I were talking about how things were going in Europe. Being that Long Beach was a Navy town, we decided that we wanted to join the Navy reserve; this way we could finish school and get a little military training. Several of our friends said there was a waiting list, so some other friends, who were in the California National Guard, suggested we try there.

On October 29, 1938, George and I visited the Armory on Seventh Street in Long Beach, where we let it be known we would like to join. We took what little physical examination they gave you that day, were issued uniforms, and, I believe sworn in that night as members of Battery F, 251st CA (AA). The next weekend found us learning how to count off by fours, what forward march and halt meant. In time, we learned how to do squads right, left, right about and all the other movements required for changing directions to go this way and that by ones, twos, fours or eights. Sometimes, we felt as if we had two left feet. We learn how to take apart the .45 cal. pistol, .03 Springfield rifle, 30 cal. and 50 cal. water-cooled - machineguns until we could do them blindfolded. When we did not get paid for the drills on November 5th and 6th, we learned that they made November 7, 1938, as the effective date of our enlistment.

George and I went to our first "Summer Camp" in 1939. We were trucked to Ventura, California. Captain Lauren Salisbury was our commanding officer. Lts. Phillipson, Thienhaus, and Jarvis were our junior officers. Our 1st Sgt. was Brissey, Parker our Mess Sgt., Hulsey our Supply Sgt. Other Sgts. were McLean, R. Wilson, C. Wilson, Argue, Bryant; Corporals were Masters, Clark, Benson, Willis, Wittlesey, Brimhall, McGihon, Northcutt and Swisher.

If you heard the song "Sound Off" that came out after World War II started, the fellow who wrote it must have heard Capt. Salisbury at our summer camp, as the words and tune were very similar to those Salisbury had us singing in 1939, as we marched.

January 1940, found our unit taking part in maneuvers at the San Francisco Airport. I left Long Beach with Lt. Jarvis and two or three others on the advance detail to Bakersfield. We stopped at Gorman and a woman tried to get Lt. Jarvis up to her room. On our way home from San Francisco, stopping overnight in Paso Robles, a few of us got the jump in the chow line and ended up doing night guard duty. We froze our butts off.

August 1940, found our regiment boarding trains to go to the state of Washington for the Army war games around and south of Fort Lewis. While riding the train north, I was sleeping and a fellow, whose last name was Valentine, gave me a hot foot. It put a blister about the size of a nickel on the side of my foot. At this time, I was the assistant to the Supply Sgt. Hulsey.

I learned to put up tents taking about ten to fifteen minutes for each one. We had sixteen to put up and like anything else, there is an act to setting them up and taking them down.

Later I was assigned to Cpl. Wittlesey's squad, which consisted of three other men, and a broomstick with a sign saying 37mm antiaircraft gun.

In the evenings, we did get to enjoy the canteen the 7th Infantry had set up close by us. The beer was good and cold. This was near Chehalis.

Shortly after arriving back in Long Beach, we started hearing rumors about the regiment being inducted into active service. The supply room became quite active getting new clothes, shoes, etc. and issuing them out. Monday, September 16, 1940 our regiment was inducted into active service. As Hulsey was not going to be inducted, I was "kind of" given the idea I would become Supply Sgt. Hulsey and I worked in Long Beach packing and I was one of the last to leave for Ventura. Before I left Long Beach, Sgt. Brissey, who liked to drink, really got plastered. When he saw me, he gave me his wallet that contained all his cash from his government paycheck and told me to take it home to his wife. No matter how drunk he was, he knew how much money he had and what he was doing, even though he was incapable and irresponsible. To me, he was always a gentleman, but he could chew you out if you deserved it. Lo and behold, upon my arriving in Ventura, we had a new Supply Sgt., a new 1st Sgt. named Frank Doran and a whole lot of new personnel I had never seen before. They had been on inactive duty. We were given our Army Serial Numbers, mine being "20 920 804".

Our regiment soon learned that it was going to be sent to Oahu T.H. and possibly on to the Philippines. The thought of going to Hawaii was great. Part of the Regiment left in October, boarding on the passenger ship the USS Washington, having staterooms. Btry. F left with the rest of the regiment November 18, 1940 aboard the U.S. Army Transport, Leonard Wood. On board the ship were regular Army and a few of these people were running around the ship with "Mohawk" haircuts. Several of us decided we wanted one. As I had a "Military" haircut to begin with, it was easy to have my hair shaped into a Mohawk. After our Col. Sherman learned what we had done, he ordered that all of the hair was to come off and we all got extra duty aboard ship for it. Most of it was K.P. duty.

After arriving in Honolulu we were trucked to Fort Shafter for three days, then trucked to our new camp which was located on Barbers Point. This was "Camp Malakole" which was under construction by the Engineers from Schofield Barracks and our first arrivals. I was assigned guard duty at the outer gate for one week. We had our Thanksgiving dinner there. I also spent Christmas, 1940, and Thanksgiving, 1941, on this post. Capt. Olin R. Ogden became our new CO.

In the construction of our camp, I worked clearing out the scrubs, on the rock crusher, filling in potholes. Btry. F operated the sawmill and Howard Pitman lost part of one hand when the saw blade caught his glove. Sgt. Moss of E Btry. had charge of the beach detail. This was my last and longest job at the camp. Our job was to locate the high coral in the ocean in one section of the camp and using 12-15 sticks of dynamite to blast it away. We always had one man on guard with a rifle in case of sharks. They wanted a place where people could swim and not cut their legs and feet on the coral.

Most weekends, when we had passes, we would take a truck or two and travel around the island. Always as we passed the pineapple fields, someone would lose his hat and, while it was being retrieved, several of us would be picking pineapples. We had several areas where we liked to go especially for swimming. Most of the time, it was to Nanakuli. In December 1940, Glen Oliver, John Atkinson and myself rescued a swimmer. We had been swimming for over half an hour, were tired so we went out of the water. The

next thing we heard was someone yelling for help. We finally spotted two heads bobbing about two blocks out. The three of us headed for the surf to go help. One of the fellows, after he seen us head towards the ocean, left his companion. Being the first to arrive, I asked the swimmer if he was having cramps. He said no, just tired. I told him I was, too. He did not know how to float on his back, I told him to take hold of my shoulder and down under I went. After Oliver and Atkinson arrived, we had him hold on to a shoulder of two of us as we towed him to shore. The three of us traded off as we pulled him towards shore. When we got to where the breakers were, I caught one and rode it in to the shore. I grabbed a bed tick full of air and swam back. Just as soon as we got him onto the tick, the next breaker took him from us and carried him right up to the shoreline where the people there pulled him over the top onto the shore. We caught the next waves in. We never did learn who he was except that he was a member of the regiment.

One of our favorite swimming holes was Waimea Falls. One weekend there, John Lawless and I decided if the little kids could dive or jump off from the highest place we could too. We decided to first practice off the face of the falls. We began at the eighteen feet level and worked up to where we were forty-five or fifty feet above the pool. I dove off from there and had my hands clapped together in my usual way, palms open, thumbs interlocked but when I hit the water, my arms were jerked out to the side, feeling like they were coming out of the sockets, my head hit the water just about knocking me out, then it felt like someone had kicked me between the legs, and pulled my swim suit just about off. I was done swimming for that day.

About three weeks later, we were back at the Falls again, I decide to try a different method of hitting the water. I interlocked my fingers and hands together and locked my arms against my ears as I hit the water. This worked well so I tried it at several levels including the fifty feet level and had no problems when hitting the water. Bill Carlberg, was one of my friends with me on this trip and we decided to go off the highest point which I always thought was 75 feet above the pool but later learnt it was 85 feet. As we stood there looking down on that small pool, we had doubts. I said to Bill, we will count to three and both go together. He agreed and at three he went. My feet were glued to the rock. When he came up, I asked how it was and he gave me the ok sign. I said, "Get out of my way" and away I went into my swan dive. When it came time, I locked my hands and my arms and hit that water cutting into it with ease. My mind was on how easy I hit the water, not thinking about bending my legs until I began to feel the pressure on my ears. I went deep and as I was fighting my way back up to the surface, I thought to myself, "boy, am I stupid." That was my first and last high dive. After swimming at the falls, we would go to Punaluu Park, eat our lunch, then around to Hanauma Bay to swim. Afterwards, we would go into Honolulu, then back to camp. One weekend, a bunch of us took a truck up to Schofield to hike over Mt. Kaala. Upon arriving at the top, we had a big surprise. It was like going back millions of years ago. It was just a big swamp, moss covering the trees and you had to be careful of your footing. You would step on what looked like solid ground, than go up to your knee in water. Going down the other side, we saw quite a few old coffee trees. Our truck met us at the road near Repukki Point.

At camp, we had our drills, anti-aircraft practice firing at towed targets and drones.

When our rifles were issued, lucky me received one that was pitted, so no matter how hard I tried, the shadows from the pits made the bore look rusty, even after a good cleaning. I was just so good at cleaning the latrine, KP and guard duty that it seemed like every other week I was on one of them.

Camp life was pretty much the same for those of us who were Privates or Privates First Class. We got the Guard duty, latrine duty and KP duty. If we were lucky, we got a weekend pass once in awhile. We would go into Honolulu. Floyd White got to know some civilians who were associated with art so we were invited to their homes and some of the art shows. We appreciated their hospitality. We always were

able to get a cot at the Army and Navy YMCA in Honolulu for spending the night there, except one night, which I will tell about later.

At camp, after retreat, we played cards, gambled or read. Bill and Bob Carlberg and Charlie Runyon had a little game they played. It was stupid so I am not going to put it down in writing. We did have to laugh at them.

SSgt. "Spud" Arnold returned to Camp and the fellows, knowing what condition he would be in, placed his bunk up in the rafters of the barracks. He messed on the floor, than climbed up into his bunk. The next day, Pvt. Arnold joined the bunch on KP.

The money- lender - we had several in our Battery. Borrow a dollar, pay back two. At least we found out who our true friends were.

I was on guard duty at Post #1 as I watched a flight of Navy F4F's come in over Barbers Point. One plane got into the propeller wash of the plane ahead of it and took a nosedive into the ground. I yelled for the Corporal of the Guard. After I was relieved from the post, I went to see what it looked like.

Clyde Brown was a classmate in high school and he used to come to my brother's shop to buy balsa wood for making model airplanes. Clyde learned to fly before we went to Oahu. There he would rent Piper Cubs at the John Rogers Airport and would fly around over the ocean and several times over our camp. He took me up with him one Sunday and I was surprised to learn how bumpy the air currents were. The seats were padded just a little so you felt the bumps.

I made Corporal of Friday, December 5, 1940. Having a weekend pass, George Meylink, Paul Warden, myself along with two more who I names cannot remember, went to Honolulu. Our truck let us off at the Army and Navy YMCA but we did not try to reserve a cot for the night at this time. Honolulu was full of service men from all services. We remarked that we had never seen that many in town before. On Canal and Hotel streets, the sailors were in block-long lines.

I believe it was the Honolulu theater showing Charlie Chaplin in the movie "The Great Dictator" so we went there to get tickets for the 10:00p.m. show only to find out that it would not be shown as they had a preview of a new picture. We decided we would go back to the YMCA and reserve our cots for the night and then go see the show Sunday. Well, we found out that all the beds were sold out. We checked two other places and they too were filled. We decided that we would take the last truck back to camp, then Sunday morning go back to Honolulu.

DECEMBER 7, 1940, Sam Hurd, one of our Battery's cooks, came into the barrack saying "Last call for breakfast". I asked what we were having - pancakes says Sam. I told him to save me a couple, I would be right there. As I lingered there an extra minute, loud explosions brought me to my feet. The noise was coming from Pearl Harbor area to our east. Black smoke began rising up and we were beginning to see aero bursts from anti-aircraft guns. Then, our camp came under fire as Japanese aircraft made strafing runs over our barracks. I shall never forget the big grin on the round-faced Japanese pilot as he flew approximately fifty feet over us. I stood there looking at him as Teasley fired off one shot with his Springfield. Finally George Meylink and I got together. We hauled a 50 Cal. Mount out, then was placing a 50 Cal. Machinegun on it when some Officer came running by and yelled at us to bring the gun and follow him to the south edge of camp. Here we are with a gun, no mount and no ammunition. After the planes left we took the gun back to our area.

It was about this time that one of our B-17 bombers came in off the ocean over Barbers Point. Not

knowing that it was one of ours, I exclaimed, "My God, what are they throwing against us". I believe it was Fort Barrett that opened fire on it.

Lt. Borden got things a little organized at our Battery. We mounted our 30 and 50 Cal. Guns on trucks and hooked up our 37mm behind them. This was around 9:00a.m. the time of the second attack. We were on the road headed for Pearl. As I was still in communications we set up our CP in Aiea. The rest of the day, I was stringing communication wires to our different gun positions. About 10:00p.m., we were about to cross the main highway with another wire, we heard and watched two of our own aircraft attempt to land on Ford Island. They had their landing lights on, but overshot the runway and turn to go around again. Some navy gunner had a heavy trigger finger and one round set the whole area off. I could see the rounds that were firing from our 37mm located at the submarine base and watched as one of them hit one of the planes. In the meantime, as there was no place where we could seek cover, we just stood our ground and listened to the shrapnel zizzling down all around us. After seeing what the size of the shrapnel looked like the next day, we were grateful for not being hit by it. After it quitted down, we continued stringing our line. It was dark, no moonlight. Upon arriving at the Navy's Aiea Recreation area, we were challenged. Hearing about 30-40 safety locks, we stopped and answered. The next day, when passing this area again, they asked if we had anything to eat. It was 1:00p.m. I told them I had not eaten since Saturday. They let us help ourselves to some ready - made sandwiches and soft cold drinks. Tuesday, December 9th, our Battery took up positions on Ford Island. I was assigned as gun corporal on a 50 cal. water-cooled machinegun and our first position was located close to where the battleship Utah was sunk. My buddies, George Meylink, Roy Brown, Eddie Finch were with me. I do not remember who else was with us. Eddie rounded up some plywood and lumber and we built a one-room hut. George and I spent about one to two months at this location, then we were transferred to Hanger #6, the old home of PBY Sq. 21. We had our gun set up right on the water edge. We ate with the sailors and marines in the Marine Barracks. They also had the Ships store in this building where we could buy almost anything you wanted. We would buy sandwiches and would play poker, eat sandwiches and drink cokes in our dugout next to our gun. Our sleeping quarters were in the hanger. There came a time when the Naval Officers would have inspections and we then had to have our beds made up and room clean.

Of all things to forget, I left out telling about loosing three good friends on December 7th. Cpl. Clyde Brown, Sgts. Henry Blackwell (both pilots) and Warren Rasmussen rented Piper Cubs that morning and were flying over the ocean on the north shore. Japanese aircraft shot them down. We believe them to be the first military personnel killed during the Japanese attack on Oahu. Another high school friend Cpl. Bill Graves who was in a gun position located on the north west end of the runway was going swimming at the pool in that area. He dove in and they said the shock of the body temperature change caused him to have a heart attack killing him. This was February 1942. His father was a shop teacher at our school. We learned that his sister had died the same way at the Long Beach YMCA.

In May of 1942 found our regiment on two transports, the Mormacsea and the Mormacstar, on our way to the Fiji Islands. At this time, it was not known where the Japanese fleet was located. Arriving there, we pulled into the port of Suva, spent the night there, then the next day sailed to Lautoka where we unloaded with the Fijians, greeting us with, "Bula Joe". Our Battery spent the first several nights there at the Sugar Mill. When we left there to take up gun positions at the New Zealand airport base near Nandi our cooks also walked off with several two- hundred-pounds-sacks of brown sugar. My gun position at the base was next to the ocean. After our own army and navy took over the base for their aircraft, I was given command of a 37mm AAA AW and we moved to a different location near one of our 90mm guns. B battery cooks had shot an Indian farmer cow and need help loading it onto their truck. Half of my squad helped. As our rations were drawn with theirs, we ate with them. They had much better cooks than our battery and after the cow was shot, we had beef instead of mutton. There was an inquiry about the cow, but of course all of us had no knowledge of it.

Our favorite gun position was when we were located on a hill we called "The Rock". It was located on the north side of Suwanii beach. We had a 50 Cal machine-gun set up at the end of the rock overlooking the ocean to our west. There was a sugar train that would haul sugarcane from the fields to the Sugar Mill and it would pass by once or twice a day each way. It had to make a hairpin turn around the rock so we would hop aboard and ride it to where our Btry. mess was located and jump off.

When we could we would catch it back to our position. Suwanii Beach was a beautiful setting. We would go swimming there but had to be careful not to step on Stingrays that were plentiful and of good size. There was a pier running out into the bay that we would dive off into the water. One day, Roy Brown, Meylink, Burch and Finch grabbed me by the arms and legs and swung me out over the water. With my back straight and my feet up, I hit the water knocking the air out of me. Unable to breathe I was trying to yell for help but all they could do was stand and laugh at me. I finally decided if I did not want to drown I had to swim to the pier and hold on to the pilings till I could get my wind back. Roy Brown made himself a spear on a long pole and would go spearing the Stingrays. One time he speared what he thought was one but it turned out to be two, one on top of the other. That pole whipped back and forth until he pulled it out of them.

Lt. Richard Borden, who later became our Captain was on the rock with us. He was raising some chickens. One day when he received a three-day pass to go to Suva, Bill Reep decided he was going to spear the chickens and he did. The boys on the hill enjoyed them. Our problem with the chickens was that they would come into our tents and mess over everything. George Meylink and I had a three-day pass to Suva. I was pretty broke at the time so George paid for the cab fare and our hotel rooms. I do not recall if I ever paid him back.

There was a Fijian village not far from our position. We use to buy bananas by the stock from them they were the best tasting bananas one could eat. Also we would buy papaya which I did not like until I ate these. Joe a Fijian became a good friend to all of us on the Rock. When his wife had her baby, I gave him the baby oil and powder my mother had sent to me. She appreciated it so much that she made a floor mat for me. I use to go fishing with the Fijian girls from the village. We had a slough that ran inside of the railroad tracks and they would reach in among the rocks and pull out these big mouth ugly fish that looked as if they could snap your fingers off. After cutting my feet a couple of times I just watched them fish.

We found out they were going to replace our 50 Cal with a 20mm gun. None of us had ever taken one apart, but Joe Jenny had watched some sailors clean one when we were on the Mormacstar. When it arrived, it came with a big heavy mount and a knocked-down platform. The platform was about ten feet by ten feet. While a few of us were leveling off the Rock for the platform and assembling it, a few of the other men were cleaning the grease out of the gun and its parts and assembling it. At 2:00 a.m. in the morning, we called our CP that the gun was ready for action. At daylight we test fired the gun and after the second round it hung up. We waited ten minutes then cleared the gun and flung the round into the ocean. About three months later our Regimental Headquarters called and asked when the gun was going to be ready.

September 1943 found our Regiment again aboard ships this time heading for Guadalcanel. The ship we were on lost its steering for about four hours in an area that they called torpedo junction. Upon arriving we were trucked to an area a short distant from the airfield and set up hammocks between the coconut palms. Later we replaced these with tents. The Japanese transport ship the King Gura Maru was located at the beach in front of us with it bow sticking about eighty feet above the water. We climbed aboard and someone asked if I was going to dive off. My answer was a flat no. Lucky us, we got to

unload barrels of gasoline off of the incoming LSTs and loading everything imaginable on the outgoing ones. Part of our regiment left in November for the invasion of Bougainville then the rest followed in December. Upon arriving we were hauled out somewhere into the jungle. We set up our tents where we could. At 6:00.am. December 24th, we had an earthquake. The ground went up and down and around in circles. Laying on my cot looking up at the tree tops they were going in circles. Ira Comp who was on guard duty at the time came running to the tent calling my name. I said to him, take it easy Comp, it's only an earthquake. We had to cut down the jungle where my gun position was positioned. Most of the trees were three feet and wider at the base and when I would swing an axe into them, the thing would bounce back out. It was a good thing that I had some fellows in my squad that could swing an axe. After we had most of our area cleared an Infantry outfit moved in close to us and in doing so, they cut a road in so that helped our field of fire. There were two trees still standing on the bank of the road. The bank was about eight feet high. I was in the road about thirty feet from where I thought the large tree would fall across the road. As it started to fall I noticed that vines were attached from one tree to another and it looked as if they were going to swing the big tree over on me. I started to run under them to get to the other side then noticed that the big tree was falling straight down pulling the smaller tree with it. I thought boy this is it so than ran straight up the bank between them as they came on down. When they hit they did not bounce like I expected them to do.

The Japanese would send their "Betties" over every night. One night they dropped a phosphorus bomb that exploded high in the air. It was just like the 4th of July. George Meylink gun position was just down the road from mine. I was down there talking to him about the M1 Range finders we had for our 40MM guns. There were four of us around the pit that it was in, Meylink, Antillia, Hill and myself. The field artillery battery down near my gun started to fire on the Japanese and we had a short round over our heads. None of us were hit but it really was a scare. There were four hole in the M1 and it knocked out. We were sent up as provisional Infantry twice, the first time we took our 40mm with us as we were on flat ground. One night Antilla rolled over on to a centipede that turned out to be very painful for him. The next time we went on the lines we were in the hills. The first night we spent in a slit trench I lied down to try to catch some sleep. The next thing I knew I had this cold thing inside my pant leg against my leg. I open my pants and lit a match and I saw this little bitty eye snake that I grabbed behind its head and slung it out of the trench. Meantime, everyone was yelling at me to put out the light.

As I did not like the chow our cooks put out, every once in awhile we could get a truck to go down to the ration dump and we would load up with C rations. They tasted better to me. This reminds me that back in FIJI we use to get both C and D rations and I would eat the chocolate bars until one day I took a bite into one of them and my teeth (all of them) started aching. Each time after that when I would pick up a candy bar to eat and start to bring it to my mouth I had the same problem. I did not have to bite into it, just the motion towards my mouth. I started drinking nectar after that and it was not till I arrived back to the states that I could eat a candy bar again.

While on Bougainville, our unit name was changed. Regimental Headquarters became the 251st Antiaircraft Artillery Group, 1st Battalion became 746th AAA Gun Bn. And the 2nd Battalion became the 951st AAA AW Bn. In May of 1944, my name was drawn for rotation back to the States along with Hobart Crabtree and Paul Warden. We were about the third group from our battery. We left the end of June 1944. When we were about six days off our coast we ran into a storm. The swells were 200 to 300 feet high. We would stand in an opening which was about 80 feet above the water and look way up at the top of the next oncoming wave, then when we were on top of the wave you could see all over. This was a Navy vessel and the only good thing about this storm was that the sailors on board did not have to get out and chip paint and repaint. We arrived in San Francisco July 20th. When we docked, there were a lot of girl bus drivers on the dock waiting to take us to the ferry for Angle Island. All of the fellows rushed over to the side of the ship and the ship started leaning onto the dock so the ships Captain had to

announce for some of the men to return to the other side. The next day on Angel Island we ran into two of our friends from our unit, Ed Thompson and Frank Lenahan. Frank was an MP there. After quarantine we were trucked to the Presidio of Monterey, after another two or three days we were given a month furlough, our first in 44 months. After our furloughs we were to report to Camp White, Oregon. Upon arriving there we found out they were closing this camp and in about two weeks, we were sent to Santa Barbara, California for orientation. They had us at the Mira Mar Motel and we went each day to the Biltmore Hotel for classes. Here we met several more of our old Btry. members working. From them we learn that most of our old regimental members were being shipped to Georgia for AAA training. I had had enough of AAA and as I had always wanted to jump from a airplane, I volunteered for the Paratroopers. They told me that I would have to take Infantry training first. I told them I have had Infantry training, but that did not mean a thing. I had to volunteer for the Infantry so I did. Charles R. Glenn who we use to call "Blanket Ass" because he was a full blooded Cherokee Indian kept singing "Oh what do they do in the infantry, but march march march". This was when I was assigned to the 42d Infantry "Rainbow" Division at Camp Gruber in Oklahoma.

As these memories are being written (March 2000) some 55 to 59 years after the fact, my memory is not too good. I have thought of several subjects I wanted to put in here after the first ten pages have been written, so here goes with some of them.

At Camp Malakole, Dick Hill and another person were fooling around when this person accidentally put his finger under Dicks' nose. When this happened it cause Dick to go Fe-Fe-Fe-Fe. From then on everyone would sneak upon Dick and put their finger under his nose just to hear him. We found out that if you did this and said a short word as the same time, Dick would repeat that word several times too. We nick-named Dick FE-FE.

In Fiji, on the ROCK, one night we were put on the alert. About 1:00a.m. there was a shot. The fellow on duty with me went to fix the sling of his rifle and being left handed he had put the muzzle of his rifle on his shoe and of course it slipped and when he grabbed for it, he caught the trigger and not having the safety on, the muzzle blast tore the top of his shoe and foot. I do not recall his name but remember that he was from Texas and he had talked about figuring someway to get out and home. Another member committed hari-kari using his bayonet.

At night time the mosquitoes were really thick. Even though we wore protection clothing we still were bitten. I received a good case of Dengue fever and spent several days in the hospital.

On Bougainville, I received a box of cookies from Margaret Coffey. I shared them with my squad and we were really enjoying them when someone noticed that there were bugs in them. We stopped eating them. They must have been good protein as none of us were made sick.

We played a lot of poker in my tent. George Meylink had a hot sit one night and was really cleaning up. He became ill and instead of taking all of his winnings, he asked me to fill in for him and left me with around \$200.00. The seat remained hot and I won over \$400.00 more and George split with me. One night another game was going on. I was sleeping but I could hear everything that was going on. Phil Karaly and Erv Weinstein were busy betting against each other and when Phil threw in his last dollars he told Erv that he should feel lucky that he did not have any more money to raise him. Phil had a nine high straight flush only to be topped by Ervs' Jack high straight flush. Like I said above, I was sleeping but could hear everything, but something else took place. I was not breathing and I could not move a muscle.

I found myself above my body looking down at it and thinking these guys will think I am dead and bury me alive. I finally woke up but have never forgotten the feeling I had.

MILITARY SERVICE - PART 2

42D INFANTRY "RAINBOW" DIVISION

(Rough draft, unedited)

As I wrote in the first piece of my "Military Service", I had always wanted to jump from an airplane using a parachute and thought I wanted to get into the paratroops and to do so I had to volunteer for the Infantry. Yea, I volunteered for the Infantry. That was how I was assigned to the 42D Infantry "Rainbow" Division.

I do not remember the date that I stepped aboard the train to head for Camp Gruber, Oklahoma. I do remember being mad as hell. The morning before I was to leave another group shipped out and some one stole my Garrison Cap that I had just bought before my furlough. I had put it under my cot and they help themselves to it. I was not mad about losing the Cap, what I was really mad about was that it had my brass ornament on it and brass ornaments could no longer be purchased.

I was carrying the orders for two of us. Lee Carter from the 1st Battalion of my old regiment also wanted to become a paratrooper so he also volunteered for the infantry. I do not remember if we were trucked to Santa Barbara, CA, to board the train or if we were loaded aboard at our location as the train did run by there. Anyway the two of us were on our way along with a number of other fellows. Not all of us were going to Gruber, but we were all on the same train. I do not recall every detail of our train ride. Lee was a guy that kept to him self and did not want to be bothered. I had met another serviceman at the Mara Mar Motel while we were undergoing orientation and he too was on the train so we teamed up together on this trip. Like all train rides in those days, they were bore some. We were at the tail of the train; the Harvey House car with its cooks was just ahead of us. My friend had walked thru that car up to where the civilian cars were; then when he came back he wanted me to go forward again with him. He had met a couple of girls, one with three young children, so I went with him and met the young ladies. They had gotten on when we stopped somewhere in Texas. Both of their husbands were in military service and they were on their way home. As there was more room in our car, we brought them back with us. We even let them sleep in our upper bunks while we slept in the chairs. I woke up only to find that our servicemen car had been disengaged from the rest of the train. We woke the girls and kids up and hurry them back to their car that was now really over crowded. As the train was to stop in Topeka, Kansas, and the girls were going to change trains there, we told them we would get off to say our good byes to them. When I woke up we were way pass Topeka. The girl without children did say that she was the "Hot canary in ?? band" I had to ask what a hot canary was. Found out she was a singer in a band in either North or South Carolina.

We finally arrived in the little town of Braggs, Oklahoma that was located in the Cookson Hills an old hideout area of the early days bandits. There were trucks to pick us up for the short ride to Camp Gruber. Of course, we were greeted like most everyone before us with the cries of "You'll be sorry". I thought to myself, yeah, after the previous four years, I would be sorry? After checking in at the Division Headquarters, they sent us to I Company, 232nd Infantry to wait for assignment to a Company. When I walked into their CP it seemed that all of their Officers were from Texas, one must have been from the Texas-Mississippi border as he sure talked funny. I was bunked in with a rifle platoon. I would watch as these people got up in the mornings, eat then go on field problems. When they came back they had no life left in them. They would shower, have supper then hit their bunks. This happen each day I was there. No life was left in them. I began to think maybe those fellows were right when they yelled "You'll be sorry". I was finally assigned to C Company, 232nd Inf. When I arrived and reported in, 1st Lt. Jack Webster, the company CO was there. He invited me to sit and talk asking about my service. He assigned me as a squad leader in the machinegun section of the 4th platoon. This did not sit well with some of the men in that section, but we soon became friends. Lt. James Departee was the platoon commander, T/Sgt. Sherwood Frye the platoon Sgt., S/Sgt. Robert Bennett chief of the mortar section, S/Sgt. Leslie Stone

chief of the machinegun section. Sgts. Donald Bennett and Harold Hickey were squad leaders in the mortar section, Cpls. Donald Carner and Rulon Clark squad leaders in the machinegun section. Lt. DePartee and S/Sgt. Stone were something else. They did not know how to handle their men or how to talk civil to the them. Our other company officers were: 1st Lt. Wendell VanAuken the Ex. Officer, 2nd Lts. Delmont Brown, Dorcy Watler and Alvin White. Brown, Watler and White were rifle platoon leaders, our 1st/Sgt. was J. Walker Juhan, all well liked.

After getting settled in with the company, I found out that they were getting up in the mornings, running field problems the same as I Company had. The different was the moral of the men. They had life left in them. After showering and eating, they did not hit their bunks, but would either go to the PX or to a show. On week-ends if you had a pass we would go to Tulsa. That was an eighty-mile bus trip and if you were lucky you had a seat or you would have to stand all the way. One thing I was not use to was that the colored having to ride in separate buses. Being from California and most of all being taught by my parents, I looked at everyone as equals. In Tulsa we would go roller-skating or to the fair. We met several girls and would let them know when we would be in Tulsa. I cannot remember their names now. John D'Angelo and I would go there together as my squad members would always head for their homes in Missouri or did not get a pass at the same time I did. I guess in all, I only went to Tulsa four times. Once I went to Muskogee but did not like it. Like a fool, I lost all of my money at the fair grounds trying to knock down the metal bottles, and to think about it now, the operator was a slick one. He added up the points so fast one could not tell if he was cheating or telling the truth. After getting back to camp I had to borrow some money until I could get my sister to get some out of my bank account and send it to me. SSgt. Eddie Kardong was kind enough to lend me the money. Not like some of my "friends" in my old outfit, I did not have to pay interest on the loan. He could have used the interest as he had his wife and two daughters living in Muskogee.

One time we took part in a field program. I had my machinegun located about half way up a hill. On top of the hill were the observers looking over the area. I heard a noise behind me and looking back and to my surprise, here was General Linden on his stomach crawling to my position. You could tell that he had put on a clean uniform that day and now he was covered with that red soil. This was the first time I saw an officer (and a General at that) do this. Usually they just walked up and stood by your position taking notes. I held this man in great respect. All the time I was with the Division, I never did see General Collins that I can remember. The rifle range: I never liked going to the range because of the fact that when you fired your rifle, it had be to held by using the sling. I know it was supposed to help you steady your rifle, but to me it was very awkward and most uncomfortable. My arm always felt like someone was twisting it off. I was never able to get a good score using the sling. I was always able to get a better score not using it or resting the rifle on a sandbag. My best shooting occurred using a Carbine in a sitting position. They showed all my shots except the last one to be in the black bulls-eye. I argued that last shot must have gone through the same hole as a previous shot. I forget now who won the argument.

One day the machinegun section was on south side of our barrack practicing gun sighting using sighting bars where you line up the little black dot to set upon the bar at the front. We heard what sounded like a shot, but then took it to be someone setting off a fire cracker as there were a few of those around camp. About the same time we heard the shot, I was headed to go into the barrack. Upon entering and looking down the room I saw a body on the floor. Our Supply Sgt., SSgt. John Shipper and his assistance T5 Dick Faulkner were in the room, John sitting on a bed and Dick standing. I walked up and looked at the guy laying there, noticing that he had placed the muzzle of the rifle under his chin and that the muzzle blast had caused a grasping hole and parts of the top of his head was on the wall and ceiling. My comments were "Well he sure did a good job of it". I walked out and reported it to Sgt. Frye. Shipper went back to his supply room and pasted out. Years later, Col. Bill Zeller who was the 232nd Inf. Exc. Officer said the soldier had received word that his newborn baby had something wrong with it and was

blaming himself.

T5 John Cardinali was one of our company cooks. One thing I always told people was that we had the best cooks. I would always tell John how much I appreciated his cooking. John would save up his sugar rations and when he did he would make large sugar donuts. I would always buddy up to John and he would see that I received extra donuts.

One day I was headed back to my company passing through the 222nd Inf. Area. It was late and getting a little dark. I saw this person coming towards me and I looked to see if he had any rank on his shoulder but did not notice what he had. The next thing I heard was "Just a minute soldier, come back here --- don't you salute an officer when you see one"? I got a good look at his rank (Major or Lt. Col.) and I said "I am sorry sir, I did not recognize you as an officer". He ordered me to step back about twenty feet then come towards him and give him the "Rainbow salute" which I did and then went on my way.

I was given a work detail consisting of eight men. We had to go to the east side of the camp and clean up an area. At Gruber, all details were suppose to march in step all the way and to me it was just a bunch of hogwash, so I told the fellows when we formed up that when we got away and in certain areas I would give the command to rout step, but the first one to see an Officer was to quietly call the group to attention and count cadence. This worked great as they all wanted to see who could spot an Officer first. I think if I had been given another detail, all of these guys would have volunteered to be on it.

I enjoyed the PX we had in our area. I just wished that I had bought another camera to take pictures of the camp and for overseas. I had to get rid of my last camera when my old unit was taking up positions on Ford Island in Pearl Harbor. You could not take cameras onto the base.

The theaters were across the parade ground from us and as I recall we had to walk around it rather than cross over it to get to them. We saw the latest features for just fifteen cents admission. These memories are being typed in April 2000. The prices at the theaters now vary from four to eight dollars and in some cases more.

They took our pictures for a Regimental review, but as I was waiting some time before the photographer snapped the picture, I jerked when he did so. After the war, I received a postcard advising me the picture was not suitable for publication. What bothered me was the fact that they did not list the names and addresses of the ones whose pictures did not turn out.

Word finally came down that there were no more transfers to be given out of the Division. That was fine with me as I liked my company and the people in it except for two. A short time later the three Infantry Regiments got orders to prepare to move out. I do not recall if we hiked to Braggs or were trucked, but we boarded the train there and were off to Camp Kilmer. I remember very little of the ride and Kilmer.

I did receive a twelve-hour pass along with Rulon Clark. As I had relatives in Carteret, NJ, we went to visit them. They made us a "corn beef" sandwich each and along with some cold beer they taste delicious. My aunt asked if we would like another one and we answered yes, then she told us they were tongue but she knew if she had told me that before, I would not eat them, which was true. Today, I have a hard time finding them. After our visit with my relatives in Carteret, Clark and I went to New York City and looked up my cousin once removed, waking her up at 1:00a.m. She had her brother and three sisters living with her. As it was late we did not stay too long and we had to get the subway and train back to Kilmer.

On November 24, 1944, the 232nd Infantry, under the command of Col. Alfred A. McNamee and as part of Task Force Linden under the command of Brigadier General Henning Linden along with our two sister regiments, the 222nd and 242nd we left New York harbor on November 25, 1944. The 232nd on board two ships, the USS Alexandria and the USS Bienville. The 1st battalion was aboard the Bienville. I

caught one day duty aboard the ship. I had to keep the men in line as they went for their meals. The sea was not as rough as I had experienced before on other ships but it was warm, too warm for me so I became a little nauseated. I was standing at the bottom of wide stairwell that led to the deck so I would go up it to the deck and get fresh air then go back down. We arrived to the entrance of the Mediterranean Sea I believed the early morning of the 7th. The entrance was protected by barrage balloons and undersea nets. We could also see on our left Europe and on the right Africa. After passing through the entrance we sailed along the African coast. We arrived at Marseilles on the 8th of December. We disembarked the same day. The harbor was filled with sunken ships some we had to walk over. After a short march (about three miles) we boarded trucks and off we went to a place they called CP2, which was a barren field on which we set up our pup tents in straight rows. After about four days and because of German planes they had us disperse over a large area. I went across onto a small hill. It was beginning to get cold and of course rain. I received two passes while we were in this area. The first pass, I was with Homer Rice, Bob Gorman and George Massey. Homer drove the jeep and we had a box of D rations with us. We went to Aix a beautiful town. A Frenchman tried to buy some of the rations Gorman was carrying. We were inside a bar and Gorman and I were sitting at a table when this man came in and sat by us. The next thing we knew there was a CIA man accusing Gorman of trying to sell our lunch. We explained the guy was bothering us.

As we were looking the town over we came to a place where there was a fountain and several rises of stairs and on the rises were beautiful statues. I had the strangest feeling come over me. I had seen this place before. Was it from a previous life or from my fathers' Geographic magazines?

The second pass I rode the trucks to Marseille. I remember Massey along and I thought Rice and Gorman were with us also. Rice said he never rode the trucks, Massey had a carton of cigarettes which he traded off. I think it was about 8:00p.m. that we were suppose to be back to catch the trucks back to CP2. After awhile I got the feeling that I had to go relieve the water pressure. I got off the truck and walked about a hundred feet the trucks started up so I hurried back and climbed aboard. This happened about two more times and about fifteen minutes later the trucks did start back. Some of the boys moved back to the end of the truck and relieved them-selves as we road but I had never been able to do that on a bouncing truck. When we arrived back at CP2 everyone got off. It took me about five minutes to get to the ground and as hurting as I was I dare not do it where I was standing as I was close to some officers tent. It took me about ten minutes to walk to where our latrine was located and each step hurt all the way, it took another five minutes to drain all the water out of me.

On December 19th we boarded the 40 and 8's and headed for Metz. The weather was freezing and we tried to keep warm by using a five-gallon can to build a fire in. Even though the boxcar was airy the smoke from our fire would cause us to kick the can out of the car. One day we stopped in a rail yard. Harold Hickey had to get rid of a load and he climbed under a boxcar on another track. We saw a train coming down the track so several of us jumped out of the car and ran over to pull him out. At night we all would lay down to try to sleep, the cold did not help. Being as close together did help some. If one man moved, everyone else had to shift.

This one night, Nicholas (Nick) Diminico, a member of my squad said to James Wine a mortarman, "Heya Wine, ifa youa tella joke, I'lla tella one. Wine said OK Nick, you tell yours first. Nick started in; Oncea upona time, Charlie McCart-that was about as far as he got. We all broke out laughing at his speech. Nick was born in Italy and he added an a to about every word he spoke. We would settle down from laughing but all it took to get us going again was for someone to giggle. Finally Nick said "Justa minate fellas, I haventa begiinna toa tella the jokea yeta" That started laughing going again.

We were headed for Gen. Patton's Third Army, but orders were received changing us to Gen. Patch's

Seventh Army. On Dec. 22nd we joined the motor convoy at Morhange and headed for Strasbourg. We were billeted at Essen School in Schiltigheim the evening of the 23rd. (When we left CP2, I felt a sore throat coming on so I asked one of the medics to take a look. He said there was nothing he could do and that there were no Medical Officers available.) I was sleeping by Lt. Webster, some time in the early hours of the 24th, they woke him up because someone needed medical care who was sleeping upstairs. Here I had been complaining since CP2 and they forgot all about me. I was mad again. I found out where the Medics were located (had to get the directions twice as the first time was wrong) and upon entering a SSgt. asked he could help me. I told him my troubles and he looked down my throat then told me that at the present time all of the medical officers were in a meeting and when they come out he would have one look at me. About five minutes later the meeting broke up. The Officer looked at my throat and said come with me we are going to see the Surgeon General. We walked to where he was located and he took one look down my throat and said to the other doctor, how soon can we get this man an ambulance? While he was telling me to take my gear back to my company and get right back, he was writing on a tag which he put on me, part of which I could read saying "acute-severe". It took me less than ten minutes to report to my company and get back. They had an ambulance waiting. Inside were American and German wounded. They took all of us to the field hospital located in a large building in Schiltigheim. They started right in giving me penicillin shots every three hours. Christmas morning when I awoke I could not open my mouth. It was locked shut and they could only feed me liquids for three days. The shots lasted three days too. The first one they gave me was with a long needle in the butt. From then on I had them give me the shots with a short needle in my arms. Then too, like in Fiji, the gums around my lower right wisdom tooth swelled and I had it taken out. The doctor gave me a shot, waited five minutes and started in on me. I had to have him stop as I could feel it. He gave me another shot and waited and started again. I fought him all the way and I had tears streaming down my cheeks. I was hanging onto his arm trying to stop him but he fought me off and got the tooth out. I had terrible pains for over two weeks afterwards, seeing several doctors. After about a week at the field hospital I was sent to a recuperating hospital. I do not know where it was located. I remember there was lots of deep snow on the ground and we had to use the outside latrines as the plumbing in the building was not working. About the second night I was there, I woke up at 1a.m. Every body and his uncle were lined up at the latrines. Those who could not wait were squatted down in the snow. Thank goodness I could wait. It hit me again about 7a.m. What a mess that had to be cleared up later.

From the hospital I was shipped to the Repo-Depo in Nancy. I remember getting an ice-cream cone there. It had a perfume taste. As I was eating it, I was looking upon a road which went down hill. From here I shipped back to Task Force Linden headquarters, then to H1B 232nd. Inf. I spent several days with them watching all the action going on below us. A runner from B Company came to report and the Sgt. Major was going to send me to B Company with him. I told him I did not know anyone in B Company so he said ok. I watched about fifteen small tanks head into a wooded area and saw only three of them returned. The others were knocked out of action. The next day I saw a jeep from my company and I told the driver not to leave without me and I reported to the Sgt. and he gave me the ok to return to my company.

C Company was stretched out over two towns, Rountzenheim and Auenheim. I was sent to Auenheim, where I rejoined my squad, this was around January 18th. Upon arriving there, I learned that Lt. DePartee and SSgt. Stone along with a few other men including John D'Angelo were shipped out and too, that SSgt. Kardong had been killed leading a patrol, also SSgt. Frye was given a commission. This house we were in was the last house on the east side with a road running each side going back into the main part of the town. The area was flat and the snow about one or two feet deep. The Germans were attacking both north and south of our location. Looking across the field south of us with binoculars I spotted a black object sticking above the snow. As it did not have snow on its top I figured it was a German looking through one of those mirrored binoculars. I had Frye take a look and after several minutes he

thought it was a stump. Later that day I was going to look at it again but could not find it. I told Frye to take a look at his stump. The night of January 19th, Frye told Sgt. Lewis Bryja to go to the mortar section and pick up the password. Later I noticed him just sitting on the floor and Frye came in and asked him about the password. Frye ate him out and told him to go get it. I figured Lewie was scared and I said "Come on Lewie, I'll go with you". It was a moonlight night and we could see very well. When we got about three quarters there, we heard German voices, so we stepped up our walk and got to the mortar position that was located beside one of those large French bunkers. From what I observed of the bunker, it was ok to be in if you were receiving artillery fire but I would not want to be inside if you were being attacked by infantry. After picking up the password, we took the long way around back to our position.

I just remembered something that happened on the truck ride to Strasbourg. We were riding open trucks and I was standing up at the front of the truck. Even with my sore throat and the biting coal, we were singing "Old Mountain Due". The next thing I knew, I just about had my head taken off by a low strung communication wire. It was a good thing it was a loose wire as it stretched and I was able to get away from it. I yelled low wire at the truck behind us.

The evening of January 20th, we received noticed that we were to withdraw. As we were passing the area where our kitchen had been set up, we learned that they were leaving a lot behind, so I grabbed a large round of boloney and someone else grabbed one or two loafs of bread. Along with our units the roads were packed with the French who were leaving. It was freezing and the roads with the packed snow had turn to ice. You had to be careful walking. I knew we had a long way to go to get to Bossendorf so I took off my oversized shoepacks as my boots inside them were sliding back and forth. I do not think that one man was able to make the trip without falling. I did not keep track of the number of times that I felled, but I noticed that D.J. Bennett was having a worst time of it than myself. I watched him fall in one spot fifteen times as I counted. In places where the road curved you would see someone slide across the road to the other side including myself. It seems that everyone was throwing away one thing or another, as there were blankets, ammuniton, you name it. I know I wanted to get rid of the round of boloney but I also knew that if I did we would not have anything to eat when we got to where we were headed. It was one hell of a miserable night. We finally got there and shared our boloney and bread with the other fellows. I do not think we spent much here as we were told that we were going to another town about nine kilometers away. Because my feet were cold I left my shoepacks on to walk and my feet began to bother me. We made it but then was told we had to go on to another town about six kilometers away. Well, I tried but before long I could no longer walk. I rode a jeep the rest of the way. We took up positions as a secondary line of defense. I was separated from my squad and along with two riflemen, Grover Green and Jack Douglass occupied a slit trench that was about six feet long eighteen inches wide and four or four and one half feet deep and red mud and water in the bottom of it. We spent two days in it. One stood guard while the other two tried to sleep with no room to lie and the guard standing on your feet. We were defending the area around Uhlwiller. We did not participate in any action in this section, but other units of the regiment did. On or about January 27th Task Force Linden was relieved and we went in reserve. The balance of our division joined us and we received replacements. C Company occupied a small town named Heinereville. The house that my squad was in was with a Frenchman and his two young daughters. In the street just to the right side of the house was where they stacked up all the cows manure that drained into a pit under it. Not having a good sense of smell, it did not bother me as much as it did to those who did. The street ran down a hill and at the bottom was a well that the people pulled their water from. As it was cold and the house did not have much wood, we went searching. We found some cut wood stacked along side of a fence and started helping ourselves. This belonged to a farmer who looked to be a lot better off than the people we saw in the town. I think he liked the Germans and that is why he had all the nice things we noticed. He came down to stop us from taking his wood, but we took it anyway. We were in this town a couple of days then moved to another town where we received replacements. One night and the only night that we ran a training program, my

squad was out among the riflemen. As it was freezing and the ground covered with snow, the cold went through you, it was miserable. We only had one machinegun and like guard duty we relieved each other after two hours. When the four of us had our two hours in, I sent one of the men in to get our relief out. No one came, so I sent another man in to send the relief, still no one came. Well the two of us left were so dam cold and I thought if either of us stayed any longer we were going to end up being frost bitten. I asked the rifleman next to us to watch the gun and the two of us went in. I woke up Dickens and gave him hell for going back to sleep each time the other two men woke him and he in turn gave me hell and threaten to have me court martial for leaving the gun. I told him find, that I would also place charges against him. We both cooled off. He and three others went out to the gun and I went to bed. It took awhile for me to thaw out.

February 17th, we headed for the lines, first stopping in Wimmenau, then down to small town of Reipertswiller riding and walking part of the way. We came down off the hill and entered a small door of a house that took you inside of the attic. On the left side after you entered, was where the family stored the hay for their cows. The stairs down led you into the kitchen. The front room had part of the rock wall blown out, from here we had a good view of the area in front of us. We occupied the houses on the south side of the valley, but our line of occupation ran on west and those who were there spent their time in fox holes. As far as we were concerned, the other side belonged to the Germans. We had two Companies on line and one in reserve. The house I was in was targeted twice each day with German mortars. They would fire six rounds at us, two striking in front, one on each side of the house and two behind us. Besides that, they had a long-range rifle firing into the town, but most of the times the shells hit in the valley in front of us. The dam things always scared the hell out of me. One day when those heavy shells were coming in, I found myself crawling on all fours trying to get behind a paper-thin wall and saying my prayers. The family cow would come home in the evening and we would drop hay down to her. The barn was part of the house. She was full of milk but not being milked for so long it was watery and no good to drink, so the next time I was there I thought I would try milking her and see if we could get some good milk. She came home that evening. I dropped some hay down for her, then went down, closed the door and put the wooden bar across the door. I started milking her, and we started receiving mortar fire. The cow started running circles around the room and as she went by me, she tried to hook me with her horn. I tried to climb up to the hayloft, but was unable to. Not wanting to get hooked by her horn, I grabbed her tail and followed her around the room trying to get the door open as we circled. I got the bar up a bit then the next time I got it off and the door came open about eighteen inches. She headed out just about tearing the door off and injuring herself.

Bob Bennett scrounge around some of the houses one day and found some bottled slices of apples and flour and the rest of the stuff it took to make a apple pie. The pie was so good that we told him to go look for more. The next day he found some rhubarb and made a pie. Lucky for us that he fully covered the top with crust. We had a small glass mirror in an opening above the table the pie sat on. When a mortar hit outside the house, this time the concussion broke the glass and we had glass all over the pie. After the pie cooled, we just turn it upside down and shook the glass off and then ate the pie. Boy was it ever so good.

When our company would go back in reserve, it would give us a chance to get clean cloths and take a shower back in Wimmenau. Also some hot food. When we returned to the lines, we rotated between two areas, the houses and the foxholes. I never was in the foxholes, each time I was in that area, they sent part of the two machinegun squads along with part of a rifle squad to set up an OP in one of the house on the opposite side of the valley. The first time we cross over we passed by the workshop building We spotted a casket inside opened it and there laid a Frenchman inside. They had his Cap on him. We put the lid back on, then moved up and occupied the first house ahead. This area was full of dead animals and a few Germans. I had my machinegun sitting of a table looking at the hill ahead of us. The other

machinegun was looking out a window on the east side. I had Afton Burns and Merle Fiser with me. Clark had Charlie Salter and Jack Lund. John Strack had Marshal Clay and I do not remember who else. We had no problems with the Germans, but our own artillery zeroed in on us twice. We had both 60 and 80mm come in from behind us. The last time only one round came down on us, hitting just in front of the house. I felt being hit and was thrown backwards about ten feet. I could not see because of grit being in my eyes and had to be careful and just let the tears wash it out. I picked myself up and looked at my chest expecting to see blood. I was not hurt. Fiser picked himself up and I asked if he was ok. As he was on the right side of the table and protected by the stonewall of the house the concussion just blew him backwards. Burns was not moving as he had become wedged between the wall and a small long storage clothes cabinet. He said he was not hurt so Fiser and I each grabbed one of his arms and pulled him up. I then walked back to the hallway and yelled up to the attic asking if they were OK. Clark answered yes, but he did not know how the round passed through without hitting one of the rafters.

The road came from our right and after passing the front of the lot the house was on turned left towards us then make a right turn to go on west. There were three or four house on each side of the road west of us. To the east about one hundred feet and up the hill set two houses one behind the other. There were two white cats and the first time we spotted them we thought maybe they were Germans dressed in white. We soon figured they were cats especially when they started fighting and screaming, that was enough to scare the hell out of you. The Germans never attacked us here.

HENRI SINGER was a young seventeen - year old Frenchman. I will not call him a Frenchboy as he was beyond his years and had been a member of the French underground fighting the Germans whom he hated with a passion, especially the Nazi SS. When our Company was along the Rhine river, somehow he adopted our Company and our Company adopted him. He was fitted with an American uniform and given a Carbine, just in case he was captured. His father had been a mayor of some small French town and the SS had beaten and tortured the man in front of Harry (Some of us called him Harry and others Frenchy). This young man saved C Company from many casualties by going before the Company and talking to the Germans into surrendering. I remember one time when a few wanted to but were afraid of one of their members who Harry killed and they came in with him. Harry learned English pretty fast especially some of our cuss words, most often "Son a bitch". He went out with most of our combat patrols and was never hurt. My buddy Rulon Clark went out once and upon returning to our lines tripped a booby trap that took his life. About March 12th Frye took a patrol out and overlooking a German position. He sent two men back to report, D. J. Bennett and Jim McGee and they were going to lead another night patrol back. Van Auken was leading this patrol with Bennett and McGee up front. Augustine Palazzo was behind Bennett along with members of his squad. I was carrying a machinegun with a short belt. The gun belonged to B Company. We had two columns moving forward in the woods near the base of the hill east of the road that was located on the hill to our left. I had a replacement named Lonnie Robinson carrying two boxes of ammunition for my gun. We stopped to rest and Lonnie walked past me about five feet. This was a night patrol so it was dark, but I could tell about where everyone was located by their cigarette hack. After about a minute or two the German guard at their road block woke up and heard our hacking and shouted Achtung and fired his burbgun in our directions. I started to get on my feet and McGee came running past me kicking me in the shin and knocking me back down. I again tried to get up and Lonnie came by kicking me again in my shin and knocking me down again. I finally was able to get up and in position so I could fire my gun. Four rounds went off and the gun hung up. A German open fired on me but he was aiming at the muzzle blast of my gun. Palazzo in a soft voice said "Hey take it easy with that thing". I told him not to worry I knew where he was located. I moved back about ten feet and got behind a large fallen tree. Bennett came back picking up one of my ammunition boxes he stumbled over. I fire the gun again and once more it hung up. Again I drew German fire. I heard about four explosions above and behind me that at first had me puzzled. I

figured them out to be concussion grenades as there was no metal flying. As it was beginning to now get light, Van Auken came down and said we might as well withdraw. Outside of Van Auken, Bennett, Palazzo I did not see anyone else. He sent me on back and they were to follow. I crossed and got onto the road and following it back to Reipertswiller not seeing any of the patrol ahead of me heading back. When I got back just about to the Valley, there was person waiting and he asked me how far back was the road block. As I was not counting my steps but was watching the road and where I was stepping because of the mines planted in the road, I told him two thousand yards. He acted discussed and said get out of here. Before I started back, someone had ordered artillery fire and I was glad to move out but it was going farther behind the location we had been in.

March 14th, C Company and a platoon from A Company outpost the 242nd front from Reiperswiller to Althorn. My squad and part of a rifle squad were on top of a hill in a area clear of trees. The mortar squads were down the hill behind us. Someone had built a good large dugout and covered it with logs and dirt. There was also a jeep parked seventy feet away. Our artillery fired over the Germans lines with leaflets that advised the Germans to surrender. The Germans returned fire and the shells started landing close, too close that we headed for the dugout. Burns and I hit the opening at the same time diving headfirst. We became wedged and with a little twisting we felled on in. Diminico was not moving but one that went overhead and landed down by the mortars made him move. The next one hit the jeep. We had several Germans come up the hill to surrender. They were a little older than myself. One of them gave me a bar that represented a metal he had earned. These people were not the SS and I always felt that if they were taken prisoner, they are out of the war and should return home safely after the war. This was a feeling that I was to learn later that all my buddies did not share. I offered one of the prisoners a cigarette that he accepted. Frye came over and took it away from him.

I always remember something that should be in another section of my memories but being seventy-nine years, I guess I have an excuse.

One day going back down on the line to Reiperswiller we were passing through B Company. As I walked past, I noticed a man sitting on the ground with a radio pack on his back. I took a second look, than had to ask him if he was Art Rivas and he answered yes. What a surprise, Art was originally with Btry. E and had been transferred into Btry F, when we were on the island of Bouginville. I did not get to speak to him or did I ever see him again. There was one other man from my old Regiment that I will write about later where he fits in.

March 15th, the Division started it attack against the German line, B Company with one platoon from Company A jumped off to attack Hill 302 and other areas. On March 16th all of the units outpostting the Division fronts were ordered to assemble in the rear of their respective battalions, Company C then moved up to take position to the right of B Company. We were loaded with extra ammunition and grenades and the hills were steep. We went up one then down and up another, than another,

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and another. About 1:00a.m. we were ordered to dig in for the rest of the night. We got our fox holes all dug and having found some blankets that one of the regiment who had been there earlier when the Germans had made their push back in November, was using them for extra warmth. We were called to get on our feet and get ready to move out. We pushed on and at daylight we spotted the road in front that led to Baerenthal. We moved into Thalhaeusein. Dimiinico spotted a light machinegun I told him not to bother it as I figured the Germans had it booby-trapped. A little later I heard this gun go off. Nick had gone back and played with it. Lucky no one was hurt. Capt. Webster and his jeep driver Bill Mansfield were in an accident. Their jeep had hit a small mine before our push off so Van Auken again had control of the company. We moved on into Baerenthal. The third battalion moved thru us and cleared Phillipsbourg, later we passed through them and cleared Obersteinbach at the German border.

With the two battalions align they crossed the border. Later the third battalion was attached to the 242nd and K Company under control of the 242nd attacked Ludwigswinkel. The 1st battalion was ordered to make a demonstration against Fischbach. B and C Companies received heavy fire from Fischbach. The small arms fire did not bother me as much as the artillery of which we receive plenty. My squad was dug in at the edge of the woods looking across an open field at Fischbach. I knew what trouble we would be in crossing that field to take the town. I believe it was in this area that Orval Stater was hit by a piece of artillery shrapnel as he jumped into a fox-hole. In our list of men KIA and DOW it shows him to be killed a few days earlier. Thank goodness, we had some artillery fire of our own.

We did a lot of mopping up of bypassed areas catching or killing the Germans that were separated from their units. In one area as we moved forward in trucks we spotted the largest artillery piece mounted on a self propelled tractor or halftrack. The legs for bracing were carried on another just like it. I think they said it was a 280mm rifle. There were two of them as I recall, but that was the only time I saw them. I was glad that we had them and wondered what the Germans people would think when they saw the pieces. They were not Americans or French guns, I am still trying to find out to whom they belonged to first.

I remember our battalion being on a hill and ahead of us was a German horse drawn convoy fleeing from us. Artillery and aircraft was called upon them. Afterwards as we moved upon the carnage and looked at the mess, it gave you a sinking feeling. Some of the horses were running around and you could see the terrible gashes in their bodies. We found a kitchen wagon and searching through it found a box containing Portuguese sardines. We loaded our field jacket pockets with them. To this day, they are the only sardines I will eat.

As we had been moving day and night we finally got a rest period. We had captured a German paymaster and we split the marks among the men in the company. We had some hot poker games going. I did not lose all of mine, later I

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gave mine away except for one that I still have. One time when were on the move our 4th platoon was in the rear. We had a time keeping up, but we staid right behind the rifleman in front of us. As we hiked, the riflemen ahead would string out and that would make us fall back quite away. When the front end stopped to rest it would take us some time to catch up and then they gave the order to move out. I pushed up to the front to where Van Auken was standing and asked him "Who in the hell was leading this parade". He looked down at his legs then at mine and said "I don't think my legs are any longer than yours".

Our CO Webster returned to the company along with his driver. March 23rd, we moved out and were on the road to Bruthweiller then on to Busenberg. Here we were ordered into Corp reserve but that did not last long. We did a lot of mopping up and shortly afterwards passed through the Siegfried Line. Anytime we captured a German SS, he was always given to Harry (Frenchy) to take back. I do not think that any of them ever reach a prisoner of war camp.

As I never kept a diary, I am copying the following from the History of Operations, 232nd Inf. Regiment. Departing the vicinity of Oberschlettenbach on 31 March, the 232nd Infantry moved by motor across the Rhine River to relieve elements of the 3rd Inf. Div. The convoy traveled approximately 206 kilometers, following a route east to Landau, north to Neustadt, north to Grunssstadt, east to Frankenthal, north to Worms crossing the Rhien River there then east to Buretadt, southeast to Vienheim, east to Weinhim, southeast to Schonau, crossing the Main River at Worth.

April 1st we assumed our attack and having a tank destroyer with us we spotted a German artillery unit pulling out of the woods to our right. We got the tank commander attention and pointed out the horse drawn artillery. They swung that tank around and fire one round so fast and as we watched, the round hit its object killing horses and men. Later that day our company had orders to take a small town near the Hassloch River. It was getting late and Webster sent in a platoon plus two jeeps with mounted machineguns on them. The large group got into the center of the town and was questioning the Berger Meiser and he told them that there were no Germans soldiers in the town. About that time an panzerfaus hit wounding about fifteen men. One of the jeeps driven by Bill Magrilio (Maggie) and with Dick Faulkner riding shotgun had taken the road that turned left at the edge of the town and stopped. Dick got out of the seat onto the ground and a panzerfaus hit the jeep, wounding Maggie and blowing most of his cloths off. Dick was not hurt. He pulled Maggie into a ditch and went for help. Don Tedrick of D Company drove up and saw Maggie in the ditch and they loaded him onto their jeep and took him back. When Dick came back, no Maggie, he learned later what happen. Lt. Watler and Charlie Bush were in the other jeep and they had stopped at the fork of the road at the entrance to the town and both of them were wounded. Sammy Demelas was badly injured in the center of the town and later died of his wounds. When Webster received the news of what had taken place he was really mad and as Battalion
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wanted him to take the town this night, he refused telling them he was going to wait till daylight. When daylight came, he ordered us to move on into the town. The road was about two feet deeper than the fields on each side. I was on the right side and there were about five large trees on my side spaced about fifty feet apart. When we reached the first tree we received rifle fire. I ordered Salters to fire at the houses ahead of us. When he first opened up, the rounds dug into the ground ahead of us. He raised his fire. We then received rifle fire from our left coming from trees up a slight slope on our left. Our mortar squads took care of them. Webster called for artillery fire giving the order to the FO Lt. William Oliver of Btry. A, 232nd FA Bn. He had them place the first rounds at the far end of the village and used first high explosives and than phosphorous shells interchanging them as he pulled the artillery fire back towards us. Van Auken had moved up across the road from me. In time, Webster pulled the fire too close for our comfort. Both Van Auken and I were calling for a cease fire as the shrapnel began to sing back our way. In fact, I took my shovel and dug a small hole in the ditch deep enough and long enough to get my head and chest down into it with my butt sticking out. Next thing I knew, Nick Diminico was on top of me. We finally got the shelling stopped and started to move out. I moved over and behind Van Auken and the next thing we saw was this old German in uniform jump out shouting "Comrade". He scared Van and myself, it is a wonder that neither of us shot him. I felt sorry for him as he was shaking so bad and scared. The area that he jumped out from was a loading area level with the road about ten by twenty feet. He had been located in the area where Salters rounds first dug into the ground when he fired, so I guess that and along with the artillery fire he thought he was done for. Most every time we expected some type of action, I always felt flush, but when it did happen, that feeling went away and I was OK. As we moved forward, I cut across to search out the first house on the right that stood out ahead of the other houses. The rest went to the house on the left of the road that went right into the town. I search the house and not finding anyone, I tossed a phosphorous grenade and left. I had heard firing and when I got to the house where the others were, Dickens looked at me and with a hideous laughter told me "I shot my first German". I left them and went back across the road and cut thru some buildings and came to a small fountain with a German Lt. on the ground. He said to me "put me away". He had been shot in the groin and had his left thumb shot off as clean as a whistle. I told him no, that our medics would soon be here and they would help him. Across the road to my left laid a German General, the one that Dickens had hit. This German Lt. became more concerned about his General than he was about himself. I took his rifle and bent the barrel, then walked over to the General. Dickens came up and started to take his metals off of him. I told him to leave the metals alone, they belong to him. Later

on, I saw some rifleman take them. Where the German Lt. laid was a road leading to the right of the town with several houses lining each side. I walked down about three houses saw a woodpile and set it on fire (Webster wanted to burn the town down). I thought I heard voices so I listen and heard more. They were coming from a cellar and locating the door opened it. I slammed it shut and quickly put out the fire. I walked back over to a house Webster was using as his CP. A rifleman came in and said he found an old German lady in a bed and the house was on fire. We got a medic with a stretcher and went down to the house. She must have been over one hundred years old, very senile not knowing what was going on. The house contained two beautiful accordions, one that I carried back to the CP and left it there. The German people began to move back into the town and coming out of their cellars. A German lady who owned the house with the old lady in it came running up and said to Frye, "Lt. Lt. mine house is on fire, what shall I do?". Frye answered "Let it burn". I always remembered this town as "Weinburg" as there was a sign just before we entered it that read Weinburg. Those who were wounded remember it as "Breitbunn". This day was April 2nd. We moved on headed for Mark-Heidenfeld.

We may have had a few firefights before getting to Mark-Heidenfeld, I do not remember. I was happy to see the white sheets hanging from windows when we got there. As we were walking through the town there were a lot of small kids standing on the side watching us. Mike Costa started yelling at them scaring the kids. I said, Mike why are you yelling at them? His answer was "They are the only ones I am not afraid of". (Mike was with us when we used the house back in the town of Saegemuhle for an OP. One morning he had orders to attend an artillery class and after he got back to our lines and going behind them, he startled Isadore Katz who shot him in the arm.) We moved on through and being tired we did not know one day from the next. Sometime during the night of April 3rd, we mounted trucks and rode them some distant then dismounted and hiked some more to the west edge of Wurzburg arriving there the early hours of April 4th. Around 0300 (3:00a.m.) we received orders to move out up to the Main River. At 0400, the Engineers having finished the Bailey bridge so foot troops could move over it, C Company was the leading company to cross. I was leading the right hand column and a rifle scout the left column. We crossed the bridge turned right then climbed down over boxes and crates to get to the wharf. We headed down river (north) going under the bridge and after arriving just a little better than opposite the Marienburg Castle we received fire. My squad crossed to the left side near the water edge and we laid a base of fire towards a building and the bridge ahead of us. We also received supporting fire from D Company who was located on the hill across the river. We then worked our way to the building and bridge. I went under the bridge but, as the road was blocked by large gates or doors, we could not pass through. I walked back to the doorway on the river side of the building. Harry Singer and a couple of riflemen were there. Then we headed back to the street that the building was located on and into a building opposite it. I thought Harry had followed us and in learning he had not went looking for him. I found him lying on the ground back in the doorway. I told him to come on and he looked up and hushed me saying "There's Germans in there" indicating the building. I pulled a pin from a grenade, threw it on top of the building, pulled Harry up onto his feet and got out of there. We moved east on a short street. As we passed an ally, we were fired upon. I crossed back and told Webster thinking the firing was coming from a window of another building. I jumped out a window into the alley, pulled a pin from a grenade and clap went a bullet by me. Realizing it came from down the alley, I threw the grenade into the window and then got out of the alley. With two other men, we entered the building and went to the top where we could look down on the scene to our south. We spotted the German the next time he exposed himself to fire again. He was standing behind a tall piece of rubble. The next time he exposed himself, all three of us fire at him. We waited and again he attempted to fire and the three of let go. After that he did not exposed himself again. We moved on to a small square that had a good size fountain and this led us to Dom Strazza (Cathedral Street), we moved on passing the Dom on its left following streets that led us eastward. We stopped two German old men and let them go, than someone decided they wanted to talk to them. We yelled for them to stop and come back but they kept on going. Salters was given orders to fire on them hitting and killing one. I do not remember what happened to the

other one. Meantime the tail end of the company was clearing out the area we just past through. We had several wounded there. As we were passing thru part of the park area, we stopped a German riding a bicycle. After being questioned, he was release and rode off going north. We are still moving eastward, now going past a few houses and rubble. The street ended here and we had to turn south. At the corner, the scout who was on my left and a little ahead of me was hit and killed. I believe he was Raymond C. Rauch, a rifleman who came to the company as a replacement. I did not know him. As we moved south, we received a lot of fire. I had Salters get over by some rubble and fire down the street spraying the area. Lt. Alvin White moved forward standing about forty or fifty feet to my left and a little behind. While we were talking as to where the firing may be coming from, I saw his helmet go spinning around the top of his head then fly off behind him. He stood there rubbing the top of his head. White was a fair complexioned guy but you could see him turn whiter. I walked over to him and asked to see. Bending his head down, I saw that the bullet had just skinned the top of his head enough to make it bleed. I picked up his helmet and liner and in handing them back to him, said if I were you I would keep these as a souvenir. (We stopped by Whites home in Albuquerque, NM in the seventies or eighties and he showed them to me) Part of Whites platoon came forward, my squad moved over to the left side of the street. Henry Andrechuk, the platoon Sgt. was to my right. He was hunched over and I could tell he was really scared, but who wasn't. We followed this street and it then made a left turn with the beginning of a small bridge that went over the railroad tract. We moved into the buildings that I believed was right next to the track. I had Salter place our gun in an open window looking at the end of the bridge and an eight or ten foot wall. Andrechuck and one or two riflemen went out the front door and moved over by my window. He was hit, then Thomas Booth, a rifle squad leader moved out the rear door and went up front and he too was hit. Both men died from their wounds that day. Lt. Frye came forward with the rest of the 4th platoon. After awhile, he decided that we had better fall back. The other machinegun squad had placed themselves in a doorway of the building facing the bridge. When they heard the order to pull back, the dummies pulled the back plate off their gun and left it. When I saw what they had done, I got the gun, told them to put the back plate back on. We pulled back several blocks and I think it was Dickens who asked me where's Diminco. I in turn asked Burns where he was as the two had been together. With a straight face he said "He's dead". Nick had gone out the wrong side of the building and had taken a bullet between his eyes. We moved back to a building on either Sartor or Crevenna Strasses. After the platoon had settled in one of the standing buildings on the north side of the street, I crossed the street and entered a building there. I went up into the attic and set down. As the windows were all shot out up there, I had a good view of the area, especially looking east. I sat down and being very tired and sleepy I would doze off for a minute or so at a time. I looked at the hill east of me, than I saw two German soldiers walking. I guess the distant and raised my gun sight and fire off one shot at them. They stopped and kind of squatted then moved on again. I readjusted the gun sight and fired off another shot. They jumped behind some bushes into a ditch. I thought to myself, well I gave them a good scare anyway. Later I crossed back over to the other building and try to get a little sleep. I do not know at what time, but it seems that we mounted our weapons carriers and were driven back to a building where our whole battalion was to spend the rest of the night. Our company was on the 2nd or 3rd floor. Webster asked me to wake him at 5:00a.m. I think he always asked several of us so that he would be sure to be awake. About 4:00a.m. a panzerfaus hit inside the building downstairs. No one was hurt but it scared the hell out of the guard. He had heard voiced talking in English near the jeeps, but they were English speaking Germans. They had pushed one of the jeeps down the street. Webster went down stairs, than came back up. He went down again then he was carried back up. He and another person had been hit in the leg by the same bullet. Several of us rushed to the roof of the building. Our FO officer Oliver was with us. He called for artillery fire and they placed it right where he called it. Dickens got a machinegun on a wall and began firing at some Germans who were crossing a street to the south of us. They were attacking our 3rd battalion. Later several of us saw a German soldier with a white handkerchief making his way towards us. Every now and then he would stop and look back. He was afraid of being shot in the back

by his people. I went downstairs to where they were just pulling him in through a window. He had a new uniform on with death head insignia on it. Strapped to his calf was a dagger with the death head on it. From the top of the building we were able to see the Marienburg Castle and noticed that the Heil Hitler and the swastika sign had been replaced with 42d Infantry Rainbow Division.

Just after we had entered this building, I found a beautiful flag with the name Wurzburg on it. I also found another flag with the swastika and eagle on it. I took this flag as I thought that it represented the regime we were fighting. Then too, it was not as heavy as the other flag. I hauled this flag to Schweinfurt where I was able to mail it home.

Sometime that morning (April 5th) we formed up to moved back to the areas we had left the night before. Someone had located a cellar full of champagne and we each were carrying two bottles of it. It was the best tasting champagne that I had ever tasted, before or after. The column stopped to rest and I set on some rubble looking down at a dead German lying in our pathway. Soon I noticed a photographer and he said something about moving the German and we told him no. About the time he got ready to take his first picture, we received orders to move out. I sat there long enough for him to take his first picture, than had to move on myself. I do not know what company was leading but when we got close to the area where we had been before, a rifleman was taking a prisoner back. Ardell Meiers ran over behind him and kicked him in the rear then put the machine pistol he carried into the mans back and pulled the trigger saying that's for my brother. I told him that it did not help his brother one bit. (His brother was a crewmember of a bomber that had been shot down over Germany) We moved on to the area of the small bridge. A light tank moved upon the bridge and our riflemen cleared the area taking five prisoners. S/Sgt. Palazzo brought them back to where Lt. Frye and our 4th platoon were waiting. The next thing I heard was Frye giving orders to shoot the prisoners. The Lt. in the tank shouted out " NO NO Not that way". The prisoners now realizing what was happening started jumping up and down, some trying to hide under their field coats. The German on the right end was saying "Mercy, Mercy, I have a wife and three children at home". This I could understand from my high school German. My squad did not take part in this I am proud to say. Burns felt something hit him and it turned out to be part of a skull bone.

After this area was cleared, we move on across the tracks to the German Military hospital on the hill. There was a tank on up the hill on fire and it then exploded and the turret went flying about fifty feet up into the air. The German General in charge came out to meet us. Bill Haupt had a skin problem on his face so he asked the General if he had something that would help him. The General sent his Aid de Camp to fletch what ever he told him, and the man did not move fast enough for the General so he said "hup-hup-hup" and the guy took off on a run. When he brought the medication back, he gave the Nazi salute with his Heil Hiter. We moved on to the north stopping in either Versbach or Rimparr for the night. The first thing I did was to find a house for Lt. Oliver and his two men for the night. I knew he was carrying a carton or two of that champagne and of course I was supplied with one or two.

April 6th, we pulled out heading north towards Arnstein. Somewhere along our route we were fired upon. The road ahead turned slightly to our left, then made a arc to the right, but the road also went below the ground level and this was where the Germans were located. Frenchy went out ahead talking to them but none was willing to surrender. Van Auken ordered mortar fire. DJ Bennett knelled down and I stood behind him bracing his back with my right leg. They fired several rounds and in watching them, they would go straight up into the air and come down on our target. They gave the order to cease firing but as the mortarman had thrown away the pin, they gave the OK to fire that round. It shot out of the tube and about ten to twenty feet in the air the fin flew off. Bennett and the mortar crew all shouted "short round". I watched the round go straight up out of sight then I took off on the run to the rear. Bennett remained where he was. I picked up the round as it came down and watch the round come down on his knee. His field jacket flew back as shrapnel went through him and it. He went down in a heap and then

there was a gurgling sound. I did not want to look at him so I waited until they had covered him up before I passed by. We worked our way up towards Arnstein, mopping up the area as we moved through. In one place we were on top of a small hill and on the flat ground east of us were some dogfaces moving towards us. I believe they were from B Company. Then mortars began to fall in among them. The ground being freshly plowed, the mortars buried themselves before exploding. The men would move one direction and the mortars would follow. Friendly fire is not pleasant to receive. It finally stopped and as far as we could tell, no one was injured. We did not go into Arnstein but by passed it heading on towards Schweinfurt. As we got closer we had to pass over some treed covered hills and the Germans using their anti-aircraft gun were firing airbursts over our heads. Lt. Oliver, the FO with our company was killed by this action. After we got out of the hills and were on flat ground, we double-timed it for about two miles. After breaking into a rout step, being so sleepy and tired I began to wonder if I could go on. I was ready to fall down. Then looking around at the other men, I told myself that if they can do it so can I and kept going. One thing we all learn when we got a break was to fall asleep fast, but it took just a second to wake up on hearing the words to move out.

Our regiment received orders to circle around to the backside of Schweinfurt. We were to block any attempts for the Germans to escape from the city. It was dark as we were passing through the town of Zell. There was a German machinegun located on the hill ahead of us and the gunner had zeroed in on the road. We watched the tracers as they came spinning on the ground towards us and we would jump over them. I think we had one or two hit up ahead of us. We made our way up the hills and as we approached the city from the north, we ran into a unit consisting of young boys, thirteen or fourteen years of age. As they put up a fight some of them were killed. I hated to see this happen but it was not of our making.

After Schweinfurt was taken, we occupied some beautiful homes and pulled guard duty at the railroad yard to prevent looting. It was here on April 12th that we learn that President Roosevelt had died. After a few days C Company joined the rest of the 1st battalion.

Somewhere along our march, the following things happened: It was cold and wet and we gathered up some wood and tried to make a fire. I found a half full five-gallon can with white paint that had six inch lid on top. Someone said to pour a little of it on the wood and when I did, it helped the wood to burn. A little later the fire burning down more wood was added and Hickey said to me "Pour some more paint on it". As I started pouring, the thing went woof and paint went flying all over Hickey. He started cussing me so I reminded him that he was the one who suggest that I pour more paint on. Casimer Judski one of our weapons carrier drivers was going to check out some Polish DPs' and asked me to go with him. We went to some farm where a good number of them had been working. They were having a dance and Judski and I went upstairs in this building where it was held. Judski being Polish and speaking the language was having a good time dancing with a very pretty Polish girl. I enjoyed watching. As we moved forward, they had us did in for the night. Of all places, we were in front of an Artillery outfit that was firing. I do not know whose brainstorm that was (or did they have any?). One early morning before daylight we had a heavy firefight taking a small town. Strack and a rifle squad and my squad were at the head. We were occupying a barn at the far end of the town and receiving rifle and machinegun fire. We did not know if they wanted us to go on or stay put. I went looking for Van Auken and when I found him, I asked him "Van, what in the hell is going on?" He looked at me, then looked at Col. Custer and said "Col., what in the hell is going on?" C Company had taken the town that B Company should have, so that meant that we had another town to take ourselves. Lucky, we did not have to fight for it. The house that we occupied belonged to a shoe cobbler and there were many pairs of shoes around. RE Bennett saw a Polish girl go walking by without shoes and he called her in and fitted her with a pair of shoes. Before long, here came more Poles wanting shoes. Bennett had the time of his life giving away shoes. The German cobbler standing in the road was pulling at his hair saying "Alles is Kaput".

Somewhere in this area as we moved through, we saw a Dutch girl (Holland Dutch) who worked as slave labor on a farm. We thought she was the most beautiful girl we had seen.

April 23rd found C Company leading our battalion. The area was slight hilly and as we walked into this small town, there was a German tank on the right located in the valley of two hills that open fired with it 88's on us. Wham bam. We pulled back little ways and artillery fire took care of it. Rather than follow the road which ran through the town and turned left, we cut to our left and went through the woods. When they came to an open area surrounded on three sides by the trees the leading scout started cutting across the field. He had not gone very far when all hell cut loose. The call went out for our machineguns to move forward. We moved forward lining ourselves behind the trees as you could hear the rounds hitting trees or going past you. When I got up there, "Blackie", Ed Czurzynski pointed out the area of the tree line across the field where machinegun fire was coming from. There was a cart path in front of us that was a little lower than the field and we moved there fast. I tried to get Salters to fire at the tree line before us but he did not want to expose himself. I had to jump over him to get to the gun, then I raked the tree line with fire. The German gun open up on me and I had a hard time seeing where it was coming from and Blackie was yelling directions at me. I finally spotted the smoke and open up on it. We were then fired upon by two other machinegun, one to the left and one to the right located on a slight sloping hill hid behind some bushes. I took turns firing on them and the gun in front of me would open up. I used up the two boxes of ammunitions we had. The other machinegun did not try to give me

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supporting fire. I ran over to them, grabbed their two boxes of ammunition and ran back to my gun. All the time being shot at. I finally knocked out the three guns. The barrel of my gun was so hot it turned yellow-red and kept firing several rounds after I took my finger off the trigger. The riflemen crossed the field, but as we did not have any more ammunition we did not follow them but took another rout into the town of Dockingen. We entered a house and on the floor laid John Strack and another man, both had been hit. Strack looked up at me and said, "Oh Carner it hurts" I said John I know it does than moved on out of the house. The Company moved on meeting light resistance. We reach the Danube River and had tanks from the 20th Armor Division waiting with us for the Engineers to construct a bridge. Two of our men walked down river away and found a dugout with two Germans in it. As we were being shelled it was a safe place for them. I do not remember if we were rowed across or waited till the bridge for the tanks was finished. Anyway we headed east and crossed the Lech River over a blown bridge. We turned left as there was a small town in that direction. As we looked across a field which had low lying mist above it, and we could see the top windows of the houses, I think we all had a deep gut feeling that this was going to be bad. Then, we saw white sheets come out of the windows and what a relief and happy feeling that was. I do not remember if we entered the town or turned south.

We moved southeast towards Munich, by riding tanks, trucks and tanks again. On one road the tank I was on went off the road and was stuck. As there was a German barn close by, we spent the night inside it. The next morning another tank came back and pulled our tank back onto the road. We rode into Munich where I caught up with my platoon. They were inside of a house and a fellow in a prison uniform came in and asked if we wanted a radio. We told him sure and in a few minutes he came back with one. This guy looked pretty healthy and I often wondered if he was a German dressed in the prison uniform and trying to hide by wearing it. In our travels we did not see any of the concentration camps.

We moved out of Munich to a small town of Voagen b. Bruckmuhl where we remained several days. There was a small creek and a small dam near by so we went swimming in the ice water. It was refreshing and cleaning as we had not bathed for several weeks except for what we could out of our helmets. May 8th, we got the news that the war here was over. Van Auken brought a case of ½ pint bottles of 180 proof rum to our platoon. I found myself on the floor trying to figure out how I was going

to get up the stairs to the bed. I should had known better than to drink it as when we first arrived in Fiji I had gone to Nandi and when I headed back to the air base, I was drinking the same type rum. I was walking so it took a little while for me to get there. There too, I found myself on the ground trying to figure how to get up in my bunk. Some of the other fellows discovered a car next door so they proceeded to take it and drove off a twenty-foot embankment. They were so drunk that none were hurt. There was a beer house down the street from us and a few of our Officers were in it. I was going to go down and have a few beers

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myself and some of the fellows advised me not to go as the Officers were there. I told them that the Officers were not afraid of me or I of them and went and was received with open arms with them shouting Carner come on in.

A day or so later, we boarded trucks and headed for Austria. The road we took was carved out of solid rock wide enough for one-way traffic and the mountain dropped straight down. Looking across at the hill opposite us I was glad the war was over as we would have been sitting ducks on that road. I remember seeing a sign naming one of the little towns we past through "Going". We move on to either Kitzbuhel or St. Johann. Judski was going somewhere in his jeep so I rode along. We went by the German Army camp. All their guns were piled into one big heap. I did notice that they had German women in uniforms working as cooks.

They stuck a few of us way out on a road block and this was where I remained until they said count your points. On May 28th I left my company headed for home. We went to Kitzbuhel then to Innsbruck. Standing inside of the front of the open truck stood Terry Sullivan from my old regiment, he had been our regimental photographer. We rode the trucks to Worms where we spent a week eating and sleeping. Guess they were trying to fatten us up. We boarded a Hospital train and traveled to Paris but was not allowed off the train. As we left riding west I was able to see the Eiffel Tower in the distant. We arrived in Le Havre where again we spent a week eating and sleeping. Finally we boarded a Coast Guard Transport and sailed for Boston. Victor Mature was a boatswain mate aboard. He was very friendly and would talk to anyone. When we arrived and docked in Boston, a very beautiful woman came aboard and left. He was on the dock and after she got several feet ahead of him he held himself and ran after her. The cheers went up for him. I spent a few days at some camp in Boston then boarded a train to head west. I arrived some days later at Camp Beal near Marysville, CA. I had the same old type physical, say ah, strip it, bend over and spread your cheeks. Not once was I given a EKG or was told my teeth had bad cavities. I was discharged July 2, 1945 given my pay and a bus ticket home. Amen...Oh yes, I had to register for the draft.

Continental service: 0 years, 6 months, 18 days.

Foreign Service: 4 years, 2 months, 29 days.

When we were inducted, we had to sign up in the "United States Army", I was discharged from "Army of the United States". Question: Am I legally discharged?