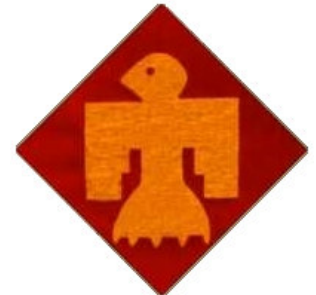


HERO FOR A DAY



By
Keith Christensen



Second Award



HERO FOR A DAY

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DEDICATION

This book is respectfully dedicated to the few, the unlucky ones, the small percentage of veterans who served thirty days or more on the line and were not wounded. They saw death, lived with death, and caused death.

Today they are deserving combat veterans who are treated the same as non-service connected veterans. They have a blue card from the VA.

He that has borne the battle.....Ha!

SPECIAL THANKS

My colleague, Jim White, a mathematics teacher when I served as a school counselor ultimately convinced me to put my memoirs into print after listening to me and prodding me for my stories of my WWII episodes. We spent many hours talking about what I saw in WWII and Korea in his office as an administrator shortly before his retirement, and both his and my home. You will not find a truer friend than Jim.

Shirley Henderson, the wife of one of our junior high principals and family friend, began the timeless task of typing-in my hand written notes. Jim finished the book for me, assisted me in its copyright and Library of Congress designations. He is a computer guru and can do things with a computer, I have trouble doing things with a screwdriver. The book's cover was his idea as well.

Thanks to all of my readers who have also served as "proof readers." Each time it is read, we find unfinished items or needed corrections. As Jim suggests, "it is a work in progress."

Thanks to all – enjoy.

PROLOGUE

It's the middle of 1942 and the war has been going for six months or so. The services are expanding and equipment and manpower are slowly being brought up to projection. Let's follow the lives of two young twenty-one year old citizens in their contribution to the war effort.

These are two young men, alike in every way except one needs glasses to meet the service physicals. Both are high school graduates...maybe one year or two of college. One has a surname of recognition in political or financial circles; the other is from the mid-west. His father earned a Silver Star and Purple Hearts in WWI.

Both men have now finished their basic training. The mid-west GI is now started in advanced AIT (Advanced Infantry Training); the "Ivy League" has started pilot's training.

It is now January, 1943. Both men have completed their training and have been assigned overseas as replacements. One a corporal, the other a second lieutenant. They have reached their new units, settled in, and have just been assigned their first combat mission.

Both go out in combat. Both are lucky. The corporal was on a combat patrol and the second lieutenant on an escort sortie. Both meet the enemy, both fire, and both score a kill. Maybe more than one on the ground.

But what happens now? The corporal returns to his unit. The platoon suffered WIA's and KIA's (wounded and killed in action). The second lieutenant has a wingman who witnessed his kill and a wing camera to confirm. The corporal has only his own memories and shares his thoughts with his God. Maybe he can share with a buddy. But, since all were busy, maybe no one saw the corporal's actions. Also, the patrol returns to their unit, still under artillery and mortar fire while the second lieutenant goes back to a base with drinks, hot food, and a shower.

This type of action takes place four more times. Each man now has a total of five

enemy killed. But, the corporal is still with his unit, still under fire, and still most likely not receiving any recognition for his kills. The second lieutenant is now an ace, he has been awarded the air medal with stars and probably more, probably been promoted to first lieutenant, maybe sent back to the Zone of Interior (US) for speeches and public relations tours for bonds and helping the war effort.

Now it could be argued that the deaths of the ten enemy were different in value. Different in cost, etc. After all, the five planes cost more than a man's equipment and all were commissioned officers. This approach to reinforcing our propaganda tried to negate one basic fact: all men cost the same to make and only God makes men.

I don't care to argue with anyone on this. I believe in equality of man. However, before some eastern oligarchy few get too riled up with my impertinence, please consider these comments. If people (men) do vary in value, where would this world and the United States be today, if an Austrian corporal, a paperhanger by trade, had been KIA in World War I?

INTRODUCTION

This book is actually my autobiography. Thirty-five years associated with the service. From CMTC (Citizens Military Training Camp), ROTC (Reserve Officers Training Corp), EAD (Extended Active Duty), USAR (United States Army Reserve), EAD (Korea), to USAR and retirement in 1974 to the USAR, 1939-1974.

I will write what I remember, what I saw, what I said, incidents and actions, and any memory that must have been important enough to me that I can recall. Don't all of us remember what we want to remember? I'm also positive that there are catatonic (blank) areas in all of us.

However, whatever the outcome of this written account, I want to make one thing clear...you don't have to accept my comments, believe my recalls, or accept my military prowess or events. And, I do not want to argue or debate my history. Unless you (the reader) have served at least thirty days on the line, witnessed and caused death, you are not qualified to a debate or confrontation. Combat is a unique exposure to life and death and all the reading, lectures, or empirical knowledge (after the fact) one may experience does not qualify one as a debater.

Most everyone has heard or read of the five blind men and the elephant. In essence, the point of the fable is that personal memory all depends on where you were standing when the incident occurred (time and place). So often in war there are so many distractions within the same time frame that the participants do not recognize each other's account of the fire fight. This is certainly not true in the match between two fighter pilots who are pitting their skills on a one-to-one basis. And, let the best pilot-plane win. . .with some luck.

I may appear to be hard on the academies. Not true! I will, however, be hard on the recipients of the training received at the academies (excellent education) when these commissioned officers violate the basic rules of leadership. Too many, (probably 1%

and that's too many) put their personal status, promotion, and assignments ahead of the welfare of their men. There are not enough casualties in the field grade ranks in recent wars or actions. (A patrol is a small war to the members of the patrol.) I saw too much arrogance in World War II and Korea in the regular army corps. Since this corps is the base of our defense, we cannot afford to keep or support a professional who puts his or her status ahead of his or her MOS (Military Occupational Specialty). This MOS is the educational training job or ability of the individual. If it includes a command function, the welfare of the assigned personnel is a paramount concern. No man in my squad or platoon ever was WIA or KIA that I wasn't within fifty feet.

I enjoyed the service. I loved combat. Don't get me wrong; I was scared, cold, and hungry many times. War and combat, however, does give a young man an exposure to the truth of a man. Nowhere in life can one find or see this short-cut to reality. If you got it, we know in minutes. If you don't, you're labeled. There is no room or allowance for the "blowhards," con-men, politicians, "smoothies," or any type of fraud personality so common in one's span of life. In combat you put up or shut up. You can soldier and live, sometimes, or cower and die. The beauty of the end result is that whatever your formative years, values, faith made you, this is what governs your decision(s) when the "shit is hitting the fan." I'm sorry to say, however, that too often the good die young and the "cowards" come home.

This great country has had its share of wars and conflicts. How many days or dead does it take to constitute a war? A police action? A conflict? Etc.? My genealogical family has always been represented in a time of need. None to my knowledge have been regular army for a career. All, that I'm aware of, were in the service during a war period. Most were in combat. I'm proud to be a part of this involvement.

On my father's side, the service starts with my father. His parents, my grandfather and grandmother, came here from North Slesvig-Holstein. My father enlisted in 1917 and served over two years in World War I and was discharged in 1919. He served in "D" BTRY, 6th Field Artillery, 1st Division in Europe. He was wounded four times and awarded the Silver Star (which I'm going to get from the service). He seldom talked about the war, but on my return from World War II he would comment now and then. He experienced his share of discomfort from his wounds but would not apply or accept any VA compensation. After his death in 1948, we were able to establish a claim to assist my mother with a widow's pension.

I will delete any comments about myself as the book is me. My son was in college during the draft status of the Viet Nam War, so has no military service.

On my mother's side, we can go back to the Pilgrims, I guess. The first record of military service was an Amos Damon (name only) who served in the 5th Massachusetts. Was there such a unit? Then my maternal grandfather was represented in the Civil War. He was in six years and I have his service records for both three-year hitches. I believe he was 16 when he enlisted. At 5' 11" he was a tall man for his time. He died at 97 so since I've been told I take after him physically; maybe I have some time left. Ha! I met him in 1937 or so, a fine old gentleman. I don't know if he was wounded or not, but I remember he was quite deaf. (Comments from my mother?)

From this genealogical history I can remember being envious as a kid. Gosh, but my grandfather and dad were lucky. They got to go to war. After all, World War I was the war to end wars...wasn't it? How wrong I was. I had to out-guess the army a few times to achieve combat experience, but I have two wars in the infantry (by choice) to my credit or maybe my debit.

CHAPTER 1

NOSTALGIA

Can memory be selective? Can the mind control exact recall? Why do we remember incidents so clearly in some cases and draw a blank in others? I don't know! One would think that only the more or most pleasurable would or could be subject to recall. This is hardly true, however.

Have you ever tried to recall the exact pain of an injury? Or, the exact trauma or hurt in the loss of a loved one? Thank God we can't. We can recall the generalized pain, but never the exact. If we were able to mentally experience pain on demand, I wonder how many babies each woman would have?

I have always found it more exacting and satisfying to write an idea or explanation than to attempt to verbalize. I probably am a bit verbose either way. However, through the years I have used simple verse. (English definition: to express a point or convey a message.) Kind of like a valentine...it is much easier to send a card than to use the three little words face to face.

Many years ago, probably twenty or so, I was experiencing a period of being pissed off at the administration of the school system where I worked for twenty-three years. This administration was and is so typical of most in the United States. A lot of lip service on the welfare and education of the students, our children, the citizens of tomorrow, but no physical backing. Show me a school system where the kids have rugs and air conditioning.

Anyway, this pissed off attitude made me recall the same arrogance and ineptness so common in the military and politics. For my own satisfaction and to relieve the tension and blood pressure, I wrote a series of four line comments to verse. Lines which are factual, sarcastic, past and current, but all relating the past with the present and lamenting that we really haven't learned or benefited too much by all of our wars. We probably never will as long as "assholes" sit in the driver's seat.

Maybe what these United States need is an honest dictator; a leader who would put the welfare and concerns of the populace first and ignore the special interests, including the military. I exclude the military for their interests always include the citizen soldier (service men/women) whenever their leadership leads us into war. It is not the regular army/service who has won all the wars since the Spanish-American but the citizen soldier. This statement may raise the hackles of the academy corps, but we'll pursue this line of thought later. I challenge the top brass to deny that from time to time in history they have purposefully voided their own basic axiom of leadership. The axiom that the welfare of their men and accomplishment of the mission is their paramount concern.

I had my WWII company commander read and comment on the third printing of this manuscript. He received his captaincy on February 45. He retired as a BG in the 70's in the USAR. I respect and appreciate his comments. He put up a warning flag on

my comments of an honest dictator. I cannot fault his comments but will quote and then a short retort.

He stated: "When suggesting an honest dictator on p2, you need to remember that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts, absolutely. We are all men and no matter how good, when in positions of power are tempted to use it to further our own interests. Look at the Hebrew Kings in the Old Testament, who start out as "good guys," as well as our own presidents and generals.

My comment: there was one who could fit the description – Jesus Christ.

There is no chronological sequence to verses although most relate to WWII and Korea. I numbered the verses A-K to avoid repetition and will refer to the verse number, in sequence, on the elaboration.

WHAT'S WRONG?

- A. AS LONG AS TITULAR MEN
CAN MAKE TAKING LIFE LEGAL
AND THE DEAD HEAD COUNT
BECOMES SOMETHING REGAL
- B. WHERE THE NATIVES OF THE LAND
TORN BY WAR-WITHOUT HOPE
AND ONE CAN BUY A WOMAN
FOR A MERE BAR OF SOAP
- C. WHERE DEATH IS SO COMMON
YOU ABHOR ONLY THE SMELL
AND IF GOD HAS GRACED THIS ACTION
WHY MUST IT RESEMBLE HELL
- D. WHERE DDT WAS A BLESSING
FOR THE POOR AND THE RICH
AND ALL LINED UP FREELY
TO RID THEMSELVES OF THE ITCH
- E. WHERE MOTHERS WITH BABIES
BEGGED FOOD FROM THE GARBAGE LINES
AND SOME OF OUR "HEROS"
POURED COFFEE GROUNDS ON THEIR FINDS
- F. IN HISTORY SO FAR HAS COME A TIME
WHEN THE PROFITS HAVE BEEN WON
AND OUR "TITULARS" SO GRACEFULLY
HAVE SAID, "WELL DONE."
- G. AND HOME COME THE MEN

BACK TO THEIR YESTERDAYS AND TOMORROWS
AND TIME SOON ALLEVIATES
THE PAIN AND ALL THE SORROW

- H. ONE PICKS UP WHERE HE WANTS TO
A NEW JOB, NEW CAR AND WIFE
AND ALL HE'S REALLY ASKING
IS THE RIGHT TO LIVE HIS LIFE
- I. BUT LIFE IS OH SO RELATIVE
FOR OUR "TITULARS" REMAIN
AT ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY
AND ONCE AGAIN THERE'S PAIN
- J. FOR THEY LIVE EACH DAY TO PERPETUATE
THEIR POWER AND THEIR GOAL
A PITTANCE FOR THE CITIZEN
LET GOD CARE FOR HIS SOUL
- K. WILL THERE EVER BE A DAY
BETTER NOW THAN THEN
WHEN ALL IN THIS WORLD
CAN LIVE WITH HONESTY AMONG MEN.

Verse A. How many of you remember the daily publishing of "actual" dead during the early phase of the Viet Nam War? How exact and correct this count was became suspect after a period of time. In fact, it would be interesting and a Master's or Doctor's study to go back and research all the newspapers for a total count of all enemy dead. I'm sure one would find that the total was far greater than all the combatants available to the NVF.

This propaganda has always been the case in all wars...especially unpopular wars. Keep the home front baffled with BS, censure the truth, pick out "heroes" for citations, and maintain some support.

Verse B. Here we can have some fun. For some reason I can remember these few days like yesterday, yet they were days in early October 1944.

I had landed in LeHarve as a buck-ass private and, like so many thousands of replacements walked up the hill to, I believe, Camp Lucky Strike. (I wonder if the camps would be named after cigarettes today.) After a few days there, we loaded into trucks (I don't remember a train) and were trucked to Givet, Belgium. It was overcast and raining as I recall but Givet was an old, quaint little mountain town.

We were quartered in a moat near an old castle. As far as concealment from German air observation, this was fine but from a standpoint of our health, it was a mess. Damp! Damp! Damp! We were in GP (general purpose) tents and fed "C" rations. The rations were heated in GI cans with GI heaters. If warm, C rations are not

bad. You took what was handed you and, if not to your liking, you could barter with a buddy or on an exchange.

Most replacements, at least at this time in the war, were young men. Young men away from home and mother, in a foreign country, in the uniform of the U.S. Army, but still young men. Young men in their sexual prime. Ready to go and willing to go. So, someone saw, smelled or found the LeChatz Noir, (the black cat) a whorehouse built into the side of the mountain. (I understand these were chains of houses in France and Belgium). The word got out and away we went.

The MP's were stationed at the entrance of the building. I believe 4-5 stories. Nevertheless, the GI's who discovered this "oasis of love" also had help from the girls in bypassing the MP's. I can remember how we would follow the moat(s), then climb out and stay low on a hillside until we reached the house. There was a back verandah and a chicken coop below the hillside. We could jump down the chicken coop roof, then to the verandah, then into the house. Some of the girls were always waiting with guide service.

I should clarify the terms girls. These women were not young...young meaning 18-20 or so. I would judge most were 25-35, with the majority, or mean, about 30. Some were married, or had been, and some had children. None of the children were present. At least I didn't see or remember any kids. And, none of the women were from this area. Most or all were here from larger cities and here to avoid the bombing and occupation of the war. We gleaned this general information from our meager knowledge of French and German mixed with their knowledge of English. I felt at the time that they were leveling with us. They had nothing to gain by attempting to exploit our sympathies. Please remember we were twenty-year old studs and we weren't there to discuss the problems of the times.

I suppose some of the men had some American cash on them. We had been in the States less than thirty days prior to our visit. We had not been paid so had no scrip, army money. However, the girls did not want money of any type. Money was worthless as there was nothing to buy. Barter was far more effective so I imagine that was reason for the soap in exchange for the lay. We had been versed on the medium of exchange so we all had our ration of soap.

The girls were very pleasant and cooperative, not all business-like the reputation of our American houses. I didn't see or hear the traditional assembly line approach with "next" being one of the few words spoken.

One can ready a myriad of explanations of why a woman becomes a professional. And, supposedly all pros hate men. I cannot accept this explanation as too accurate. Remember that here we had dozens of young, clean, sober men who since they were in the army had a very small possibility that they were infected with gonorrhea or syphilis. This was the good old days where clap and/or syphilis or pregnancies were the only worry of any sexual partners. We did not have the exotic herpes and AIDS, etc., nor did we have the medicine for curing what we have today. Penicillin had just come to the medicinal arsenal. (1942?)

The girls were busy. Busy, busy, busy! They didn't have to work too long that first day with their customers. It was slam-bam, thank you ma'am, for the most. However, we visited the house several times a day for several days running. Now even a young man slows down. Sex is like an appetite, as you catch up on your needs, the action becomes more difficult than the thought. So, the girls started to work harder for their soap. I remember so clearly one poor gal lying on the bed in a room as I passed by...naked and pooped. Her "business" was exposed to the world. It was red and sore, I'll bet, and tired, and so was she. I thought to myself how exacting the Good Lord was when he made man. How he added and detracted in the right areas of anatomy. Just think how few children there would be in the world...man would have died out before he started...if the Good Lord had put eyes and a nose in the gland of a penis. If it could see or smell where it was going, we'd have a hell of a lot less sex. Just kidding! I love ladies! And, I'll admit a penis is no thing of beauty.

A true entrepreneur. We had one in our group. This cheap (or smart) GI cut the soap in half and had twice as much "love" for his bar. The girls stalled and fussed with him but one would always leave with him. I'm sure his lay was strictly business.

I do not recall names of buddies like some veterans can. Oh, I remember some that were KIA like yesterday but many of the replacements who came after me to my unit are hardly faces. It strikes me as unique then that one of the members of this stud brigade stands out like yesterday. His last name started with C, he was from the L.A. area, and was of Mexican-American parentage. He also was hung. He stood there the first day in true anticipation with one genuine hunk of salami standing straight out. The girls, at least 4-5, surrounded him with jabber, smiles, head shaking, etc. Finally, one nodded in the affirmative, I'm sure to the relief of the others. And off they went for their "roll in the hay."

U.S. servicemen have been catching hell from some noted sociologists for years. Hell, in the sense that all our sexual adventures should be punishable if a pregnancy occurs. Since sex has been the subject of these past pages, let's explore that theory.

First, one must realize that the type and depth of sexual involvement is directly related to the current conditions of the area where the sex is obtainable. By this, I mean if combat conditions are present, only the professional approach to sex is available. Okay, I'll admit that a few true "lovers" seem to score anywhere...anytime. However, if the war has moved or left the area, then the boy-girl relationship blooms. It is usually under these conditions that pregnancies occur.

I have no quarrel with the theory or fact that any man should be held responsible for his sexual activities. I question, however, if the responsibility should be 100%. It takes two to tango and always will.

Why the pregnancies? There is no easy answer but the Good Lord in his infinite wisdom made only two kinds of people, male and female. Man tacked on nationalities, cultures, religion, life-styles, etc. And, in wartime, people still eat, sleep and drink. And where is the best source of food...the service man. So, with bartering of physical favors, a universal action, some women any place in the world, traded sex for

subsistence. Sometimes the trade becomes permanent and marriage and children result. Most often, however, the half-breed children of this barter are left to fend for themselves. All too often, the father moves on or goes back to the States and discharge back to civilian life.

I understand that some countries, Great Britain, France for example, recognize their responsibility in this area and have laws and regulations to assist the women and children of these servicemen's folly. The U.S. does not! At least the procedures are so involved and complex that they usually nullify any hope.

My main gripe with this interpretation of our role in these "barter" or "trade" love nests is not that we should be obligated to support the child or children, but the hypocrisy of the experts condemning our actions and dictating our legal recourse. I wonder how pure and moral some of these U.S. experts are. Or, if maybe they can't get a man themselves so resent the attention gleaned by the non-American women?

There has not been a war on U.S. soil since the War Between the States. Let us hope there never will be. The American women have been spared the horrors and miseries of war for over 100 years. We've been lucky in that we have furnished the troops, not the real estate, for our last four wars.

I wonder, however, with the outspoken critics of the servicemen, that if the next one (war) is on U.S. soil and we lose how long before they would barter or trade to stay alive. A dear acquaintance of mine, someone I respect very much for her wisdom, was on the phone once and I asked her that question. Her reply, "She'd be in bed as soon as she got real hungry...for sure in 30 days max." (The basic difference between the sexes is that the female always has something to sell or barter.)

Verse C. Actually, there was very little odor to death in the ETO. The climate is similar to our Midwest (prairie states) with a range of cold to hot-temperate zone. I didn't get to the ETO until the fall of 1944 so maybe the summer months were a problem. All the KIA's in most cases, however, were picked up within hours or days whenever possible. (I understand that the heat alone in the South Pacific Theater caused the bodies to bloat in hours.)

I didn't like to see the first dead I was exposed to and I quickly developed a personal philosophy to help me accept the dead. There were four kinds of dead in this war and any war. Since we were at war, the first and paramount job was to kill the enemy, so there were enemy dead and field gray. Then GI's also died so some dead in OD 33. (No one wore fatigues in the fall of 1944. All wore OD 33, which was extremely good quality 100% wool and warm.)

The next types of dead were the civilians and children and finally, the animals. I never did get adjusted to seeing dead children, dogs, horses, cows, etc. You'll never forget the cries of a wounded horse. Somehow, it didn't seem fair that they should die for the stupidity of man. What had they done wrong?

With the enemy dead and ours, I developed this simple philosophy. If the dead were the enemy, tough, but you lost. If the dead were ours, I'm sorry, buddy, but rather you than me. Some years ago, we initiated a new term in medicine...PTSD. Could not

the problems plaguing some veterans today be directly correlated to this area of survival; conscience versus fact? More on this later.

God must have been very, very busy during this and every war as prayers for success and his blessings on the action, mission, or attack were offered by both armies. How did he decide which prayer was answered? Wehrmacht or GI?

I always considered the Wehrmacht good, sensible soldiers. I believe Wehrmacht means defense force. The SS were a psycho bunch of fanatics, so blinded and poisoned by their politics and zeal that they were beyond respect and consideration. They remind me today of the young crop of politicians that after their victory at the polls spent the next four years applying their own personal philosophies on the American public...even at our demise.

Verse D. This assistance by the U.S. Army was probably of short duration. As soon as hostilities ended, it didn't take the civilians long to return to normal living...short on basic supplies, however.

In World War I histories, I have read of similar help for the civilian populace. However, I believe autoclaves were the only source of the sterilization. A question comes to my mind on the autoclave. With woolen clothing, how did the medics accomplish this without shrinking the hell out of the clothing?

With DDT, I believe I asked about the strength and believe I remember a 6 or 10% answer. Anyway, I can remember the civilians standing in line and raising their arms for the application of the DDT powder up each arm to the armpits. I suppose an application was made to the crotch area, but that area of application doesn't bring a recall.

Looking back, I wonder what the poor devils did when the eggs hatched days later after the adults were killed. Unless the clothing was washed, or what, the eggs hatch. Get a good dose of crabs sometime or lice and see for yourself. Fun! Fun!

Verse E. This incident happened in January 1952 while stationed on Koji-Do Island. I think it offers an excellent insight to the myriad of problems so common in an army. Probably more so with the United States Army due to the composition of the troop numbers. First, however, let me describe the incident, which triggered the analogy.

Food lines (mess) and garbage lines are the same the world over. The area was plain. I mean plain. We did not have GP tents or tables to eat on like shown in M*A*S*H. You were served in the open, ate in the open, and washed your mess gear in the open. We were stationed there (Koji-Do) to guard North Korean and Chinese POW. Our company was assigned compound 66, the top brass compound.

Koji-Do is an island south of the Korean peninsula about 10 by 30 miles in area. It was loaded with the "overflow" of war. There were mama-sans and kids everywhere. I heard that there were also 2000 (where did the number originate?) whores on the island. I can honestly say that "heard" is as close as I got.

These women with kids in tow and on their back would stand around the garbage lines (we corrected this problem quickly) and beg for scraps from the GI's.

They had various types of utensils for this effort.

On this particular day I noticed and heard some of the men in my platoon laughing, pointing and cajoling the women. Then when the women would offer her container for the food, the soldier would pour his left over coffee with grounds into her currently obtained food. I halted this sadistic crap by making it clear that either you dump your garbage or let the women have it without the adulteration effort.

When the draft was effected after war was declared, the range of ages obligated was 18-42. In the middle of 1942, the top age was lowered to 38. At least the change was effected by January 1943. The initial range gave you 24 years of education, living, wisdom, vocation, etc. A lot of years and a lot of differences. Some differences, of course, were of a negative nature. A man who has lived forty years usually has a more varied philosophy and life style than the neophyte just out of high school at eighteen.

These negative mature differences! All drafted and enlisted were administered the Army General Classification Test. AGCT. This was just another form of an IQ test. The only MA/CA formula. I doubt if much else was gleaned from the score received. The range here was 0-150. I believe 80 or 90 were the minimum necessary for induction.

The point I want to make in all these comments is that there is no test or methods used, to my knowledge, to screen and eliminate from service the true psychos, oddballs, sadists, dysfunctional types. I would prefer not to have them in my unit. I vaguely remember talking with, I assume, a psychologist. He asked me if I liked girls. A man about 25 or so was crying and pleading in the next booth for approval...his problem?

Verse F. A dear friend of mine has said many times...when I get on one of my idealistic serenades...he that has the gold, makes the rules. And, there is profit in war. Not the uniformed citizen, but the politicians and their "suppliers." Krupp, DuPont and all the blue chip corporations. As I wrote once to one of my senators, maybe the draft should be selected inversely by the last year of individual's IRS 1040 filing. Start at \$50,000 a year and up. After all, they have the most to lose. Ha!

I don't want to spend too much time on this verse. I will elaborate later in other chapters on some pet peeves. But, we won and one year later the greatest army in the world was a shadow. Five years later in the "Police Action" we scraped the barrel again and rebuilt our war machine. Of course, thousands of American men died during the interim. Not the "TITULARS," just the American men.

The services set up their own system of discharging and riffing. The army used a point system. What an insult to the combat veteran. In brief, why should the greatest "contest" of all, war and combat, be graded by time and intention alone?

I know of no other area of recognition in competition that gives a letter to whoever wears the uniform. This same recognition is used today by the various veterans' organizations and the Veterans Administration in adjudicating compensation. He that has borne the battle...Ha!

Verse G. Yes, home come the men. They left some years ago as boys and grew up, oh, so quickly.

The greatest positive change this great country has ever seen and experienced

was WWII. Prior to explosion and destruction of customs, mores, and folkways caused by the movement due to the war and preparation prior to, the declaration of war was the greatest positive change the American society has ever seen or experienced. Americans got to see how the "other half" lived. We all got to see the "other side of the street." To share through the exchange of daily living each other's idiosyncrasies. (In 1941 the furthest west I'd been was Medora, North Dakota, the South Dakota border to the south, Grand Forks, North Dakota to the north and Duluth, Minnesota to the east.) Since 1941 I've had, but not always enjoyed, extensive travel thanks to the United States Government Travel Bureau.

The main point I'm trying to make here is that the veteran who came home was seldom the boy who left. His interests, his love, his needs and habits, wants, etc. were foreign to many. Mothers shed a lot of tears trying to understand and accept this "new" child.

Time can be a dear, dear friend. Most problems or questions will be answered by time. Pre-war marriages and many marriages during the war were broken by this change in the veteran. Some brought home pain that never left and never will. New medical terms for psychosis and catatonia (of the mind and body), shell-shocked and combat fatigue are now all lumped under PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). What a Pandora's Box!

Verse H. I don't believe many returning veterans of all branches settled into a set routine for at least 30-90 days after discharge. The uniform was respected; you were appreciated. Some acts and comments even made one feel that he truly was a "HERO FOR A DAY."

I suppose most of us lost sleep, money and our "health" in trying to catch up with the girls. One learns one fact quickly during wartime and separation. Sex is either a feast or a famine. We were home now, older and wiser, and years had been lost. Look out honey, here I come!

None of us had any special order on job, car, or wife. Most of us didn't have any of the three. A car, if it ran, cost a fortune. New cars were non-existent. The changeover was just starting. I bought a 1935 Ford V8 for \$300.00. Its cost new in 1935 was \$580. But it ran, and wheels catch girls!

There was an unemployment program set up by the government for veterans. The slang name was the 52/20 Club. One would list his occupation and if that was not offered or found, you collected the \$20.00/week. So, one I know listed crane operator. In Fargo, North Dakota in 1945 there was probably one crane in existence. He collected his \$20.00 for 52 weeks. (In 1952-54 the assistance was \$50.00 week. I collected one check and canceled. Just couldn't do it.)

I was surprised at how quickly society returned to normalcy. The only reminder of the five years of hell (for some) was the slowing dribble of discharged servicemen coming home to catch up. I started back to college the winter term (quarters) but lasted through the third quarter. Looking back, I guess I was a bit flaky. Maybe still am!

Verses I & J. Our "leaders" made a quick adjustment also with the destruction of

the services. They are good! Most made the transition from flag-waving and martial music to baby kissing and welfare promotion. Some veterans joined the "titular" ranks. Veterans were popular, especially a wounded decorated one. This transition, however, was not always in the best interest of the country. Service and politics are strange bedfellows at times, especially when the "enlistment" is not for personal gain and the welfare of these United States.

There is one great difference between service and politics, however. In the service, your integrity, patriotism, word, ability, all the values that make a man a man can be tested in combat. If wanting, you die, get court-martialed or prove yourself. A liar...a prevaricator...some politicians say anything, anywhere, anytime and although often caught with their "fingers in the cookie jar," are seldom disciplined or dismissed. Today, lying is an art!

Verse K. I feel sorry for the succeeding generations I have known and loved. Values are changing; respect for authority, two parent incomes, drugs, family values, are but a few. Everything is based on the dollar. We expect a young man to die in the service of his country and pay him \$600-\$700 a month. At the same time, we lionize our athletes and pay them millions. Kids can rattle off sports accomplishments, but can't tell you who their mayor or governor is. Sad!

What is really destroying the respect and trust in our elected officials, however, are the dual standards of justice and citizenship found in these United States.

A few examples...all rile me up personally because I've seen the dual standards.

In 1933 we went off the gold standard. All citizens were required to turn in all their gold except, I believe, \$20.00 for a "souvenir." All good citizens did...the gold was supposedly melted down back to bullion. How then is it that the numismatic companies can offer one or all the gold coins and dates one wants to buy? Where did their gold come from?

During the war ammunition storage and processing camp was built at Igloo, South Dakota. Barracks, buildings were built and troops assigned. Now in all cases of Federal property in the United States, someone is put in charge. This person signs for and is responsible for the property and all use of the camp. As units come, the Commanding Officers of the units sign for the property they use. Records are kept and must be kept of all these transactions. The Property Book is the bible of the area. Usually a Colonel is in charge. Inspections check on him and all units from time to time. If he is transferred, he signs the property over to the succeeding commander. At all times, whether the area is active or closed, in this property book, all additions and deletions are recorded. Why then today are there questions of toxic material, explosive material, and dangerous war supplies that were buried, may have been buried, removed, changed, etc.? No one knows. No one is responsible?! And we promoted these men and paid them handsomely.

The biggest lie in this area to me is the killing flood of 1972. In one night 238 or so people died. Why? Due to rain and dams bursting. The "leaders" call it the 100-year flood. They have made changes to insure that a flood never happens again; at least of

this magnitude. What caused the flood? Rain! Up to 16 inches west of Rapid City, SD in less than 12 hours.

The government officials, the state and local "leaders" all agree it was excessive rain. None will mention and all deny that cloud seeding was not responsible...that cloud seeding was not even used that day. Oh?

What gives any elected leader the right to modify the truth?

Just a few:

The assassination?

The USS Liberty

The atomic testing

The 66th Division

The syphilis experiment

The ozone hole

Watergate

Whitewater

And, and, and....

If one took his time, how long would the list become? And the sad part and fact is that some on the list and many more are current.

CHAPTER 2

CMTC, DRAFT, BASIC

CMTC

CMTC: I attended my first and last CMTC (Citizen's Military Training Camp [or Corps]) in the summer of 1939 at Ft. Lincoln, North Dakota. I can remember some incidents as if they were yesterday. I easily remember that it was hot. Really hot! One day the temperature of 104 sticks in my mind. I suppose I could check the weather records, but why?

The program was probably started in the early 30's and intended to be a source of reserve officers for the United States Army. It probably augmented the training for ROTC officers at that time. I don't remember company officers at formation, but I'm sure they were there. The regimental CP (Command Post) was a series of general-purpose tents. This I remember clearly as I earned the outstanding guard at a formal guard mount and my reward was the assignment of the post incorporating the CP area. Big deal! More work than any other part as all one did was salute.

The program was four years in duration. I guess one could call the years phases. The first year was the basic year. Then the next three were titled the Red, White, and Blue phases. The basic was thirty days duration. Clothing, lodging, and chow were furnished. There was no salary or compensation. You received the cost of your travel at \$.04 a mile. Here I saw and remember so clearly the closed interpretation of army regulations.

Today all travel time is based on commercial air. So, one can travel anywhere in the United States in twenty-four hours or less. I'll bet one could go from San Diego to Bangor in less time than 12 hours. In 1939 and into the 50's, all travel was based not only on rail time but rail accessibility. Here is what happened to one basic. He knew he was beating the system, we knew, finance knew, etc., but he drew full pay for travel.

He lived sixty miles south of Bismarck at Linton, North Dakota. A good highway linked the two cities but he claimed he came by rail. Now rail through Linton was the main line of the Milwaukee Road. It follows the border of North Dakota-South Dakota and ends up in Minneapolis. There is no spur line from Linton to Bismarck. Bismarck was served by the Northern Pacific at that time. I don't remember the exact mileage or pay but it was roughly based on this scenario. The basic soldier caught the Milwaukee at Linton and rode to Minneapolis. From Minneapolis to Fargo-Bismarck on the Northern Pacific. It's about five miles to Ft. Lincoln from Bismarck but the army certainly did not pick him up. So, roughly the mileage was Linton to Minneapolis - 400 miles; Minneapolis to Fargo - 250 miles; Fargo to Bismarck - 200 miles; total 850 miles. And return = 1700 miles x \$.04/miles = \$68.00. I drew \$16.00 at the end of the thirty days. Fargo - Bismarck - return. 400 miles.

I should mention that at the end of the fourth year and all years successfully completed, the individual was commissioned a reserve officer (second lieutenant) in the ORC, now USAR (Officers Reserve Corps - United States Army Reserve). Whether

individual classwork or special training over and above the annual training was required, I don't know. A good program! Fact, not theory!

We drew our clothing and supplies on arrival. The personnel assigned to our support were all regular army at Ft. Lincoln. If I remember correctly, there was one company of heavy machine guns and the Hdq. & Hdq. Company. This is an administrative support company, which also feeds and houses the commanding officers and his staff. All regular army.

The campaign hat was our favorite. It went out of use with WWII but is still used by drill instructors, etc. Khaki pants, OD33 wool shirts, shoes and leggings. I don't believe we were issued personal rifles but drew from secured racks as needed. Even in North Dakota there were young men who had never handled a 1903 Springfield.

Certain incidents remain in my memory (57 years ago) very clearly and these should make interesting reading. One was range firing.

We had completed all marksmanship training and were scheduled for the range. The big day came. We were ready and excited. We probably walked to the range. I don't remember. But, this was North Dakota and there was lots of room. So, the range was set up for 100, 200, 300, 500, and probably 1000 yards. I mention this because the ammo to be used was M1-ball. A long-range, accurate, wind-bucking round of 173 grains with a boat tail base. This ammo was discontinued in 1940 or so because its range was 5500 maximum. Today's replacement is M2-Ball with 3500 yards maximum. With a heavier bullet and greater range comes more recoil. Harsh recoil for beginners.

We were on the line firing for record. The guy next to me was a short, dumpy, little guy who obviously was either scared or uninterested, or both. I'll bet he either was holding the 03 incorrectly or some "big brother" type had already scared him with "wait until it kicks the crap out of you!" His coach was regular army. I didn't pay any attention to his first shot although I thought a bit loud. I heard his coach tell him to slide forward, then I saw grass and dirt fly to my immediate front. More words and help from the coach, his voice a bit louder. Another shot - more dirt. This happened probably about three times. Then I heard, "Open the bolt," put the GD rifle down. I looked up and the coach picked the kid up by his collar and belt and carried him - actually threw him off the line. You're done, buddy!

Try this today and you would have IG's all over the range. (Inspector General). This was in the good old days - in some ways - where the safety of the unit was more important, had precedent over the Constitutional rights of the individual. The kid had three chances to correct his problem. Enough! Fini!

I want to emphasize once again that this camp was surrounded by the regular army. All the day's events and training was "From Here to Eternity." The chain of command was in place although we never saw many of the Fort's officers; only our own. We worked daily with the enlisted men as instructors and mentors. Working close one could smell the social residue of yesterday on some. Alcohol and tobacco! Remember this was peace-time army and the only prerequisites for enlistment was

good eyesight and teeth. No one was here as a draftee. This is what makes the following memory so difficult to accept. Try it in today's army or during the war years.

We slept in tents (4 to a tent) on cots or bunks (?) on a concrete floor. Every morning we had reveille. It was early, 0430 or so. Daylight in North Dakota in July was at least before 0500 and sundown at least 2000 (8 p.m.). So it was dawn when we rolled out. Luckily there was very little leave for us, only weekends, so we could make reveille. One learns in a hurry that leave at night is fun and needed but the army doesn't really care whether you slept or not or how much. Just get up! And if you don't make formation, the trouble starts - for you.

Keeping this style of living in mind, how about the twice a day (10-15 minutes) break we had at 1000 (10am) and 1400 (2 p.m.) called "TITTY." All training stopped and the portable canteen would be waiting. Everyone got a break, even the regular army personnel. We formed a line and received our twice-daily ration of ½ pint of whole milk and a cookie or snack. Many times baked at the mess hall of one of the supporting units. Good! Good! There was some smoking by the CMTC members but not like the later years during the war.

The leave we did get was only on the weekend. During the week we were not allowed off the Fort property. And remember, none of us had a car. Everyone had arrived by whatever transportation and dropped. I was fortunate to have an aunt who lived in Bismarck. She was young enough to remember dating and dates and was very generous in letting me use the family car, a 1937 Chevrolet four door. Cars have always been handy in finding and locating girls. So we did find or were able to get a few to ride.

The dates, of course, were all completely innocent. I only remember one weekend (maybe the only?). We, another CMTC and I, met these girls in an ice cream store in Mandan. One was from Mandan and the other Bismarck. Both were high school seniors. Both very pretty. If either are still alive and read this book, I can remember the names as clearly as if the dates were yesterday: Margaret B and Constance C. I hope you both had a good life.

Chow was probably at 0500-1130-1700. "TITTY" filled in the "hunger" space between lunch and supper. So, probably after the p.m. "TITTY," about 1500 (3 p.m.) or 1530, we have recreation. A lot of choices, but all team sports and all outside. I can remember boxing with a guy - he had a German surname - and a good record in the Golden Gloves as a middleweight or so, 150# at 104 degrees. Hot! Hot! Hot! We probably drew the shoes from the recreation department as we didn't come with them, or maybe we did, as there was a list of pre-camp orders. Anyway, he caught me good; I remember a tooth chipping, no mouthpiece, and we quit. It took us both quite a while to get back in uniform for retreat, as the tennis shoes wouldn't come off. The heat had bonded the shoe to our issue stockings like a vulcanizing patch.

Another "break" we all got to look forward to was the canteen. I don't believe it opened until after retreat. It was portable and sold cigarettes, tobacco, shaving supplies, and candy. After a p.m. of 104 degrees, the candy was sometimes soft. I really

remember the cigarettes. I was smoking prior to 1939 - not at home, although I wasn't fooling anybody - so would buy my cigarettes here. The price was nearly "give away" as no state tax. Also, one could buy cigs in tins called flat fifties. All makes. These lithographed tins were hinged and quite airtight. I understand that they are worth a fortune by collectors today. Of course, I brought some home at the end of the tour and started smoking at home. After all, I was a high school graduate. Ha!

Our training, weather permitting, was all outside. If working on weapons we would use a shelter half for the part. After the basic phases of the unit individual rifle (U.S. Springfield 1903) we did get some training on the M1919 Browning heavy machine gun. I can't say that this exposure to a crew-served weapon was responsible for my personal attitude on crew-served weapons, but to this day I don't care for them. Maybe I don't want to be tied down to being part of a team. Anyway, within twelve years of this month's training, I had experienced two major wars and didn't then and don't now like a crew-served weapon. We need them but I don't want to be part of them.

I wrote a lot of letters this month in the "army." I was in love. I had been going steady with a girl a couple years my junior and this separation was devastating. I can remember one letter was 31 pages. What the hell I said I have no idea. I do remember it cost me about 3-4 ounces extra for postage.

I have always been in love with love. Looking back, I don't remember or believe I was ever homesick, I was only lovesick. This concept was directly the result of my parents' discipline. (They honestly tried.) Their rules were always unfair and unreasonable - to me. The most stupid people God ever created. They knew nil and remembered nil of their childhood and teen years. How ignorant I was.

The days dragged and the weeks never came. Somehow the thirty days were completed. I was cleared, received my \$16.00 and dismissed. Little did I realize that within two years this experience would and could have affected my military life and assignments. I left for Fargo and my sweetheart. How long did the \$16.00 last?

In the middle of 1940 after a freshman year of failure (in love) at NDSU (AC) I decided to join the army. My dad had always commented that he could get me in. (This was the year of the first draft; (1919-1920 birth date mostly.) Down to the post office I went to the recruiting office. They were excited during the initial visit. I was a high school graduate, CMTC, and a year of ROTC. I was warm to the touch and could read and write. Now the Snellen Eye Chart with the E's etc. declining in size is another story.

I started wearing glasses in about 1935. My parents knew I had some eye(s) problem due to notification from school in this regard. Actually I was quite myopic in the right eye and had a small astigmatic condition in the left eye. Both conditions were correctable to normal or even better with glasses. The Snellen results haven't varied too much all these years. The results that day were: R: 20/200, L: 20/60. The sergeant used a small-lighted device with a rolling bar to measure. I had never seen one before this and none since.

He laughed! Sorry, buddy, it's no go on your eyes. No waiver, no nothing! We

can't use you. No glasses allowed in Uncle Sam's Army.

I was mad and hurt. I could see normal with glasses and I had seen glasses in pictures and person of servicemen. And, I could out-shoot 99% of the so-called normal soldiers. And, isn't war based on shooting? Okay, assholes, if this is it, don't ever ask me for anything. Once again, little did I realize how many times this problem in eyesight acuity would affect my life. And I mean adversely.

Genetically, I have never figured out where this weakness carried over. My parents had normal eyesight and only needed a clarification for reading in their later years. My brother had normal vision and was accepted into one of the "V" programs in 1943! Since I'm still here and will be 75 in September (1996), maybe this was all meant to be. I have often thought and said since that fateful day in 1940, that if my eyes had been normal, I would have been either a KIA Second LT, a second lieutenant, or a live retired general.

About the only military association I had from the 1940 examination and the "greetings" in 1942 was a couple of neighborhood shoots on Sunday. A close neighbor had a brother in the active army. He was a commissioned officer. Her name was FAN (best I'll do) and she brought up the fact that there was an army rifle and bullets in her basement one day. It was a 1917 Enfield and a case (1500 rounds) of M2 Ball ammo. We went out a couple of Sundays to shoot. She didn't weight 85 pounds sopping wet but she would hold the rifle tight against her shoulder in the prone position and shoot. I swear the recoil moved her whole body a couple of inches. Never comment - just loaded and fired again. My kind of woman, but a couple of years older. Ha!

I had received my first rifle, a Continental 11, price \$2.00. Some years later, I bought an 1892 Winchester 25/20 with Lyman loading dies and a Lyman cherry mold for an 87-grain bullet. I mentioned this as when one reloads, he has to study bullet types and weights in all calibers. For this reason I was well versed in caliber/millimeters sizes of commercial and military weapons. This knowledge was invaluable later in the service.

DRAFT

I knew that the greetings were inevitable. And, I welcomed the chance to join the service and wear the uniform. Already people were starting to look at you on the street. You could hear their thoughts: "My boy is gone, he doesn't look like anything's wrong with him. Why is he still here?" In the same breath I cursed the army. Not good enough for you in 1940, but now that you got caught with your pants down, I'm all right. You pompous, self-centered assholes. But, bygones be bygones, here was my chance to join the service.

The greetings came in August or September of 1942. There was a physical scheduled in town and handled by a reserve doctor with his staff. I was warm to the touch, reflexes okay, all my teeth, and with glasses the eyes were correctable to Snellen 20/20 in both eyes. I made it! Now to wait for orders.

Let me digress a minute. Our local guard units had left for Guadalcanal. Already some of the KIA's included some of those I had graduated with in 1939. The war was becoming personal. History tells us how close we came to failure in those first months of the war. This guard unit and the U.S. Marines finally captured the island with Henderson Field as the prize. (The unit was the 164th INF REGT.)

Was fate involved with my current status or not? I believe in fate in the fact that our lives have been programmed and unless one circumvents or ignores his actions, the pattern will progress to our individual demise. A friend and I were headed to the armory one night in the spring of 1940 to enlist. We never made it. We stopped for a game of snooker at the local parlor and one game became many. I have often thought what if, if, why, why not, etc.??

The greetings came and the report date was 18 October 42 at Ft. Snelling, Minnesota. Yea! Of course, my mother cried and fussed. But, what 20 year old can spell mortality and with the exuberance of youth, let's go and save the world. Eighteen is maybe a year or two early (my opinion), due to the immaturity of the mind, for enlistment or draft. Exceptions, of course, are possible. Anyway, I was ready.

The fateful day arrived and I reported to the armory. (Not sure?) Also, I think I remember three Greyhound buses waiting. Could be two, but I'm betting three. They held about 40 each so there was a large contingent of "bodies." Mother cried, of course. I reminded her that at least I had a job when I got there. Most of the year prior to 18 October 42 I had bounced around doing nothing. I had quit higher education after two years and lousy grades. Skipped most of the classes - did nothing. A spoiled rotten, immature brat!

It was Sunday. A beautiful day. We loaded and started for Minneapolis about noon. Somehow the number of men (boys) loaded was 117? Away we went with cheers and tears. This trip was in October 1942. If we were sworn in that day it was the 18th, for we left Fargo on the 17th.

There were and still are many highways to Minneapolis other than the Interstate 94. And, there was no Interstate 94 in 1942. I believe we went on U.S. Highway 10. About two hours on the road the coffee and drinks start pressing on the young

bladders. Time for a piss stop. A sunny, quiet Sunday afternoon. Three buses pull over on the shoulder and out pour 117 young men in pain. Shoulder to shoulder we stood and watered the quack grass. Cars full of young girls, kids, grandparents drove by. Whistles etc. were common. Pain before custom. Also, this day marked the beginning of the bashful kidneys and bladder for some of these new servicemen.

Getting to Ft. Snelling, unloading, and bedding down are a blank. I suspect we had been sworn in while in Fargo so that we were subject to all army discipline and regulations. To bed!

Before sunrise, we were rudely awakened by big, gruff sergeants. None appeared to be concerned about my rest and health. To breakfast and a busy day! Most was spent on orientation and clothing issue.

That night we had free time off. Some of us went into Minneapolis. We followed the directions to find the Rialto Theater. A glimpse at some skin and pasties. Big deal! One sees more flesh on today's TV than the old burlesque. But, our generation had a vivid imagination. (A smart woman always leaves something to a man's imagination. It's much kinder than fact.)

I checked a map of Minneapolis to see if I could find the old streetcar route from the city center to Ft. Snelling. I remember it ran straight from A to G (map codes). I must conclude that the streetcars ran on what was and still is Hiawatha Avenue.

We also got our first taste of the U.S. Army's generosity. A pass gets you off a post and out in the world of play and relaxation. One needs this break before one goes stir crazy. Isn't this a compliment to the Army's concern for my mental health? What the Army doesn't tell you is that the pass is on your off-duty time and reveille comes the same time next morning. Whether you slept or not or what time you got in bed is your problem. The lights go on, the whistles blow, the sergeants yell and cajole, and you pray for strength and guidance and put your feet on the floor.

After one of these first days, reveille at 0430 or so and a SOS breakfast, (shit on a shingle - chipped beef with white gravy on toast); we ended up in a line waiting to visit an officer in a cubicle. Here was our first and last screening on patriotism, political preference, and sexual preference. (Do you like girls?) I passed the exam quickly. I notice one guy crying and pleading for acceptance. What his problem was I don't know but if he had admitted he was gay - he was out.

Another time, another day, we were assigned and seated at least 100 to a room. There were quite a few officers and monitor assistants in the room. This was to be "Test Day," the day we took the AGCT (Army General Classification Test, an IQ test.) The results found here today would be the key and door to any and all schools, commissions, transfers. In other words, promotions one could have. But, none of this was emphasized. Sit down, shut up, at ease!

The test took one hour, I believe. I don't remember how many questions or the weight of any question, but a score of 0-160 was possible. I can remember one guy about 25 or so who finished early and walked up to the front with his papers I heard the monitor tell him that he had an hour. The guy said he was through. He was sent back

to his seat and if by mistrust or suspicion the monitor corrected the test. I watched his eyes and lips and he showed and whispered to another monitor: 148.

I found out later that the guy had a Master of Science Degree in Chemistry. He probably never made over PFC and was probably on permanent KP after his basic. As long as the members of any of the services are bound (tied) to AR's and SR's, you will have these abortions of common sense.

All AR's and SR's are written as a guide. Some more restrictive than others but none can be finite when dealing with human behavior. There is latitude in all. The true leaders in the services are those who will, if necessary, circumvent the structured, narrow guides and get the job done. I'll bet my pension that the majority of the "authors" of the AR-SR's were never on the line, never were cold or hot, hungry or scared and never killed a man, much less saw a KIA on either side. Perfect examples of P-P Syndrome (Potential vs. Performance). You'll read more of this P-P.

I don't remember much about the rest of the week at Ft. Snelling. I do know we didn't go into Minneapolis again. We were up before dawn and going the rest of the day. I suppose more paper work and a start on basic formations. We were in the Army now.

Logistics were at work while we trained, ate, and slept. Somewhere in the USA basic training schedule was to start. Or, a new unit needed fillers to augment the current cadre. When the orders came for the troop movement and our first assignment, I don't know. We were alerted and prepared to load and move out on Sunday. One week at Ft. Snelling and away we go. Where?

I thought how ironic it was when the troop train stopped in or at the Fargo, North Dakota Great Northern Depot about midnight that Sunday. Here I was six blocks from home and I might as well have been on the moon. At least we knew we were heading west. But where? Little did I know that I would not see Fargo again for 22 months. My first leave was a delay in route in April '44.

The rest of the train movement was/is a blank. The Great Northern route was also new to me. I had been west in the fall of 41 on the "rods." And, the main east-west highway at that time, #10, followed the Northern Pacific tracks.

BASIC

It was probably Wednesday or Thursday when we reached our destination. Of course, it was 0400 and raining. It was to rain for months as it always has and does today. We were about to detrain at Camp White, Oregon, about 11 miles from Medford, Oregon. The area was known as the Agate Dessert. One wondered why.

Like sheep we poured off the train. On our helmet liners was a letter and numbers. Mine read: H361. I realized later how lucky I was as D, H, M companies are the heavy weapons companies. Usually one lives longer in these units. Usually!

A first sergeant in a peaked soft cap was checking and hollering at us as we walked by with a flashlight. When he came to me, he stopped and commented that I belonged to his unit. My comment was that I wasn't sure if I wanted to be. He had no

sense of humor. In time we became good friends. He was somewhat older, 5' 8-9" in height, and tough as nails. His name I'll never forget: Walter Ambo. The CO of H 361 was also an excellent soldier. His name is indelible in my mind: Captain Alex R. Rhodes.

The man was a giant of a man. About 6' 4" with shoulders at least three feet across. And, a heart of compassion and the common sense to go with it.

I have to digress here to set the stage for the months to come. I was quite unique as a basic soldier. I had had a month of basic training in CMTC in 1939 and two years of ROTC at NDSU in 39 and 40. I was well versed on basic formations, guard duty, the Springfield Rifle Model 1903, and Browning Automatic Rifle Model 1919 and Colt 1911A1. Also, compass and map work, etc., etc., etc. So, I started as an acting corporal with my own room in the 66 man barracks.

Most of us from Ft. Snelling were of the same age or the range quite narrow. Probably 18-25 in our case. This, however, was not to be the norm. The draft in 1942 affected all men from 18-42. (In early 43 the top age was lowered to 38.) One should remember that any man who has lived 42 years could have seen a lot of life. Anyone over 25 could also have "seen a lot of the world." This range of ages, I felt, was a bonus to all in basic training. We shared "our yesterdays."

We were still standing in the rain when an ambulance drove up and stopped a couple of cars away. There was some commotion and quite a few "officials" coming and going from the car. We brand new neophytes asked about the action. In a blasé, unemotional voice, Sgt. Ambo commented that there are two guys that won't be taking basic. Why? Because they had committed suicide within the last hour.

We didn't know it at the time but about 40% of the basics were already at Camp while these soldiers had arrived only days before from along the west coast. As we met and shared in days to come, I can remember Bellingham, Everett, Seattle, Tacoma, Olympia, Centralia, etc. It was as if the draft boards started at the Canadian border and went south through Oregon picking up their quotas.

Our train was composed of North Dakota and Minnesota citizens. Very similar in philosophy and life style to the west coast draftees. And all or most were high school graduates. Part of our train and later fillers were from Kentucky and Tennessee. Few had ever been over a few miles from their birthplace and many had little formal education. They were, however, ready and willing to do their share. I understood that the two men who had committed suicide on the train were from this area. More on this later.

The war did have, to me, one especially positive effect on this country. It mixed us up. Few of us had done much traveling; most came from ethnic areas of settlement. For example, in North Dakota the Homestead Act brought the Northern Europeans west. The Norwegians, the Swedes, Germans, Russians, etc. all to farm.

The American woman was recognized as capable of many more vocations other than wife, nurse, teacher, secretary, etc., and employed accordingly. All America was a team effort. The sleeping "Tiger" was stretching and yawning.

Two more areas of comments and this is as good a place as any.

One hears a lot today from DA and DOD about the quality and abilities of today's soldiers. I'm glad to hear and read that they are trained and ready. As to being the best ever - no way. Remember the AGCT test with the range of 0-160? The results would make a very interesting dissertation on the mean and medium IQ of then and now.

I had a mortar section during and after basic. If I remember correctly, there were nine men out of the 16 assigned with scores of 130-160. One had a score of 144. He was slight built, dark-haired draftee from northern Washington. The crux to this ability and its application then versus today's soldiers was that we were in for the duration. The sooner we won, the sooner we got home. It was not our basic, chosen vocation. Today's soldier is in uniform for his or her choice of vocation. A big difference. He/she works at world crises during the 20-year enlistment.

In this same area, the one result of war training that galls me the most and is flaunted - unintentionally - nearly every day of my life is the peace time application of the myriad MOS (Military Occupational Skills) pilots go from EAD to commercial, signal corps go to telecommunications, MP's to law enforcement, medical to related fields, etc. Where does a peacetime society have room for a rifleman, machine gunner, or mortarman? Here we have the men who had and did the daily dirty work in a war who are never paid or recognized for their work who receive nil on discharge. Not fair or right.

We are now back to the cantonment area and basic training has begun. We have only about 50% strength as wherever the fillers are, they haven't arrived. Also, it is raining. Most every day it rains. We have no overshoes, as once again this great country's intelligence was wrong. Colds, influenza, pneumonia kept 10-20% sick at all times. We wore ankle shoes and leggings. Dubbin was issued to waterproof the shoes of which we had two pair. How does one get leather to absorb a vegetable oil or grease when the leather is wet? More on this later.

Many incidents and actions stand out in my mind. These salient memories range from the serious to the ludicrous. I will not attempt to relate them chronologically but will try and maintain a sequence of events.

Since I had prior military training and could read and write, I caught more than my share of assignments. One of the first was to report to a special building - not in our area. There were all grades of rank and some men in civilian clothes. We were explained our role in the matter. The Army and FBI were concerned about any possibility of local espionage. This concern was both within my unit, area or anywhere I happened to be on post. After receiving our instructions, we received letterhead stationary and SASE to be mailed once a week. It was to a P. O. Box in Medford. If we had any questions or doubts concerning comments or actions of anyone in our contact, we were to casually mention this person by name, the name to be part of a general comment, such as borrowing money, having a beer, playing cards, etc. This assignment lasted several months until orders to stop were received.

One incident I remember clearly. After we finally received passes (another story), one of the men in my section really got himself in a stew. He was a big kid, happy-go-lucky and a capable soldier. I can still remember his name: Vandersheer. German or Dutch. Whatever, he spoke fluent German. He made the mistake of speaking German in a bar in uniform. (We all wore only the uniform - no civilian clothes in WWII). Two big men in business suits approached and apprehended him. We thought he was AWOL - gone 2-3 days. Finally, he returned with little to say (by orders) but his days of speaking German anywhere to anybody had ended. Scared shitless!

As a kid I always had troubles with colds and coughs - earaches, etc. My folks had been informed of my enlarged tonsils. The rain and wet continued to take its toll. Finally me! Within a month after wet feet day after day, I had tonsils the size of golf balls, plus and a fever to go with them. The APC's from battalion aid station didn't work. Penicillin was still in the laboratory stage. I was sick - I needed a tonsillectomy. To the base hospital I went (APC's was a common pill issued for pain and fever. I believe the composition was a triple approach to pain, decongestant, and stimulant as follows: A-aspirin, P-phenacetin, and C-caffeine. In what mg strength I don't know but the pill was at least five grains. Made and prescribed today - doubtful. All we had in 42.

To the hospital I went. The day of surgery I can remember clearly. Prior to this date the only trauma I had with a doctor was a three-surface filling w/o Novocain. (In the fall of 1945 I had 16-17 fillings, paid for by the USA at the dentist of my choice in Fargo, North Dakota.) My fault or the war's? A mixture of both.

There was no prepping for the surgery. I walked into the operation room. I was told to sit on a stool. A medical Captain sat in front of me on another stool. He took a syringe big enough for a horse and after telling me to open wide; he deadened the tonsil area with a series of shots through the tissue. I could feel and hear the needle "crunch" through. He waited a minute, put down the guillotine type of tool and picked up a piano-wire noose type - tonsils were too large for the former - and quickly squished through the muscles and veins holding and feeding the tonsil. Of course, I began to bleed and gag. Breathe through your mouth - breathe through your mouth - I can't, I have to spit! I gagged and expelled a bloody mass straight into his face. Needless to say, he was pissed. He wiped himself, went in after the remaining tonsil and a quick squirt both were on the table next to me. Done!

I don't suppose I received the malt or shake treatment during my early convalescence. I was kept in the hospital for nine days. A body in the bed is worth ten on the street. Ye olde politics of game playing. Keep the count up to justify the expenses. (VA used to be the same way.)

I saw all the shows during these nine days. Enjoyable, as I was a show-aholic in my young years. One night sitting, watching the show, a strong, putrid, vile odor permeated the air. I thought, boy does someone stink. A little while later I shifted my feet - wow - worse. It was me! After some days in a dry area my shoes had finally

dried out. The Dubbin being a vegetable base had started to decompose and the shoes stunk. Rancid, rancid, rancid!

It was a clear day - no rain - a sunny day when I was discharged from the hospital. My area was at least two miles away and one didn't get Jeep rides in those days. After all, this was an infantry division! I had been away from military courtesy for over a week. Warm, dry, and uncomfortable.

As I walked along in my reverie, I noticed a captain come out of an orderly room and walk straight toward the street. He was about 40-50 feet away when he turned and threw me a salute (high ball). I thought what the hell? A captain saluting a private. I continued to walk. He turned again at about 20 feet and saluted again. I continued to walk. He stopped. I stopped. "God damnit, soldier, when I salute you, you better well salute back!" I did! He chewed some more and let me go. I saluted on leaving.

The composition of the company was a cross section of America. We had all ages from 18-42. One "elderly" was 42 years of age. He had been separated from the army from WWI as an officer. He had received promotions through the years and when drafted held a captaincy in the ORC (Officers Reserve Corps). He had written to the Department of the Army after receiving his "greetings" but the draft process worked faster than DA.

His commission and status came through on orders. There were several days before he reported to a new duty station. The battalion and company officers wanted him to move to the officers BOQ (Bachelor Officer's Quarters). He refused. These men were good enough before my orders - they're good enough now. He stayed. Probably a damn fine officer but not by regular army standards.

Armistice Day in 1942 was a day I always remember. Most of us had only been in the service for a few weeks and many had not as yet mastered simple formations and facings. But we went on parade - in Medford. I think we marched in full-field packs or at least combat packs. Since we were so green, I believe we marched at sling arms with fixed bayonets. (It could have been an interesting mess with shoulder arms.) OD 33 dress with steel pots. All in all, we looked and did well. Also, the realism of war was added to the parade. A squadron of P-38's came right down on the deck (Main Street), flew over the entire parade body and then stood on their tails. I believe they came back for a second run. Noisy but good!

The dress chosen for the parade was correct. We marched the way we would be dressed in combat. The only thing missing was the dirt and wrinkles and tears of the field. Too often, most parades are in Class A uniform and that is not representative of fact. Pretty, but not factual.

Morale was at rock bottom for the units. We were in the early stages of basic training. The rain was continuous and homesickness was truly a problem. Some of the men had never been over 24 hours from home and mother. There were no cars, no wives, no sweethearts allowed. No passes off post - except the officers and cooks - a visit to the PX and a show now and then - in the rain. Walking automatons!

Captain Rhodes called me into his office. He put me at ease and became very

informal. He asked about the mental status of the men. No suicides in our unit but some throughout the regiment. He knew that with Christmas coming the mental trauma would be at a peak. Let's try and get the men to relax and enjoy the day. A day without any training and a special meal, etc. for the unit and any and all guests who might be here on a visit. Travel was not easy during these days - especially private transportation. Train or bus with the schedules and discomfort were the basic means.

"So, Sgt. Christensen, I want you to go to Medford, Grant's Pass, wherever necessary, and get 215 presents for the men in the unit. Try and keep the identical items to a maximum of five. Here's \$100.00 and try and keep the value of each item to \$.25." (In 1942, \$.25 would buy a fairly decent item - not a candy bar of today.) I received a special pass, a Jeep with trip ticket to town (rare) and the next day I left early to be in town when the stores opened. It should be fun! It was, but work, work!

The first buys were easy. Quite soon, however, I had to watch for duplications. Also, even if I bought a maximum of five, it would take fifty different items in sets of five to fill the company quota. I went to the 5 and 10's, specialty shops, and even drove to Grant's Pass - about 30 miles. It was 11 miles from Camp White to Medford, 60 miles round trip to Grant's Pass and 11 miles back. So, I drove a minimum of 82 miles that day. Actually, over 100! I did well, although at times it looked hopeless. And I don't remember any rain.

On return to the unit, we wrapped and coded the items so as to try and match the gift to the man and rank. Who helped? I don't remember.

I have to digress here. Colds, coughs, fevers were common. At one time, I believe one had to have a fever of over 102 to be hospitalized. Otherwise assigned to quarters. (In basic training, few get quarters.) The slightest exertion brought immediate spasms of coughing upon coughing with a forceful throat clearing and a loud, forceful, high velocity expulsion of goo. (Spit! Spit! SPIT! Talk about an old expression: "Hocking gobs!" Yuck!)

Since the ground was saturated, this sputum did not soak in or be absorbed. It sat where it hit in all the colors of nature. Such was the sight as Christmas day dawned. It looked like hell. So, the old man, CO, Captain Rhodes, ordered a detail to take the sand buckets hanging on the barracks for fire and use a sparing amount of sand on each pile of expectorated mess.

Noon came with the sun peeking through, the first time in days. (One could read anything he wanted into this phenomenon.) The guests arrived. The littered area of little sand piles stood out like black on white or visa versa. One heard the question asked by the guests - what are all the sand piles? Luckily the first answer was diplomatic and made sense. Ants! They built the area up to keep the water out of their nests.

I want to digress here and relate a story of my brother. The correlation in weather and problems is $r = +1.0$.

My dad was in World War I, "D" Btty, 6th FA, 1st Division. I'm sure he trained and enlisted at Ft. Riley, Kansas, but many draftees of WWI were sent to and received

their basic training at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. Humidity always 90+ percent and can get to 0 degrees some winters. The cold goes straight through to the bone. (The coldest I ever felt - sensual temperature - was at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri in February 1951. It was 100% humidity and 16 degrees above 0.)

Jefferson Barracks has the same reputation, I'm sure, today. A hellhole. At least for those of us who are not used to humidity.

My brother had signed up for one of the USAAC - United States Army Air Corps - V programs. This allowed him to finish some school until called. He was called in mid '43 and assigned to pilot training at Jefferson Barracks. Quite a few of his friends were in the group. Three completed the training - my brother was medically discharged. In life, only one is left. He was shot down over Germany and spent several years at Moosberg Prison in eastern Germany. A coincidence that units of the division I was in, 14th AD, liberated him.

The training started for my brother and in late fall of '43, he was ready to solo. Fall had started and winter around the corner. Humidity up - temperature down.

The colds and fevers started, then some pneumonia. But sick call was not to be - in most cases, it was denied these 19 and 20 years old trainees. Why? Because the cadre and CO of the training unit had apparently appointed themselves as doctor, judge and jury. If any of the trainees went to sick call, they may have received an APC pill, but most were sent back to the barracks and assigned to barracks orderly. They tended to coal furnaces. They got no sleep, they were cold and wet, they got sicker and some died. If I remember correctly, my brother said that 71 died in all.

What the source of the commission for the CO, Captain, was I don't know. I do know, however, that the medium IQ of the trainees was probably a top measurement for these sick, sadistic clowns. The trainees time and time again had made a mockery of their leadership and ability. They were not mature or men enough to accept a defeat that they started. For these infractions, some of the trainees died.

Finally, my brother became ill. I don't know how many days he was assigned to barracks duty or who and how he finally was taken to the post hospital, but he was in a coma for eight days. The damage to his lungs was permanent when he finally woke up. He rode the "fence of life" for some time. At no time were our parents notified. I guess that was a break as my father would have killed that sick prick called a CO. Back to the barracks to recuperate and rest. (My brother was finished with pilot training. He never soloed.)

One day at the barracks an older officer, a major, introduced himself and asked if he could visit. A fatherly type and my brother felt sincere. He liked him. They visited. Intensively! My brother found out at the end of the "visit" that the major was from the IG (Inspector General). Finally, after all the deaths and hearsay rumors, the army was investigating the unit and the administration. The information furnished by the trainees led to a General Courts Martial for the Captain and the top non-coms. All were found guilty. The Captain was sentenced to 15 years and the non-coms 7 (as I remember). The Captain should have been shot.

A sequel to this story (hearsay) is that for some of those that finished the training and won their wings, life was short. Even with the new P-51 Mustangs, the graduates were no match for the older and experienced Luftwaffe. Sent to Germany in mid-'44 some died before they developed the skills of combat.

There were very few cars on the post in 1942-43. Most of the officers lived on post. I doubt if many had their wives or families, if any, nearby. Being a new camp and located near a small town did not offer much in the way of housing. For the above reasons, there were quite a few horses seen and kept. Our regimental and divisional commanders both rode horses quite frequently. The division commander, Major General Charles A. Gerhart, was also rated quite a polo player. Our regimental CO, Colonel R. W. Broedlow (Richard or Robert?) also rode a horse extensively. Probably both were ex-cavalry officers.

Both gentlemen were in good physical shape. No potbellies in those days. Both expressed a need for exercise and calisthenics. So, we had physical training (PT) every day. And, most every day Colonel Broedlow would be present - horse or no horse.

He was a fine, older officer. I don't know or remember the source of his commission, but do remember his sons: one was commissioned through the CMTC Program. Anyone who had been in the program was automatically a positive suspect for soldiering by the colonel. (My recognition.)

I found Colonel Broedlow's signature on a promotion order dated 3 Feb 43. He had promoted me from Corporal to Sergeant (temporary). His last name is quite legible but the initials appear to be R.W. He must have been in his late fifties or early sixties. Whatever, talk was that he was too old for an overseas command. The division went to Italy in the spring or summer of 1944. Whether he went as CO of the 361st Regiment I don't know. General Gerhart left the 91st Division to command the 29th and was in on the D-Day landings as CO of the 29th.

There is a PT incident involving Colonel Broedlow that I've never forgotten.

We usually fell out for PT about dawn and marched to an area with a review stand used by the PT instructor. This morning was like all or most - clouds, rainy, foggy - a mess. Most men had colds or some form of respiratory distress. After each exercise, there would be fits of coughing and spitting. Out of the fog rode Colonel Broedlow. He dismounted and got up on the stand. He denounced coughing and spitting as bad habits. He would lead us in "jumping jacks" or one quite demanding exercise. This he did. On completing, the coughing and spitting started. One man in the front ranks started to clear his throat - from his ankles up - he gagged, gasped, and finally collected enough phlegm to release. This he did with lung pressure of many pounds per square inch. Colonel Broedlow's face lit up the area. It was beet red from self-control. He glared, swallowed, turned smartly and left - on his horse. PT was dismissed for the day.

I had many personal contacts with this gracious officer. Not always pleasant, but certainly fair. One incident is so clear that it could have happened yesterday.

We were on the range for record firing. This was with the 1903 Springfield. It

was issued a beautiful piece. Excellent walnut, barrel like a diamond and a high number receiver. It had a Pedersen device on the receiver. (A machined slot in the left part of the receiver in an attempt to use a sub caliber bullet as a semi-automatic after World War I. It was not too successful or accepted.)

I often wondered what happened to this rifle. It was a shooter. Accurate! I guess it pays to wait as prior to the final work on the book, I found the original scorebook. It was in good shape and readable at 57 years of storage. The data on the rifle had been recorded. Serial Number is 1041920 from the Springfield Armory. This makes the rifle receiver in the double-hearted category. I would prize having the rifle so if any reader has or knows the location of the rifle – receiver, modified, complete, please give me a fair price offer.

I had reached and just finished a rapid-fire sequence of standing to prone (60 seconds) with a score of 48. (I had two fours - eight bull's eyes.) I fired expert that day and every time and weapon in the infantry arsenal. Anyway, I commented to my coach that sixty seconds was too generous in time. I could fire three clips in that time. (15 rounds) A voice said, "I'll take that bet, Sergeant." It was Colonel Broedlow. We agreed on \$5.00, the Colonel ceased all firing, cleared the firing line, issued me three clips and we got ready. Here again you can see his leadership qualities. I fired the 13 rounds but failed to pull the bolt far enough to the rear to pick up two rounds and chamber from the last clip. The colonel allowed me eight seconds standing too prone to complete. I did. Thirteen bulls and two close fours. He handed me a \$5.00 bill, smiled and left.

I never fired the heavy machine gun but all other weapons, except recoilless rifle and 60 mortar. All expert. I never received the expert infantry badge, but probably because I transferred out of the unit to ASTP in May 43. I did earn two CIB's (Combat Infantry Badges), one in World War II and the other Korea as a private and a second lieutenant. But, the expert badge indicates an ability that the CIB doesn't.

Actually, a CIB is easier to earn than an Expert Infantry Badge. Easier if you are only in a combat area. Your presence for thirty days meets the requirement; on the other hand, an EIB requires your qualification in all the individual and some crew-served weapons in the infantry arsenal. Rifle, BAR, pistol, carbine, bazooka, mortar, etc. I believe its receipt earned one \$5.00 more per month. (If I remember correctly, in the pre-WWII army, an expert qualification earned one \$5.00/month also.) This increase was about 23.4% increase in a private's pay at \$21.00 per month! A generous and sensible addition and recognition for soldering. (Isn't killing the base assignment for an army in wartime?)

For example: At our peak in training on the 81 mortars, before we got stale, we could continuously go into action in 30 seconds. The record, if I remember correctly, was 29 by Ft. Benning, Georgia instructors. And that's all these sergeants did. I'm sure we could have shaved another second off the time. You should remember that nine out of sixteen in my section had IQ's of 130 or more. Brains win wars - not brawn. The Israeli army is probably the best in the world in quality because the mean IQ is higher

than any other. And, they are fighting for their own homes and families.

We were in good shape - in our prime. I probably weighed 155 pounds, a 31-inch waist. All the men under 30 were in the best condition of their life, now or later. Those over 30, I'm sure, had plenty of aches and pains and didn't bounce back after a good night's sleep. So, we had our share of testing (AGF - Army Grounds Forces) and a couple of track meets with open competition between regiments. Fatigues and shoes with no special training.

At one track meet we, 361st with "H" company well represented, had won most of the relays and straight races. I began to watch a specialty contest - throwing a practice hand grenade. I believe they weighed 22 oz. Anyway, none of the contestants were setting any records and I commented to a buddy that I could do better. A voice said that I'd better try. Have at it, sergeant. I turned and here stood General Gerhart, CO of the division. Oh, boy! Well, here goes. One thing in throwing the practice grenade was there was no lever.

There were no rules on throwing. I got back, ran forward and let it go, like a baseball. The release and angle of flight was perfect. (I was never able to do that again.) It flew! On measuring the distance, what a pleasant surprise: 181.4 feet. A bit over 60 yards. The general shook my hand, congratulated me, I saluted and he left. (In a later meet I didn't practice and I failed miserably. I got only a little over 40 yards.)

We finally got overshoes in February or March of 43. Prior to that time the colds, flu, and pneumonia continued. I had an episode after my tonsillectomy with fever and shakes. The incident showed the common sense and empathy that SGT Ambo possessed. I was one sick cookie. APC's, etc. hadn't helped. If only I could get a good day's rest. So, this day I missed formation and stayed in bed. I had a single room as a section sergeant. It wasn't long before Sgt. Ambo appeared. What's the problem? Get your ass up! Typical comments. When he finished, I told him to go F___ himself, court martial me, anything, but if I can get one day's rest, I'll lick it. He stood, looked, I'll check later, and left. Believe it or not, I loved the guy. From then on, no one badmouthed the First Sergeant.

A common phenomenon appeared after a month or so from the camp opening. As with groups of men anywhere in the world, where we conjugate so do many of nature's animals. Camp White was no exception. Many units had dogs, either as mascots or just friends. Throughout the division, however, was a variety of animals - not all true pets. Deer were numerous, raccoons, porcupines, and a rumor of a puma kitten, to mention a few. Any and all either accepted us or tolerated us.

The deer would stop at the mess halls garbage sacks and sniff or feed. In some cases, they would skip the mess hall rack entirely. Why? For all the services, there is a master menu and each day's meals are prepared from the master menu (as a guide). Some variation in the preparation is allowed. Anyway, time and time again I watched the deer either stop and browse or "walk on by." Why? If every mess hall drew the same rations for the day, why would there be a variation in the garbage? Apparently, there was as the deer avoided some garbage racks like the plague.

Dogs, of course, lived with us in the containment area. Not in the barracks, although we had them in from time to time. Usually we would fix up a place for them in one of the furnace rooms. Such was the case with Lady, a full-blooded German Shepard. Where she came from I don't know, but everyone (nearly) was kind to her so she stayed. She was also with puppies.

It's funny how I can remember some names and other cases history is a blank. I do remember all the names in the forthcoming scenario. There are three mortar sections in an 81-mortar platoon. The section sergeants were Pauley, Van Ech, and Christensen. The platoon sergeant was S/Sgt. Huff. (He didn't care for dogs, was regular army, and came as a member of the cadre when the division was being formed. We were all buck sergeants.)

We watched Lady's pregnancy develop and planned on the delivery. The big day arrived. She became listless, nervous, whined a lot, etc. So, as planned, we took her to Sgt. Huff's room for the birthing. He was "out" for the evening. Time about 1830. All went well and either six or seven pups arrived. All healthy and mother doing fine. In came Sgt. Huff. What the f___? Get that GD dog out of here and, and, and. We all looked in unison (he could have preferred charges) and one said she would be leaving soon and we'll clean up the mess. Until then just take a deep breath. It must have been the look and tone of our faces and voices as he turned and left. Smart man.

We took lady to the furnace room between the orderly room and dayroom, made her a bed, furnished water, etc., and left her with her new family.

The word got around and Lady had lots of company. She, of course, did not know many the men, but if they were enlisted like me, she tolerated all, with some apprehension. The pups were too young to pick up so all the "visitors" stood and talked to her. After a couple of weeks, it was the same except her pups were picked up. She tolerated.

Somewhere in her past, an officer must have been mean to her. When our company officers came to call, Lady would bare her fangs and maintain a low-level growl. Why? The dirtiest EM could visit and just a casual "watch," an officer - no way, Jose!

Everything good must end! The army in its infinite wisdom decided that the animals must go. Down came the memos and orders. I guess I can't blame the camp or division CO. The porcupines were eating the handrails off the steps and the deer getting so tame that they were dangerously immune to man.

Along with my regular duties, I was assigned the responsibility and title of air raid sergeant. I received a steel triangle and striking rod to complete the duty. Since Camp White was only 75 miles or so from the coast, an air raid in 1942 was certainly a possibility. Each quadrangle had steel pedestal for mounting a 50 caliber Browning. Thankfully, our company was not assigned this action. We did practice several times in the fall of 42.

Most of the time, the practice and use of the air raid signal was done while we were marching (route step) to and from the ranges or outside the camp proper. One

incident, which clearly showed and proved the conditioned habit (reflex) from training, happened on such a march. The science of repetition.

We were coming back from range firing and I received orders to use the air raid signal. I could not exercise this right by myself. It was a wet day and had been raining. The ditches were all full of water to varying depths. (I was accused of picking this place by some of the men until the lieutenant squelched the idea.)

I rang the signal and the men scattered off the road into the watery ditch. We were all soaked from the rain so not a pure shock. In we went - splash, splash. One man in my section ran into the water a few feet and disappeared from sight. Not a splash or ripple. What the hell? Where is he? We cautiously moved toward the last spot he was at. About this time the water started stirring. Up came an arm clutching a rifle. Behind the arm a helmet. We grabbed the arm and rifle and pulled the man out. No damage but a lot of sputtering and spitting. He told us he must have dropped ten feet or so before he could pick his way up. And he never let go of his rifle. Training - training. (Later that year we were able to find and inspect the hole. At least 15 feet deep. An old well?)

One of the few times that I could sense that Captain Rhodes was really pissed off at me was when I was Charge of Quarters as a corporal. I didn't get to sleep due to phone and latecomers so didn't hear the alarm. (I could really sleep in those days.) Anyway, I failed to get the cooks up, wake the first sergeant, etc., etc., etc. I heard the orderly room door slam and it was daylight. After six and Captain Rhodes stood over me. Oversleep, Christensen? Yes, sir! No words, no chewing, but he was pissed.

Many soldiers found out the hard way that there is a catch to rank and more pay and prestige. You are called upon to do more, receive more responsible assignments, and are held accountable for your actions. As a dumb, plain private, one was not expected to do or be anything other than the lowest rung on the ladder.

I had one fight in the spring of 43. His name came to me as I wrote the above paragraph. He was a corporal in my section: Otto K, a true German surname. The fight resulted in an argument and words over some order. What? Anyway, he wanted to kick my ass. We were about the same size and weight so I felt it would be fair to oblige. I received permission to see the "old man" (Capt. Rhodes) for approval. Once again, his wisdom was correct but ignored. He stated that fights seldom answer anything and strongly suggested I avoid the fight.

Ahead we went - 16 oz. gloves and the fight inside the dayroom. As usual, the noise and screams for the favorites. Actually, the fights were uneventful. Really no winner - a draw. Neither of us landed anything positive and other than a bloody nose and some bruises, nothing. But Capt. Rhodes was right. We didn't settle the problem, just tolerated each other after that. Should have left well enough alone. Didn't like him before the fight and didn't after.

One day I was assigned a Jeep and driver and told to report to the railhead area. All the warehouses were located there, plus the big freezers for the frozen foods. I reported to the building, showed my orders, left copies of ???, loaded up some boxes

and left to another area to drop off the boxes. There were men and desks in the room - a school. We helped open the boxes and here were primary readers. The men were here to learn to read and write. An "X" on a payroll line is extra work.

What the percentage of the men assigned to Camp White who couldn't read or write was I don't know. Not a lot but a few was too many. For example, on payday, an X was always a problem and slowed down the pay line. (In those days the pay was to the exact cents. Now the pay is to the nearest dollar unless by check.) Anyway, the pay of the unit was all continuous alphabetically by rank and all names were in a common voucher. One mistake on any page and the red line canceled the page. Sometimes an "X" caused this red line.

Today each service member has an individual voucher. A mistake cancels only the individual voucher. I believe there are three copies to a voucher - white, yellow, and pink. A receipt for all concerned.

I had an excellent example of the politics in the draft boards throughout the United States. Some of the decisions made by the "local power structure" stunk. How about this example: Tom was in my section. He was 33 years old, married and had nine children. Nine plus a wife = 10. He was drafted from one of the eastern mountainous states. He was a good soldier. Always available and ready and always a smile. His only vice was Brown Mule chewing tobacco. This supply he always bought in bulk from the PX on payday. He did not receive a lot of cash as a private and the forced reductions for his dependents. In addition, every month he mailed a few dollars home for his planned leave.

Look what Tom cost us to draft. He drew \$50.00 as a private, his wife got \$28.00, and so Tom drew \$22.00. Nevertheless, each dependent received some help. I believe the first child \$15.00 and others \$10.00. So the wife received \$28.00 plus \$15.00, plus \$80.00 (first dependent \$15.00, all others \$10.00) for a total of \$123.00/month. In 1942, this was good money, more than he or his wife had ever made. Also the cash he had mailed home.

The leave day was coming - spring of 43 and Tom was excited. He told me he had written home for the cash and told his wife the good news. I/we never saw the letter he received from his wife until after the AWOL incident. All we knew was that Tom had asked for a pass to Medford (6 hours) and had not returned after 2-3 days. The MP's found him dead drunk outside the camp fence.

Charges were preferred, etc. It was then that I received the letter from his wife. It was short, blunt, to the point. He was found guilty of AWOL but received no time penalty or punishment. The letter read: "Don't want you home, don't have your money." I bought a mule with your money. Don't want you home. I'll just have another baby. (Fini).

Another letter. I came into the main barracks area one night and one of my sections was "writing" a letter. He was sitting on his upper bunk holding a clipboard vertically, trying to write. "What are you doing, U?" "Trying to write to my sister." "What do you want to tell her?" "Just what we do, etc." "Tell you what, U, take this

50¢ and go get us each a pint of ice cream at the PX and I'll write and you sign. Okay?" "Yeah!" We mailed the letter.

I received a letter in about a week. None for U. It was from the sister. How nice I wrote and, and. Out of courtesy, I returned a short letter. The first time her salutation was "dear." The second answer, "dearest." She was going to come to Camp White, see me, and live there. I never wrote again. One scared soldier. War hysteria?

Another example of army math! All training was advanced in early 43 and we trained continuously. Due to cost, however, we couldn't fire live mortar ammo with all the training. So, we used a practice round. This was cast iron and weighed 13#. It had a range of probably 500 yards. There were no powder increments to add or detract for the range, only the shell insert to provide the "push." Now, remember the ground was soft. Pure muck. (In a couple of months, one couldn't pound a steel stake in the ground - Agate Desert). The rounds would bury themselves many feet into the ground. If we could salvage, it would save money. Dig them up and out. We would shoot and then dig. At first, we lost some because as we dug, the entrance hole collapsed. With Yankee ingenuity, we would put a bamboo pole into the hole touching the buried round and then dig. It worked like a charm. But, someone with some "big picture" sense realized that the cost of retrieving the buried rounds was far more than their worth with the man-hours involved. So, a stop order was received.

We did something once with the practice rounds out in the field. It was the lieutenant's idea, but we loved it. We were good with the mortar, really good. Someone wondered with a charge 0 or 1 if the gunner could hold the tube without the base and bipod and fire. With the ground just right, not too sloppy, not too hard. We tried it. Worked like a charm and accurate. We could have many rounds (?) in the air between fire and impact.

This one and only time we used a house for a target. Camp White was built in an area of pear orchards and irrigation canals. Beautiful homes. Empty. So, why not use as a target. A couple of rounds to bracket and fire for effect. Away went the rounds. They hit and even at 300-400 yards, the smashing noise was loud. We went out of action and moved up to see the effect. We found all the rounds that hit but they were deformed like the ones dug up after hitting a rock or two. You would have to see the damage to believe it that a 13 pound cast iron projectile does coming down at terminal velocity ($V = \frac{1}{2} GT^2$) 2-3-4 hundred miles an hour, and hits rafters, joists, floors, whatever gets in the way. Instant splinters. After the war, the owners probably wondered what in the hell happened. They were paid for the foreclosure.

As for the irrigation ditches! This water came from the Rogue River and was a must for the orchards during the summer months. We didn't need them during the rainy season. During some of the training, we had to cross these ditches in full battle gear. Quite steep, quite deep, and cold. So, with the few "Yankee" type always looking for a quicker, drier way, some tried to cross on the various bridges (flat log) to get across. Anticipating this type of soldier, the engineers were ready with primer starch or TNT and when the GI got halfway across - BAM - off went the charge - up came

hundreds of gallons of water at hundreds of feet per second and off flew the GI. Wet twice and a dive in between. I can't remember any lawsuits from this action. Rights: I'm being facetious.

With the above comments in litigation and the tendency today to attempt common sense through the courts rather than basic responsibility of the individual, another example of leadership of Captain Alex. R. Rhodes came to mind.

Servicemen in World War II were offered a type of term insurance called the NSLI - National Service Life Insurance. It was offered with a maximum of \$10,000 in increments of \$1000.00. The cost per thousand was based on age and the cheapest, if I remember correctly, was \$.64/1000. This figure was actuarially based on a projected one million casualties until the duration of the war. Actually, we experienced about one-fourth of this. This very pleasant mistake has resulted in the annual payment to all veterans who retained their NSLI - original or converted.

The insurance was mandatory and history is replete with the sad circumstances for the survivors of those who failed to accept or modified the amount. (My wife's uncle had only \$5,000.00 when he was killed in 1942 and his mother could really have utilized the full amount. The beneficiaries had to be a blood relative. Someone deserves accolades for this restriction for if it had not been included, a lot of girlfriends would have pissed away a lot of "love" money.

Captain Rhodes had spoken of this insurance several times at company formations but there were a lot of deaf ears. After all, with a salary of \$50.00 per month, less the minimum of \$.64/1000 or \$6.40 a month, was over 10% of the salary. A lot of beer and/or cigarettes. Also, remember that requesting the insurance was mandatory. No serviceman could be forced to buy or request. (Later in the war, the premiums were dropped and the insurance offered free at the rate originally set up.)

Finally, the example of leadership. Since the pep talks had not been successful and the contract could not be mandatory, little change had occurred in the number of company members with a maximum amount. But, it was now early 1943 and basic training had long been completed. It was time for the first six and twelve hour passes to town. Yea!

Captain Rhodes appeared at a company formation. He alluded to the dangers in traveling, visiting, civilian problems, etc. on a pass. How it was not fair to the parents or wife not to be fully covered just in case. So, only those with full \$10,000 coverage would be allowed the 50% number of passes available. There was much bitching, mumbling, cussing, but the line quickly formed, the lesser amounts were crossed out and initialed, and the men left for Medford with a full \$10,000. (I wonder how many KIA's there were in H361 after the division went to Italy in the spring of 1944. All beneficiaries of these servicemen can be thankful that a CO named Captain (major in early 43) Alex R. Rhodes existed and commanded. Today the insurance is offered up to \$100,000. It is still a term offering and called SGLI (Serviceman Group Life Insurance), and it's free!

No treatise of army life would be complete without a story of a "shortarm"

inspection. These were conducted at anyplace, at any time without any compassion or hint of courtesy by the inspecting teams. Sometimes I wondered if the "inspectors" were qualified medics. With today's army with the growing percentage of female servicewomen, will the inspections be conducted in a similar method or will there be curtains and bunks, cots, or at least a mattress for the ladies? And, if so, why? No special preference!

There is and was a need for the shortarm. If any soldier were infected with gonorrhea (clap) or syphilis, he must be isolated immediately from the communal life of the military, especially the enlisted. Clap is easy to spot, syphilis much more difficult, depending on the stage. Both can be cured quite quickly with today's antibiotics. Such was not the case in the early 40's and earlier.

Another example of the DA's or Pentagon's intelligence or negligence would be the regulations in the early days of the war and before. All servicemen in these days had enlisted and with their oath of allegiance became subject to all areas of the Code of Military Justice. One area read that all "bad" time or lost time must be added to the original enlistment. Since a venereal disease was considered "bad" time if it resulted in hospitalization or time from regular duty, it has to be made up. Now, if the service member found that he enjoyed the service, this was no problem. Many, however, had learned to hate the service, regimentation, and whatever and were counting the days. This type of individual, therefore, did not report the infection and did not want it known. In the meantime, he may have infected his unit members, new women in his love life, or scarred himself for life with home remedies: silver nitrate and mercuric oxide.

One incident I never forgot occurred in the middle of a long march. It was a warm day, dry and dusty. All of us were sweating. As we came around a long graceful curve, here were some ambulances, folding tables set up, and medical personnel standing around. Halt, all out. First platoon fall in, single file and forward. Up to the table, we marched.

This was to be shortarm only. So the order came to unbutton your fly, haul it out, skin it back (all who were not circumcised) and step up to the table. A captain sat with a flashlight, even in the sun, and scrutinized each and all male genitalia. Next - next - next!

Now one of the men in the platoon had been greatly blessed by the Good Lord. He was hung! He was also not circumcised so as he tried to "skin" it back, the bulk of his "gift" would be pushed back into his pants. For a couple of times this happened and the medical captain with a sadistic glint in his eye raised his voice. Hey, men, look at this! What a beaut! Wow! (The man was crimson - understandably). Good God, man, and you wanted to hide this beauty. Shame! Shame! If I had one like that, I'd wave it in the streets. Next!

The above paragraph was quite basic. Blunt! I meant it to be to show the lack of consideration or courtesy the mechanical corps had for the enlisted man. We were cattle! Here was pure arrogance, ignorance and total disregard for even basic social

protocol. But, in defense of the approach – surprise inspections – not the method – they were probably the only way to insure and prevent any mass venereal epidemic within the ranks.

A regulation concerning venereal diseases was in effect until shortly after the war started. It showed so clearly the caste system of the services. The enlisted men, the cattle, the lords, the commissioned ranks. In 1943, I believe, this regulation was changed – cancelled.

Prior to this most enlistments were for four years, 48 months, or 1461 days. These were duty days and the army expected its full accounting. Now, a legitimate illness or injury was counted as a duty day. A case of gonorrhea or syphilis was considered a personal folly and counted as bad time, downtime, non-duty etc.

A fair percentage of men had learned shortly after they enlisted that army life was not for them – then hated and abhorred the service life. But they were under oath so marked time until the end of their enlistment. Every day was a chore. So, no wonder they did not want to lose credit for duty days nor have any days added to the original enlistment date. So, if they became infected they did not report to such call and tried to treat themselves. Some did. Some became sterile. Some scarred themselves, etc. Remember that penicillin came on the market in 1942 and mostly for the military. Syphilis prior to '42 was treated by Dr. Ehrlich's magic bullet. Salvarsan. It often made the treatment as deadly as the disease. Remember, that Al Capone with all his millions died in prison from syphilis of the brain, paresis.

Another shortarm I remember was in Sasabo, Japan, just before we loaded for the U.S. and home. This group was all officers. The two ahead of me were company grade black officers. As they skinned it back, the white gonococcus infection showed up like a neon sign on the black glans. They both left the line!

I was called to the orderly room in the spring of 43 and given the range, time and reason why. Pick up a Jeep, here's your TR (Transportation Request) and be there. I did.

The pit detail, where the targets are, were furnished and in place. Also, communications were set up and ready to go. All I was ordered to do was coach a soldier on the KD range (Known Distance) and get him qualified. Apparently, he had failed to qualify in basic training. What a small world! One soldier was one from Fargo and the other was one of the groups that had gone into Minneapolis to the Rialto that one night we had a pass at Ft. Snelling. I didn't know that he was on the same troop train that past fall or what unit he had been assigned to. He was not a personal friend but I knew him through high school, a year ahead, and his dad was our family's ophthalmologist. A southsider.

Now the reason he was there was that he had passed the oral and physical exams for OCS (Officer's Candidate School) and needed a qualification for his record to meet all requirements. The branch for OCS was not infantry or any of the combat arms so one of the few times I forged a record in the service. I used a 30-caliber pencil and passed him. I was not proud of this and it has always bothered me.

Another time on range about this time, still on some special detail. We found ourselves with loose, extra ammo at the end of the day. Now, S 4 (Service and Supply) company through regiment wants no extra ammo (loose) on the supply record. So none was ever returned or tried to be returned. Especially after the first try and the resulting "ass chewing." So all loose rounds were buried, lost, or shot up prior to leaving the range.

This day was a detail of all expert shots. The scales of marksmanship were and still are: marksman, sharpshooter, and expert. I believe 70-80, 80-90, 90-100%. Or close!

Now, what we did was highly unethical but the only way out we could see without burying the extra ammo. We set up a deal with the pit and kept the ammo intact. Remember, that all the men on this small detail were classified as experts. One would shoot - wait for the mark - and when the target reappeared, the next one would shoot. If anyone missed the bull, he was out. The range was 200 yards. It was too easy. No one fell out. So, a new contest. One would shoot to miss the bull on purpose and, after the target was pulled, checked and returned, up with the mark. We would shoot the mark. The mark was three inches in diameter in either black for all values other than bull's eye and white if a bull's eye. The game didn't last long, the pit detail called back and said the bullets were splintering the sticks or poles used for the markers and didn't want any trouble explaining to the range offices when and how the damage. We quit. The extra ammo - I don't remember.

The same problem presented itself in the 1950's after recall for Korean Service with tracer ammo. Couldn't use due to dryness of area, but that's a later story. And, in 1950, there were no longer Springfield 03's issued as TOE equipment. Only M-1 Garands.

I was getting stale. We all were. The division was getting bored. You train for war. You can only train so long. And no war. So, I wanted out. New surroundings, new places and faces, anywhere, just out. About this time, the rumors started flying about summer maneuvers at Bend, Oregon. I guess this did occur but exactly when and how long I don't recall. The division did go to Italy in the spring of '44 and accounted for itself quite well.

Anyhow, two opportunities arose for an out. Either OCS or a new program called A.S.T.P. (Army Specialized Training Program). I apply for both, took the initial tests and was approved for both. Whether there were any cross-reference checks, I don't know. The only thing left for the OCS approval was a physical. I thought at the time that this was odd and quite redundant. Here I am on active duty, a buck sergeant and they want a physical. I took it. In a couple of days, I get a phone call. I was unqualified for OCS (ordnance or engineers) due to my eyesight. I wore glasses. It didn't add up. Here I was in the same uniform and service and now I was physically and mentally destroyed. But, you must remember that my generation accepted authority (begrudgingly) so even though depressed, I accepted. I heard that another solder in the same boat said f--- this and went to the I.G. (Inspector General). He went to whatever OCS he had applied for. Guess someone felt that if he had enough

fortitude or guts to challenge the stupidity of the regulations, he'd make a good officer. Probably did! As for myself, since I'm still here at 75 writing about the incident, fate didn't have me on that page of history.

The only other out was the A.S.T.P. So, I waited on that program to develop and schedule an interview. I finally receive a time - date. I remember the interview was in the hospital area. (Luckily!)

That morning the unit was conducting USGF Testing (United States Ground Forces, running, carrying someone piggy-back, throwing a practice grenade, etc. All individual testing. Now the tests were being conducted in the near area to our unit. The rainy season had ended. It was now late April or early May and the name of the area, the Agate Desert, began to make sense.

The ground was pockmarked with hardened footprints. During one run, I turned my ankle. A twinge of pain, but I completed the testing, then back to the company area for noon chow. The ankle began to let me know it was there.

In WWII very few soldiers enjoyed any transportation for personal needs or reasons. So after the noon dinner a small group from the regiment scheduled for the interviews for A.S.T.P. fell in and walked route step to the building assigned. It was at least two miles and as the time and distance passed, I fell slowly behind. So, as the detail approached the area, I stood out like a sore thumb, limping along to the rear.

The board for the interviews had some doctors assigned. I was pulled out of the group, taken to the hospital, X-rayed and returned. Nothing broken; just a very severe strain. Not a sprain. I got a Jeep ride back to my company area, with some APC's and went to bed to get off the foot. My right foot!

The pain subsided after I took my weight off the foot and I had a good rest and sleep. Now came reveille. With apprehension, I slowly sat up and put my feet on the floor.

When I returned to the barracks that afternoon, the ankle was the same size as the calf of my leg. Now, as I put my feet gingerly on the floor it looked normal. A little weight - no pain, more weight - no pain, full weight - no pain. Why? Since then, I have spent time in VA hospitals with sprains where the entire foot was pure black from the ankle down due to hemorrhage. Why? Never since that one time have I had a strain - now always a sprain with resulting hemorrhage.

Another range story! One takes basic training to initially learn how to shoot a weapon (individual) and how to use. The range shooting is to give the soldier practical training with the rifle. Everyone learns how to use the rifle first. If later one is assigned a carbine, 45, M-3, grease gun or BAR, etc., training and firing of one or all of these is done for familiarization. But, never does the army show any trust for your training. Possession of ammo was a court martial offense. Yet, the Swiss, for example, have a fully automatic rifle, with ammo, in their own homes. I resented the fact today that we were not respected enough to have been allowed ammo. Guilty before trial! For this reason, all range firing was completed with an inspection in ranks and inspection of arms. It was not too uncommon for a rifle to fire, as some nitwit had not unloaded

correctly.

I wanted a souvenir from my first range firing so I got and kept a clip of five rounds. A courts martial offense! Now how do I get the clip back to the cantonment area? I put under my "jewels" in my jockey shorts. I hated the briefs furnished by the army and bought my own underwear. I had never worn briefs and don't to this day. But what a march "home" that was. The clip didn't make it. It ended up in a ditch somewhere as my personal comfort had to come before my material wants. Try a five round clip jabbing your scrotum at every step and you'll get the message. Can't win them all!

One hears of "souvenirs" causing injury and death. How true and I don't know but there was one incident in an adjacent unit where a 37 mm shell exploded. The guy supposedly was playing with it by his footlocker and dropped it. Truth?

In the early part of 1943, I had a time of servitude for nearly two weeks. I call it servitude because it was forced assignment to regimental headquarters. A position I hated and did not want or ask for. To this day, I still believe the old gentleman, Colonel Broedlow, researched the 201 files and was responsible for my status.

The first I knew of the "reassignment" was when I was called to company headquarters and shown and asked about a SO (special orders) requisition requesting me by name and a time-date for reporting to regimental headquarters. I was to report to a specified person (?). What the hell is this all about? Damned if I know! I reported.

I believe I was a buck sergeant at this time but on reporting, I found that the colonel wanted me groomed for a position called, "Operations Sergeant." A technical sergeant rank. I'd be promoted by June. I was put to work preparing training aids to scale for troop instruction. It was dry work!

Many mornings after breakfast at Company H, attached there for billet and chow, Sergeant Ambo and Captain Rhodes asked several times as to how long this was to be. Since the SO was from the Colonel, who knew.

I can remember one morning quite clearly. I got my ass chewed. It was cold, wet, and dreary. I had just started to work and was quite engrossed with some measuring. As if from a distance and muffled, I heard a "Good Morning!" Without looking up I responded, "Good Morning!" A long pause, a great increase in volume from the initial voice, "When I speak to you, you will stand at attention, Sergeant!" I did! It was Colonel Broedlow. A "carry on" and he left.

That did it! I wanted out! Out! Out! I got permission to see Captain Rhodes and stated my request. He would see what he could do. What he did was go to the battalion commander. Name: ??? A short name but don't recall. BANG! In reading this now, a flash – was it Lehman? I'm quite sure. A good soldier. Can still see his adjutant like yesterday. A handsome man - first lieutenant - with the bluest eyes I've ever seen then or since. Even with contacts. I'll bet he went through women like rain through a sieve.

Between the two officers, a lieutenant colonel and a captain, they got me on orders and out of the soft job. I was back with the soldiers - the men who do the dirty

work - not support. Thank you!

I had received word by now that I had failed the physical for OCS but had been approved for further testing for ASTP. Orders were forthcoming. So, to open my slot as section sergeant for a subordinate, I was assigned to company headquarters. This was and probably still is a holding area for all men on a casual status. (Unassigned or waiting orders and change.) In the commissioned ranks, I believe it is coded 0001.

There were some real losers in the "waiting pool." Most just duds and misfits. Bitch, bitch, bitch! The continual bitch was that no one had ever had any leave, even six hours, from the post. Basic training had been over for months. I was in charge of a latrine detail being dug in the field. The regiment was on a tactical week of training. It was a Thursday p.m. with one day to go until we headed in. The mail call that p.m. had a telegram from the girl friend coming through for a six-hour layover. Could I meet her? I went to the first sergeant.

About an hour before mail call, we were working on the latrine and bitching. What I didn't know was that Captain Rhodes had stopped nearby and heard all the gripes.

I was called and told to report to him. I did! He was short and to the point. If you no longer care to act like a non-commissioned officer and seek the problem soldiers to chum with, take the chevrons off tomorrow when we get in. Dismissed.

My request for a pass (I found out later) went from Sergeant Ambo to Captain Rhodes to Battalion CO to Colonel Broedlow. I was to catch the kitchen truck, in that p.m. with a six-hour pass. The rest is history with the Captain meeting and dancing with the lady and in conversation asked about marriage. Nothing definite but who knows. So, the next day he called me to company headquarters - met your girl friend, possibility of marriage - have you taken the stripes off yet? Did you learn anything from yesterday? Okay. Let's leave the rank as it is but -----!

I remember the XO's name as LaMont. (?) As to the platoon leader's, not a name. Had several come and go and not impressed with some. One was the buddy-buddy type. He would come into the barracks and smoke and BS with us. Then he gets his tit in a wringer for his informal actions and turns around and racks our asses for lack of respect.

He mentioned one day prior to his being reprimanded that there was a memo requesting junior officers for an Alaskan duty. Orders would be cut in a week or so. He had volunteered and was ready to go. So, he had sold off his private belongings at ten cents on the dollar. Radio, clock, etc. The entire movement was rescinded. Back comes the asshole crying for his stuff back at the selling price. (I didn't buy anything!) Phooey to you, sir! The men who had bought stuck by their guns. Our price or we keep. He was transferred soon after that but where? Good riddance!

The hysteria that existed along the coast in 1942 had been greatly toned down. The United States had won several critical battles and west coast camps had begun to relax a bit. I think I had turned in my air raid triangle for warnings and I don't remember any more practice alerts with the 50 caliber Brownings in each quadrangle.

So, 50% of the unit could receive a pass on the weekends and did. After my episode in the field, the officers from regiment on down had realized how wrong the past policies had been. Most passes, however, were for six-hour duration. This is the key to success in Medford with the battle of the sexes.

I was chatting with one of the first cooks one day and learned that he had been going to Medford since the camp opened. (What BS!) He stated quite matter-of-factly, that "pickings" were good - always good in town. Oh, yeah! Show me! Okay! We'll go in this weekend. (The weekend was my last days at Camp White. I/we (ASTP) had orders to board a bus the following Monday and report to Stanford University at Palo Alto for more testing.

The weekend arrived and away we go with 12-hour passes. This was my first hint at score-fail ratio of the troops. Six hours was not enough time for anything. The bus took nearly 30 minutes coming and going the 11 miles to town so one had five hours to look and find. No way! Also, I've often wondered if a man in dire need has physical changes in his appearance, talk, walk, etc. Maybe his eyes are glazed. Whatever, the changes alert the ladies and they are forewarned and can act accordingly.

In we went that fateful Saturday night. There were GI's everywhere. Also, a few "ladies" on the street, etc. On an off-street, I saw my first greet light - a pro station. (Prophylactics Station). If one had been naughty, he was to report for ye olde mercuric oxide up the urethra. (Only once in my service days.)

My buddy very calmly stated that we'd go to a show. I thought he was nuts. I could go to a show on the post. Just relax and wait - a little patience. I doubt if I enjoyed the show - anticipation. Ha! (I hadn't yet learned - too young - that a man's imagination is much more flattering and inaccurate than reality in regard to women.)

The show was over about 10:00 p.m. Out we went and at once, I noticed something in the human traffic. Many GI's were heading for the bus depot. They had six-hour passes. Medford in 1996 lists a population of approximately 46,000. In 1943, it was probably 15-20,000. Not a lot!

We went to a restaurant and ordered coffee and pie. Of course, our booth was next to one with three "lovelies" in it. All quite young and all quite cute and not because of absence. We hadn't sat long when one of the girls, the blonde, spoke up and said that if we were going to buy them some lunch we'd better hurry up as the place closed at 12:00. Over we went.

The blonde, and I'm partial to blondes, was about 25 (exactly as I found out later) the other two were brunettes and quite small women. We had not sat long before a second lieutenant came up, visited a bit, and left with one of the brunettes. At 12:00, we left. My lady immediately complained about her feet. She had "pumps" on and how long had she been dancing, walking standing? Anyway, we went to the hotel where they had a room. The Holland? Sticks in my mind! Upstairs they went. Wait a few minutes and come on up. We waited and made our move to the elevator. No way, Jose, said the desk clerk. Can't let you up, men. I'd lose my job. (In the old days, a desk clerk was Chief of Vice, Morals Officer, Chaplain, Doctor of Medicine, etc. He

could halt all and any action between sexes at his disposal.)

My buddy went to the phone and called the room. He explained the problem and the little brunette agreed to come down. She did and they left. I agreed to wait.

I made myself comfortable in the lobby and read magazines. Several times the clerk, an elderly man (to me in 1943) came over to chat. He had been in WWI and understood my problem but he needed his job. I appreciated his candor and chat and resigned myself to wait for my buddy.

About an hour passed when the clerk came and told me to follow him. I did. We went to the desk and he called the room. He told the lady that there was a lonesome sergeant at the desk who would like to come up. I heard her voice. Come ahead. Up the elevator, knock on the door come in. She was in bed waiting.

We had nearly two hours together and all a la natural. She was good! She knew what and where she wanted and she spoke English. She should have taught a class for women on sex. I was one tired, happy, warm, young soldier. We visited and shared notes on our personal life, place of birth, residence, education, etc. Just like the good books on the full consummation of the blending of a man and women. This warm, candid conversation was all I needed. I was pleasantly pooped. We probably shared a cigarette or two.

About this time there was a knock on the door. Yes, come in! It was the brunette who had left with the second lieutenant. Hi, hello, introduction, and wham-bam, zip-zip, off went her clothes and into bed she hopped on the other side of my lady. Minutes later another knock. The same sequence of actions and now I have three naked women to my left. A true menage quatre, not a trois. The dream of a lifetime for any and all red-blooded lover? Not now - not tonight or this morning. I was as interested in more loving as I would be catching cobras bare handed.

My lady had some girl talk with them and then returned to my side. About this time she got up and went to the bathroom. Leave him alone - he's mine! Other similar comments. Hopefully, they, the brunettes, had had a "full" evening. I was not interested and actually a bit apprehensive. Time to go! It was 0400 or so but I got out of bed, dressed, kissed my lady goodnight and left. I breathed easier on the way downstairs. No way was I in a position to "assist" three women.

I never saw the cook again. I still remember his name but will not compromise his status after all these years. I got back to camp. Showered, packed all my gear and reported to the bus area at 0700. It was time for a change. Captain Rhodes left command for his Majority; Lieutenant LaMont was now CO of H Co., 361st Infantry. I was about to turn over a new page in my service life. Away we go!

CHAPTER 3

ASTP

We boarded a bus around 0700 for our trip to Stanford University in Palo Alto, California. I knew this prior to leaving, as I was abruptly jolted awake by a change in my plans. Since I was the ranking non-commissioned officer in the group, I was assigned all the duties related to a troop movement. I had the itinerary, the TR's (Transportation Requests), meal vouchers and a running chronology of ETA's and D's, (Estimated Time of Arrivals/Departures), from start to finish of the trip (Estimated Time of Arrival and Departure.) I promised myself here and now that from here on out in my military career I would never volunteer my rank (date) again and would try and be as inconspicuous as possible. There's a catch to rank and pay and allowances. No one has it as easy as a private.

All these years I've always thought that I had been over the Golden Gate Bridge. Now I wonder. The route taken from Camp White to Palo Alto was probably along today's Interstate 5 - then 99? A rough estimate of total mileage would be 425 miles. A good day's drive during the war years. Of course, we made good time as the charter bus only stopped for meals and personal needs ("piss call").

I only remember one stop with any clarity. This was our noon or lunch stop. The itinerary was quite accurate on its ETA's. There were over 30 GIs on the bus but none were a problem. All were anxious to see and experience the new change in status and what awaited us. So, I had only to count heads for the meals and seats. No problem!

We arrived in Palo Alto in the late p.m. We were expected and a detail was waiting to assign a dormitory and announce the pending schedules. The ranking officer in charge was a Major Stewart, a big man, and probably a teacher or college professor by vocation. A kindly man who did not deserve what was ahead of him. He was the CO of the detachment that ultimately was assigned to the University of California at Berkeley. I reported to him as ranking non-com and from then on he never forgot my name. I was marked!

I draw a blank on where we were quartered. Probably in one of the many dormitories. I imagine we ate at the school cafeteria - another blank. I do remember the shaded walks with the support columns around most of the buildings. It can get hot in Palo Alto and sunny.

We were at Stanford about a week and I do not remember much of a respite at any time. Not many military demands but they kept us busy with testing, testing, testing and some one-on-one interviews. I imagine there was another intelligence test administered - the Wechsler Adult Scale? - or maybe one of Stanford's construction. The results of our AGCT (Army Ground Classification Test) taken at the induction were quite valid, I'm sure. But, no problem in being thorough. A battery of tests on areas of achievement and maybe personality and aptitude tests were also administered. We

were busy!

I came close to not making the grade. I had had a math teacher in grade ten in high school who destroyed me. A nice guy but a better shoe salesman than a teacher (his words). Geometry never made sense to me - why prove something which was quite obvious? My math area was low - poor. Thankfully since I was 21 (old for the group) I was passed.

We got out in the p.m. and were much appreciated in the local social circles. The girls had cars and there were a lot of them. I enjoyed one "quick" evening with one of the local beauties. However, my success (score) was tempered by the knowledge that the lady was known as "Miss Make" on the local scene. I can certainly agree with her title. From my experience in the love game with her I'd have to diagnose that her Bartholin glands never shut down. In sharing notes (remember we were young men) all noticed this same situation.

A brief explanation of what ASTP was all about: The Army Specialized Training Program was the brainchild of some rear echelon hero or heroes and liberal educators. The war was going in our favor and victory was a possibility. So, it was felt that a corps of educated, capable, commissioned officers would be needed throughout the world to administer and control all facets of recovery in the post war era. All graduates of the program would be commissioned as majors and retained on active duty for a set number of years. Here again, we have a modification of the P-P Syndrome. Why should academic ability and/or intelligence alone guarantee leadership? No way! Here we have "ye olde game" of playing the game of military politics. The "soldiers" die and the "chosen few" enhance their careers.

The week at Stanford ended and we (part of the number at Stanford) were assigned to the University of California at Berkeley. A short bus ride up the peninsula to San Francisco, across the Bay Bridge with no stop at Mare Island (Navy) to Oakland, up Telegraph Street to Berkeley, to Euclid Street up to ?? Street to our new quarters in the Theta Chi house (leased by the government).

The campus at U of C is big. Large, beautiful buildings, a large athletic field and stadium, but what I remember clearly was the campanile near the west (?) gate. It overpowered everything else with its size, beauty, and location. I was to see it for six months before the vagabond spirit again told me that it was time to move on.

Everything was quite informal as far as recent army demands. There was no formation from our residence to the campus area. That would have been too dangerous. We did, however, march from class to class in formation. Chow was at the school cafeteria and I think we were granted an hour for lunch. Wonderful, as that left us time for the campus beauties. I understand there were 15,000 women students in attendance and the total of service units was about 1500. An excellent ratio! We, most of us, would sit after lunch until 1300 and the next class - with the beauty or beauties of choice. Many, many lovelies!

Our classes started immediately and were standard fare for a freshman matriculation: English, chemistry, algebra, history, PE, etc. Our algebra teacher was a

sweetheart. She had a Ph.D. in math, was about 40, and, we sensed, quite tense the opening day of class. We found out later that she had openly expressed her apprehension on a class of 35 young soldiers. That first day brought an unwritten law in the 35 that there would be no nonsense or misconduct. We treated her like a lady of the court. At the end of the course, we all chipped in and gave her a dozen roses. She was flabbergasted but wore a million dollar smile with alternate tears. We heard later that she had stated many times that we had been her most pleasant and enjoyable class she had ever taught. It was refreshing to know that we could be gentlemen by choice because other classes were quite different.

Our weekends were free with some restrictions. Sign out and be back by 1200 on Sunday. A limit on miles. Quite like a VOCO (Verbal Orders Commanding Officer) on a regular post. A fifty-mile limit with a 48-hour maximum of leave time permitted. I went back to visit a girl I had met in Palo Alto a couple times those first weekends. I have a couple of stories here, all correct.

On one weekend we came into San Francisco. I had heard of the International Settlement off Market Street on the bay. A conglomeration of restaurants, bars, dance halls, etc. All for play! We had ordered our drinks and since I had just been paid, I had a couple of \$20's. Being naïve, I offered the waitress the \$20.00. She accepted but explained she had no change and would bring it back. My date took the \$20.00 and told her to come back with the change for the \$20.00. In 1943, I guess, a waitress would disappear for that kind of money.

I have asked through the years about the International area to no avail. Anyone under 60 has never heard of it. Gone! I suppose more permanent businesses required the space. At least I can say I was there once for what it's worth.

Another time for a date with her, I had quite an experience. Her back yard had several fruit trees that were loaded with ripe fruit. Several were the big plum type and some were fig trees. I have always enjoyed dried figs and do today. However, fresh figs, black with white meat and seeds. Seeds just don't cut it. The plums were ripe - probably over ripe. I doubled a paper sack and took a full sack with me on the way back to Berkeley. A bus ride to San Francisco to the Key System (train) for the ride over the Bay Bridge, with a stop at Mare Island, to Oakland.

During the rides, the vibrations of the rides had settled the fruit. I was holding the sack and standing on the Key System. Also, I was wearing the summer uniform of khaki. Everything showed on this fabric. The train was full of sailors. As I stood holding the sack, I could feel the dampness increase on the bottom so I held the sack out away from my stomach. The dampness increased with the vibration and I looked down and there was a drip, drip on the floor. It looked like blood. Some sailors noticed and I watched their looks and facial expressions. (There had been a murder in the area recently where the victim had been decapitated. Was I holding a head in the sack? Could be!) So, I reached in and took out a plum and started to eat it. At once, the expressions changed on the faces. I offered around and the sack was soon emptied. I guess a small price to pay for a return to normalcy.

Probably on the same weekend that I returned with the over-ripe plums, there were two incidents that I remember very clearly. On the way down to Palo Alto, I was sitting in the rear seat of the bus with another GI, a stranger. Next to us was a middle-aged woman and next to her was a young gal with a baby, a new one. All of us were visiting and from time to time the woman would visit with us. The young mother was blocked from us by the older woman. After some time the baby started to whimper and whine - then sigh and then out and out cry. The young mother's face turned to a frantic red. She whispered to the older woman - passed their question and answer period and then she shifted herself and the baby, draped the baby over her left breast and allowed the baby to nurse. Quiet, resigned! The poor kid had been fussing because it was hungry, the mother nervous as to how to feed (nurse) with us sitting there. I guess one might say that breast-feeding followed a more discreet action than today. Today I have seen some - exercising their constitutional rights - whip out a boob or both and nurse the child. I guess I'm a bit old fashioned as I feel that nursing a baby, like sex, is a private act between two parties.

The other incident occurred on the way back to Berkeley the next day. The bus was crowded and the traffic was heavy. The bus driver, a young woman, had trouble double clutching on the grades and would grind and grind the transmission. One older man went into orbit. He had a fleet of gravel trucks and he kept raving about her inability to drive and shift. His raving certainly didn't help. I can remember that once she came to a complete stop and then started through the gears. Too bad she couldn't have drawn a newer model and transmission.

We slowly approached March Field. It was a fighter base and the planes parked, flying, and landing were Bell P-39 Air Cobras. (Remember now - traffic was bumper to bumper.) Others and I noticed this one P-39 taking off. Its flight path took it directly over the highway. The plane had risen about 100 feet or so, faltered, flat lined out, and then started down. You could see that it was headed exactly into the tight traffic. You could see the initial impact and hear the crash and then the bigger explosion and fire to the left of the highway where the plane and car had stopped after the initial impact. It didn't take a genius to see and know that there were no survivors.

In the paper the next day, the facts were printed. The plane had experienced mechanical or pilot error and lost air speed and crashed. It took a single car with a single driver off the highway with the impact. Two dead - pilot, driver. Here we were in a bus, locked into the traffic stream about 100-150 yards behind the poor devil in the car. The death toll could have been higher! I thought about this for some time, one of many "hints." Was the Good Lord trying to tell me something?

Before I comment on the next six months of "civilian" life, I must offer a preface of explanation. Although there were girls and dates (of varying degrees) during the period, I was experiencing a transformation of morality. I developed a conscience? I'm sure some psychological expert could come up with some diagnosis and title such as: Lost Libido Syndrome, Master of Morals Syndrome, Mother-Sister Syndrome, etc., etc. Somehow, I didn't dare or care to let any friendship develop beyond the friendship

stage. I didn't expect or want to stay at the U of C forever and out of fairness to the girl and myself, I could not get emotionally involved on a part-time basis. There were some lovely, wonderful young women dated in this short period and I believe I can mention by first name only: Barbara, Betty, Edith, Nancy and Rosemary. You were and are all very attractive and desirable women. Our platonic association was not a reflection on your part, only mine. I hope all of you experienced a rich, full life of happiness and fulfillment. There could have been something permanent with a couple of you and to one I offer my sincere apology for acting like a complete ass. God Bless!

One incident stands out in my mind like it happened yesterday. Actually, it was in June of '43 so actually 54 years ago. It's quite raw but true. This is probably why I remember the incident so clearly.

We had an hour for lunch so I had time on the campus to sit and watch the girls go by. Remember 15,000 to 1,500, or 10 to 1. I had met a cutie on the lawn and sat there every day. We sat on a slight rise that sloped down to the sidewalk. The sidewalks were at least 6-8 feet wide. Chitchat and the general BS between young men and women were the rule.

The 1500 servicemen on campus were from three of the services - at least army and navy. The Army in the ASTP and the Navy in the V programs: 5 or 12. If the Army Air Corps was represented, I don't remember the classification. Of the three programs, the army mean-age was the highest. Most of us had come from active duty and all had completed basic training in our respective branch. The Navy kids were 18-19, no active duty - right out of high school. Most had been deferred from active duty to finish high school. I make this point because we (the old men) looked at them as kids and never respected their basic close order marching ability. This was true until this incident. It was perfection plus. How long and where had they practiced? Who or where arranged the verbal contents? I heard and retained the verbal drill just this once and I have never heard or read since.

The beauty of the "drill" was the facings, correlated with the "poetry." Why the "young" men felt they had to present their "chorus" to us, I don't know. We actually had very little contact with each other. The campus of the U of C can swallow up 1500 bodies without a trace. I don't remember either group passing each other from class to class. All passing between classes was in platoon formation.

The act of infamy occurred on a very pleasant day. It was sunny, warm, the grass cool, and the girls, and mine beautiful. We really didn't pay too much attention at first, as the platoon of the "upstarts" marched by from our left front.

The platoon leader brought them to a halt, gave a "right face" and clearly announced, "Say hello to the boys!" I will list the "verse" in its entirety and then fit the facings with each line to show how poignant the facings were to the delivery and indelible impression retained all these years.

From the mouths of babes came:

Eyes right!

Foreskins tight!

Assholes to the front!
We're the boys that make the noise
We're always after cunt.
We're the heroes of the night,
We would rather fuck than fight.
We're the members of the foreskin jubilee.

Their delivery was flawless. Crystal clear and their articulation and enunciation were perfection. This clarity was really the key to their act - you heard perfectly but you couldn't and didn't want to accept what you heard. No one would dare to try such verbal filth - especially while on active duty. Oh, yeah!

I'll walk you through the entire "program" using capital case for this "poetry" in unison and lower case for the platoon leader's commands, matching the platoon's close order movements to the "poetry."

As the platoon approached us from the left and when it was directly in front of us, the platoon leader said, "*Platoon halt. Right face. Say hello to the boys.*" In unison at plenty of decibels, HELLO BOYS! Then, EYES RIGHT! The platoon leader checked the ranks - straightened - and then, *Ready front*, then, FORESKINS TIGHT! The entire platoon simulated a short-arm inspection by pantomiming holding their penises out and pulling the foreskin back, *Ready front*. The platoon returned to attention. *About face*. This command was completed and, *Assume the position*. The platoon bent over and grabbed their ankles, then they put each hand on each cheek of their butts and simulated pulling the cheeks apart for a rectal check. ASSHOLES TO THE FRONT. *Ready front. About face*. In unison and loud now, WE'RE THE BOYS THAT MAKE THE NOISE, WE'RE ALWAYS AFTER CUNT. WE'RE THE HEROES OF THE NIGHT, WE WOULD RATHER FUCK THAN FIGHT, WE'RE THE MEMBERS OF THE FORESKIN JUBILEE. *Left face - forward march - double time*. And away they went.

The girl I was sitting with, Betty, turned to me and asked what did they say? I'm sure she had heard as clearly as I had but being such a socially tactful man (ha!), I answered that I'm not sure but I'm afraid some of the words were filth.

I didn't know at the time what platoon or program these men were from. I don't to this day. We never heard anything about the incident from Major Stewart so I assume that no one complained to the college authorities. Lucky for all of us as the punishment would have been reflected on all of us due to all of us being under oath and in the service.

Early in my stay at U of C, I met a wonderful, wonderful couple, Gene and Janet Roberts. They were lifesavers! They shared their home, table, and love on many weekends. I even baby-sat on several occasions their one-year-old daughter. (Name?) The pleasant memories are too many to share, but there were highlights that were general in nature.

Through Gene and Janet I met another couple: Bob and Dorothy LaRue. I should mention that both Gene and Bob were members of the Berkeley Police Force. Their home was further up in the hills and I was invited there for several excellent

meals.

I can remember two incidents very clearly. I went to the kitchen for a refill and Dorothy was preparing a French bread for the oven. (I came from a small mid-western town, Fargo, and gourmet culinary arts were foreign.) She took a large clove of garlic, sliced it in half and then took each half and vigorously rubbed each half of the bread with the garlic half. It was my first exposure to garlic - delicious - but to this day, I don't care for "garlic breath."

The other image was a full size picture of a very pretty woman hanging on the end of the garage wall. As you drove in, here was this scantily clad, pretty woman to greet you. Actually, it was a photograph blown up to full size. Bob enjoyed photography as a hobby, was good at it and had taken the picture at a smoker. Dorothy hated it but I guess there had been an understanding on its disposition. Hands off!

A neighbor of Bob and Dorothy's and an excellent host was a physicist named Doctor Ernest Lawrence. (I hope I have his first name correct.) He was in charge of the Cyclotron, smashing the atom. A building that was high above the U of C campus and has a role in a later story. I don't remember eating at his home or his wife or children, maybe just an introduction and/or a drink?

Now that history has shown us the answers (some) on fission and fusion, how lucky or unlucky we are in America that our first attempts were closer to fact than other attempts in the world. How much time did the Germans waste in Norway on their "Heavy Water Theory?" At least enough that we got ahead.

One more story at the LaRue's house. Bob had had a contractor excavate a 15 by 25 (at least) swimming pool in his back yard. The natural grade of the property would make draining an easy matter. So, Bob elected to finish that part of the project himself. He asked for help on one Sunday and Gene and I went up to help. Bob had a huge mechanical jack which he/we set up between the two-inch drain and the sidewall, and started jacking the pipe towards a slight gully for the drain. It was like moving cheese several inches on each pull of the lever. Then a solid stop. Solid! Solid! No movement - nothing. We figured we'd shore up more strength behind the jack to the back wall and it would give - whatever it was. Wrong. I heard later it was a big rock - no way could it be moved. For extra weight, he had Dorothy stand on the new shoring (How stupid - she didn't weigh 115 pounds.) Ready, go! We caught a notch and jacked. Nothing! You could feel the pressure on the ground through your feet. Another notch! The shoring was vibrating. Okay, one more! One more it was. The shoring started to buckle and threw Dorothy into the air and off. She was not hurt. Then, like a pound of TNT, the entire shoring exploded.

We all ducked and backed off. But, out of the corner of my eye, my peripheral vision was better than; I sensed or saw this object coming. Down came a piece of 2 x 4 about 4-5 feet long. Smack on the head - it knocked me down. Immediately I had blood in my eyes. (Ye olde scalp wounds are vicious looking, but usually minor.)

To the emergency hospital we went. I remember two doors leading into the hospital, each to an emergency room. I could look through the window of the right

door and what a mess. All I saw was red. It was the buttocks of a young girl, I found this out later, who had fallen on her own skate at the inside ice rink in Berkeley. The skate blade had sliced her bottom to the bone for about 6-8 stitches in length. I don't suppose it was life threatening, but what a gory mess. (Didn't see anything as messy until combat and haven't since.)

No Purple Heart for me. The doctor shaved my head around the laceration and stitched it up. If I remember it was 6-7 stitches. Then he put a liquid plastic patch over and we were done. Back to B and D's but all work for the day was suspended. I was treated royally and Dorothy was worried about the blood loss. A steak and beer helped in this replenishment. Ha!

There is one more sequel to this hurt. In about a week I had been told to report to the dispensary at U of C to have the plastic patch removed, along with the stitches. The plastic was practically bonded to my scalp and as the nurse tried to remove the patch, it would pull on the fresh healing area. She didn't want to tear it open again and was apologizing to me. It was uncomfortable but not excessive. At the same time, there was a young sailor getting a cut stitched or un-stitched. It was on his arm and quite small; no blood. He was whining and moaning and partly crying and offering very little cooperation to the other nurse. We were about five feet apart. Finally, the nurse working on him (trying to), lost her patience and commented, "You cry baby!" If you're an example of Navy manhood, we're in trouble. Look at the soldier next to you, twice the stitches and twice the pain and he hasn't said a word. It worked! The kid quit "crying" (like a baby) and cooperated without any more whimpering.

The war changed our lives and habits of most Americans. It also changed the sports world in the U.S. When there are few young athletes, the rivalry between colleges and universities had to be modified. The interest and participation in traditional competition just wasn't therefore possible. This was wrong! It was not right! I/we had to "replenish" this spirit of contact. What to do?

High on the hill behind the U of C campus and stadium was a large C and, if I remember correctly, large rocks. It was at least 20 x 30 feet in size or even larger. It was painted in gold to show the U's colors. At least in orange or yellow. This must be changed to Stanford's color, red. This we did!

Where we got the paint, I don't remember. Probably we collected all the shades of red from Gene and Janet, Bob and Dorothy and maybe there was left over paint at the frat house. Anyway, we had enough; it turned out later, to completely cover the C. A good job.

We left (how many?) the frat house about midnight with the paint, pails, mops, brooms, and brushes, whatever to do the job. Looking back, we were lucky and stupid. Lucky we didn't get caught by our lieutenant at bed check and stupid because the "C" was quite near the Cyclotron. This was surrounded by barbed wire, under armed guard, restricted, off limits, you name it. We knew we had to be quiet and apparently, we were. No one interrupted us at any phase of the infamous act.

Nature and the weather also assisted and made the deed perfection. The night

was clear and warm and dawn brought a typical Bay morning. Heavy fog right down to the deck.

The activities started before noon. More cars and people than usual. Preparation at the stadium increased. It was a festive atmosphere. There was some interest in the traditional event.

About noon the sun burned through. There in all its (our) glory was a big red "C." The world exploded! Activity, activity! We watched the hordes of bodies in mixed colors head up the hill to undo the damage. What it cost them to correct I have no idea. Also, I'll bet they had some ruined clothes. The paint in 1943 was all linseed based; latex was not formulated at that time. The red was still wet and stuck. We ruined our fatigues so we destroyed and claimed we forgot about salvaging them had to pay for replacement. The army does not recognize civilian work damage to its property.

If I remember correctly, although this is hearsay, two other events occurred or marred the day. Supposedly, a P-51 pilot came over the "C" hill and dropped down into the stadium at 250 mph or so then stood the plane on its tail. Another pilot flew a light plane under the Golden Gate Bridge. Both were caught and grounded. Such actions are the mark of good fighter pilots. One has to have a "wild streak" to be good. For a bomber pilot, a "sedate" life style. We need both. Who won the game?

One of the courses we were assigned was a course in physical geography. The class was held on the fourth floor of the engineering building. This was also the summer quarter and it was warm - a typical California summer - with the temperature tempered by the San Francisco Bay.

A Dutch professor taught the course. What his background was and why he was at the U of C I don't know. His English was heavy with a German or Dutch brogue. He also talked a mile a minute. We had had about a week of the class and nobody had assimilated a word. We had begun to dread going to class as the time was simply wasted. The professor had a couple of graduate assistants who, we hoped, might teach a portion of the course, but no way. We knew that he was a master of his course, but his delivery and approach to teaching was losing all of us.

On this day, it was hot. Some of the men had climbed out the windows and were sitting on the overhang four stories up. The professor droned away. Now I have done some stupid things in my life, but this was one of the stupidest. Maybe I felt, as did all or most of the men, helpless and frustrated.

I was seated about half way back from the podium. My mind was rambling along and only periodically returned to the lecture. As my mind returned this time, here was a machine gun delivery with the guttural base. I stood up, faced the professor and without any hand movements said, Heil Hitler!

The professor blanched, then reddened, then turned and left the room. It was quiet! Down the aisles came the two assistants. I had really put my foot in my mouth this time. I was in the uniform of the United States Army on EAD and under oath. The assistants approached and I said that what I did was plain stupidity. I would like the

privilege of apologizing. They both, without a pause, said that that would not be necessary. In essence, the conversation condensed down to these facts. The professor had discussed his speech and delivery with assistants. Was he making himself clear? Were we comprehending the information? Was he going too fast and/or assuming too much? My Heil Hitler was an abrupt answer to his questions. No apologies needed. All of us learned that day. The class from then on was interesting and constructive. We all participated and all benefited. In fact, it was one of our best.

Another incident that was born and formulated and made possible was the physical geography classroom. The room had natural gas outlets and we needed the gas to make the "show" go. Also, we had to wait for a day when it was actively raining and overcast so we had the occasion to wear or carry our raincoats. The raincoats were the key to success. The ponchos of today would also have worked but in 1943, we had sleeved raincoats - always a bit loose and sloppy.

Mother Nature cooperated and the day arrived. The class was after the noon meal - probably 1300 (1:00 p.m.). We attended and after the bell rang rushed to the gas outlets. Each man had an army issue prophylactic (rubber). These we filled with gas, buttoned up our raincoats, fell in, and marched as a platoon to the library. The library lobby is large (as I remember) with ceilings at least 20 feet high. It was the middle of the afternoon and we were scheduled for a study period. Quiet, quiet, quiet!

Luck was with us. The lobby was empty. As we entered, all the men opened their raincoats and released the gas filled rubbers. Up, up, up went our transparent oblong balloons. Up to the ceiling!

No one saw or heard. We were priceless in our acting. No giggles, laughter or noise. To the study hall we went. A bit later the commotion started. Voices, footsteps and the sounds of equipment (ladders). Then pop, pop, pop, pop, and more dragging sounds and pop, pop, pop.

There were no smirks or acknowledgment of our involvement. Innocent lambs! Then in comes Major Stewart. He was livid! I had never seen him so mad before or after and, yet, there was this hint of a smile on his face at the same time. He chewed us up and down again and again. Such sick humor! Such disrespect for womankind! Etc., etc. Maybe, the whole idea and incident was due to a repressed sexual urge by most of us. Who knows? By this time, several of the men had been exposed to liberal but flaky behavior or some of the local "belles" and had questioned their manhood due to an unnatural (to them) exposure. Who knows? But it was fun. Taxes increased by the waste of 35 "French letters."

One course we took every day was physical education. The U of C had room and equipment for every sport known to man. A large swimming pool where we were tested on proficiency. The test was probably the same the navy uses or at least patterned after the same. One has to tread water and/or float for a certain number of minutes. Since none of us had an ounce of fat, our buoyancy factor was nil. Some of the men really had trouble. I had to work! Maybe salt water would have made the treading easier.

We even had some boxing. I can remember one buddy who was difficult to box. He could hit from any angle as he had lost his thumb as a young man. Yes, his thumb. Yet here he was on active duty without limitations. No limited duty status and he never asked for the rating. I saw him in 1972 and a couple of years ago here in Rapid City, SD. He, Sid Buckley, and his wife, Rae, had four children (?) and he is now retired from the bench. He held a federal judgeship for years in one of our western states. He went overseas and was assigned to the 13th Armored Division. On a patrol he stepped on a teller mine. Either 11 or 14 pounds of TNT. He heard the snap of the detonator and jumped. The "fan" of the explosive caught him mostly from the waist down. He was sieved! He's alive today without much residual pain or discomfort. I have my suspicions that he was a good judge - fair and square - and applied and interpreted the same laws across the board.

One area, however, sticks out in my mind like a salient - probably because I never forgot or have forgiven the coach who made the comment. This area was in the various facets of track and field. Mostly, we ran. I had a pair of moccasins that I wore with heavy socks. Certainly not government issue - one of the last vestiges of civilian life. I was clumsy until I reached eighteen or so. I was now 22. There were three of us about the same size and weight - 6' 1" and 160# with a 30-31 waist. We could run. During the incident of words with the coach he stated our running times. He had been watching and timing. Not world class but good and without equipment or training. He timed us (we ran practically together) in the 100 yard: 9.9 seconds; 220: 22 and less seconds; and the 440: low 47 seconds. This one day he came over, introduced himself and asked our names, had we been in college prior to the army, where, run before, etc. Then comment, this GD war! I saw red! I bit my tongue - for a change - and excused myself from his presence. The comment, so typical of "coaches" the country over, shows the self-designing and possessiveness that the title implies. He didn't care or give a damn that men were dying on both sides of the world, only that the war was preventing him from a rich source of possible letter winners. And when the team or individual wins, the coach wins. Fame and a raise at the expense of the young bodies. How good was he as a young man? I've checked on some locally and they didn't rate fourth at their best or in their prime.

One weekend in the fall, Sid and I had an experience that has been permanent in my memory. It was fun and an odd social incident. Also, what were the odds of us being involved as we were? My entire life has been a contradiction to the laws and sets of the Math of Probability. I am a living exception. An example that I will enlarge on later. Two weeks prior to my joining my assigned unit in World War II and Korea, the CO and his driver were injured or killed in a minefield action. This was at the battalion level.

About a week before our weekend of pleasant surprises, one of our members had been standing on a corner with his date waiting for a streetcar and wondering where to go. Remember that at \$50.00 per month we didn't have a lot of "date" money. This car pulls up and stops. There was only the driver and the car was a Packard Clipper. The

man got out, introduced himself, and asked if he could be their host for the evening. It sounded nuts and different, but in 1943 the percentage of real "kooks" was a far cry from today.

They agreed and had an evening that they will never forget. He took them to San Francisco to the Top of the Mart, the most exclusive club-restaurant in the area. Lobster, champagne, etc. Tuxedo waiters - the works. The bill was over \$100.00. What an evening.

When we heard of this, we about crapped our pants. How lucky can one get? We could stand on the corner the rest of our life and the only thing that would happen would be that we'd get run over. On and on. Envy and jealousy! Little did we know or realize that the next weekend we, Sid and I, would be guests of the same gentleman with a weekend of "You name it - it's yours."

I'm sorry I don't remember the man's name. I should have! He owned a couple of meat markets in Oakland and had a pilot's license prior to the war. He had tried to enlist in the USAAC but to no avail. His expertise was needed as a pilot instructor. He had resigned himself to this status, but felt that it just wasn't fair that he stayed in the area and received a salary of \$1800 or \$4000 per month sticks in my mind. He was quite wealthy from the meat markets. So, he decided to take a serviceman and his date out of the evening every weekend to help - his share - with the war effort.

We were in a bar the following weekend when this angel of social generosity approached us and introduced himself. (What we were doing in a bar I don't know - \$50.00 a month doesn't go very far for social outings.) We immediately recognized his comments from the recap of the week before. And since he was a medium sized man of at least 40, we felt we could handle any approaches in case he was a phony. So, welcome aboard! He wondered if we were hungry. At 22, a man is always hungry. Out we went to his car, a Packard Clipper (1941?) and on to Oakland. He parked in an alley, knocked on a door and in we went. It was 0130 a.m. It turned out that the cafe was one to which he furnished all the meat so he was a VIP and the reason we were let in. Delicious! He asked several times what time we had to be in. When was bed check or when was reveille? Anticipating some extra "goodies" if we had the time, we both said in unison, 0600 on Monday.

So, away we went to Russian River for the day. About 90 miles and quite a reputation for fun, games and girls. The car had a "C" sticker on the windshield so gas was no problem. The time was not well spent or received, however. There were very few people of any age at the resort. He purchased us some swimming trunks and food anytime with drinks. We had fun even without the ladies. He apologized several times.

We left early the next morning to return to Berkeley and he to work. We were a bit late but never missed so paid nil for the infractions of the service. The rest of the guys couldn't believe or get over our "luck." Twice in two weeks - man!

At the end of the summer quarter, we had a one-week "vacation." Anyone who lived within ?? miles, could go home. The rest was no deal as the travel to and from

would eat up all the actual leave time. You've got to remember that travel maximum was based on 300-400 per day and air travel practically nil. And, who had the bucks anyway? Train and buses were the mode and I lived 1500 miles away in Fargo, North Dakota.

A good buddy was a guy named Hamilton. (First name?). He was from Tennessee or Kentucky so did not meet leave criteria. What to do? Where to go? Where to stay? The Theta Chi house was open for us - if. As if the Good Lord had a hand in our decision, one of us read in the local paper that laborers (2) were wanted to scale and repaint structural steel girders, etc. at a processing plant. At the fantastic salary of \$2.00 an hour. The place was on the waterfront between Berkeley and Oakland. We went, applied, and started work that day. The steel had been stacked for several years. It was originally ordered to build extra footage to the plant but when the war started their priority for steel was nil.

We worked a week - about 40 plus hours. Ruined our fatigues, which by regulations should not have been used for such work. So, we both knew that we would be paying for a new set - no salvage. Our checks on the last Saturday with all withholding (few in 1943) was nearly \$100.00. We were rich! Filthy rich! How do we spend it?

We had stayed some nights at Gene and Janet's for meals and lodging. A present for them. I don't remember what we got Gene (he didn't smoke) but Janet's treat was a fortune. By discreet questioning (we - discreet - ha!). We learned that she loved the fragrance: WHISPER. On checking, a small bottle of perfume was around \$40.00. Wow! We settled on cologne at about \$18.00. She was ecstatic! I believe we also babysat while she and Gene went out for the evening. Our pleasure.

One day in the first quarter of the program, a couple of us were walking in the science building. Here was a room full of cages and various animals. A pretty attendant was working on the "rat" area. She told us she was checking for pregnancies of the animals. If not pregnant, back they went for a repeat impregnation process. The rats were quite unique and quite attractive. They were basically white with shades of gray, rust and brown scattered throughout the fur, and very friendly. At the end of our "tour," one of us asked about the rats. How about one for a pet? Twos better, threes a crowd. So, we took three. I believe she called this style - type, Spotters.

We brought them back to the frat house and set them up in a large wooden box. The attendant had mentioned what food, when, how much, and always lots of available water. A couple of times I/we took the rats to class in our fatigue pockets. The rats seemed to love it.

Now came the seven-day furlough and Ham and I working at the steel plant. Very few of the detail were going to stay at the house so no one could help as lookout for the rats. We put a lot of water in the box along with food - daily times seven - and went to work. Actually, we forgot all about the rats until the Monday that all returned for classes.

Oh, boy, the rats. We opened the lid and what a change. Nothing was left inside

except one, healthy-looking, happy to see us rat. The food was all gone, the water and no sign of the other two. After a closer look, we found some hairs in the box. We checked with the attendant at the zoo lab - we brought the survivor back to the lab. She told us what probably happened was that the food and water got low so the two strongest turned on the weakest and killed him/her, then devoured the body completely. Here was the water and subsistence. In a day or so the last one - the survivor - turned on his or her buddy - killed and ate him/her. An excellent lesson on the survival of the fittest.

There was some animosity, jealousy, envy, bitterness, etc. between the services in WWII. Maybe there still is. Some of the friction could be justified, some not. Basically, some branches felt that they did all the work and got little glory. Enlistments were often based on the "resume" of the branch. Anyway, one brief experience in this area I have never forgotten. I never did take the stripes or division insignia off one of the khaki shirts and always wore this uniform when on pass or "out for the evening."

One evening in a nice bar (I believe I was with Gene who was on an investigation), I was sitting alone but there were two USAAC (United States Army Air Corps) seated down the line - both lieutenants. We had shared salutations when I entered. Out of the corner of my eye, I noticed a captain enter the room. The door was to our right. He walked behind me and down past the two lieutenants. Looked at the shoulder patches (it dawned on me what he was doing) and then back to me with the pine tree on my left arm. (91st Infantry Division - Camp White). Sat down beside me with the comment that he would rather drink with a soldier than two "fly boys." He bought me several.

Another time I was out with Gene to a bar up town. A plain, local-type bar with most of the "Cheers" characters. I had noticed the blonde sitting in a booth alone when we came in but had not made any eye contact. Gene was gone five or ten minutes and when he returned had a beer with me. He noticed the blonde or knew her. However, he commented that she would surely enjoy my presence. Our eyes met as I looked over at her and her facial expressions reinforced Gene's comments. Remember, I was having that Moral Spell Syndrome so I just said that we came together - we'll leave together. What a mental set!

These six months of my life in ASTP were unique and special. Many pleasant memories but the time was "carved in stone" by Gene Roberts. One of the few men I have met in my life that made you want to stand at attention with respect. He was a giant of a man: tolerant, patient, powerful, gentle, all the superlative virtues of mankind. And, a wife to match. Janet would fuss about his being gone and openly questioned his faithfulness. She had nothing to fear and this was easy to say since it was the truth.

The Berkeley Police Force was quite unique in its requirements - maybe still is - for hiring. One had to be a college graduate, age range - height, and weight range. (A sheepskin doesn't guarantee leadership, but it does show that one has some ability or you wouldn't have made it.) All the cars were unmarked. You could have any car - any

type as long as it got twelve miles to the gallon. The city would furnish the radio, lights, gas, tires, etc., and you were paid for depreciation. Since I was always in uniform I guess Gene felt I could ride along without violation of policy. This I did many times and remember so clearly some of the episodes. Human nature being what it is (?) hasn't changed much since 1943. The papers are full of identical "exposures" each day of actions between the populace and the police force.

Gene and Janet lived in the caretaker's house in a city park off Euclid Avenue. I wonder if the park is still there? Ye olde developments are everywhere. I believe they lived rent free in exchange for caring for the house and few acres of property. Kids and swings, etc. A good deal as he was just starting on the force.

Gene had graduated from U of C and had played first string football for most of the years - maybe all. You would never know that he played guard or tackle - first string. And, was probably good. Humility was another virtue of his. Where was Janet from? Can't remember. Gene left Berkeley for Sacramento in later years and joined the State Police. I corresponded for some years and then learned of his death. I wonder where the daughter is today. I baby sat her several times while Gene and Janet were out. I regret and have regretted very much the fact that I didn't take the time in February of 52 when I landed in San Francisco on my way home from Korea to have taken a day or so and visited them in Sacramento. Another boo-boo on the road of life.

It was time to go. Many of the guys felt the same way. ASTP was going no place. It just didn't add up. The war was starting to go our way on both sides and school was not the place for me. After all, I could shoot and out walk or run 99% of any soldier. I started the ball rolling with my request for transfer at the end of the quarter in 43. Enough is enough.

CHAPTER 4

89th CHEMICAL BATTALION

It didn't take long for orders to come assigning me to the 89th Chemical Battalion at Camp Roberts, California. I was not alone on leaving ASTP. Others felt as I did that the program was doomed and one might as well get out. So, south we went to Camp Roberts - about half way between San Francisco and Los Angeles and now halfway livable since it was December. Whether we used bus or train transportation, I don't remember. It was only a 5-6 hour ride. For once, I felt someone must have read my records as the 89th was a 4.2-inch mortar battalion and my MOS was (had been) 653 - Section Sergeant in mortars. Right where I belonged.

The unit was known as a bastard unit in army terms. The title stemmed from the fact that it was a separate battalion and the CO (highest ranking officer) was only a lieutenant colonel. LC's don't carry much authority on any post where a division was stationed as here you have an MG (major general), BG (brigadier general); three line colonels, and other colonels and flocks of LC's. Such a battalion is usually attached for rations and quarters to a larger unit. This is also true for bastard regiments, but here a full colonel can usually get more recognition and help for his troops.

The unit was filling up for basic training. I believe altogether in the army there were or were to be five of these battalions. The basic arm was the 4.2-inch mortar and at that time the battalions were all part of the CWS (Chemical Warfare Service). The equivalent of today's nuclear, gas, germ warfare. Also, today the battalions are an integral part of an infantry division as this should be. The 4.2 is an excellent support weapon: accurate, fast firing and quite mobile. Since the use and function of all our mortars are basically the same, (60, 81, 4.2), it was a walk away on learning the weapon. It is composed of three basic parts; tube (barrel), bipod, and base for a total of 440 pounds - at that time. Now, with changes, it probably weighs more. The newer models I've seen (years ago) had longer barrels. Here again, however, was an excellent example of service priorities. The sight for this 4.2 was an insult. It was made of brass and was hung on the barrel by two little hooks. The degree (angle) was then read and adjusted for firing - range and height. (Maximum ordinate). The German, Russian, English, French, etc. all used optical glass to adjust and we sighted like a BB gun. Of course, one of the first modifications was the sight. I have never fired a 4.2 since 1943 so can only comment that it certainly looks like a great improvement. I believe the name of the sight was an "aladate" (sp.).

The ammunition choices were similar to our artillery. One could choose HE (high explosive), WP (white phosphorous), or FS (various types of smoke or irritants). Range was at least 4-5 miles and if the gunners were any good, you could have ten rounds in the air at one time from gun to target. The Germans called the gun, automatic artillery, the first time they were deployed. Most 4.2's went to Italy, if I read or heard right.

I don't remember the CO's name. My platoon leader had an Italian name. I can remember the time early after my arrival he proudly announced my promotion to corporal. (I never did make PFC). In fact, I was a sergeant again when I left the unit in May of '44. The platoon sergeant's name was Holmgren or Holmquist. The top soldier was Sergeant Cash. Some of the top non-coms had a drinking problem. I never explored their past assignments nor did I care to but alcohol had quite a hold on some.

The unit was quartered on the south post at Camp Roberts. This was a smaller area than the original or main post, so we caught less flak on parades, drills, and show time. No complaints here.

Not many events can I recall for these months at Camp Roberts. One particular guard duty, however, sticks out in my mind. There were six posts and five and six overlapped on one quarter of the posts. The original mount was by a smart-ass lieutenant who kept telling us how lucky we were, how proud we should be, and more general bullshit to have been selected for the duty. I was assigned to post #6, which was a water pump house. It was surrounded by a high fence with barbed wire and about 30 ft. x 30 ft. in size. The post, however, was several hundred yards square with the pump house in the lower corner. There was quite a bit of elevation change around the post.

Once again, the stupidity of the army was in my craw. I do not deny that such area could be critical, guarded during wartime. Even though there had been no Japanese or sabotage activity of record in several years in the area, if it was worth guarding at all, it was worth guarding correctly. Give me (us) live ammo for the weapons. If an actual incident, what do I do? Point and play bang-bang! BS. The guard and I would meet on the perimeter, which overlapped. It was a cool, cold, clear night in January '44 and the moon was out and shining. How long we had visited quietly? I don't know, maybe too long.

Bang, tinkle, tinkle, came a sound from the pump house. We weren't quite sure we had heard correctly. Bang, tinkle, tinkle again. The sound of a rock hitting the metal roof and rolling down to the ground. I started down the hill, cutting across the area to save time. When I was about 30 feet from the shaded side of the house, a voice (I recognized) called out, "Halt, who goes there?" I thought, "What the hell is this?" The cart before the horse. Oh well, let's play games. I answered, "Guard on Post #6." Advance to be recognized. Halt! Then the "commando" came out of the shadows. He chewed my bottom without putting me at ease on dereliction of duty, avoidance of special orders, and, and, and. Finally, when he quit and asked for a comment, I answered that if this post is that critical and important, just give me some live rounds and we'll back up the clock and you try and get in again, SIR. He blanched, reddened, turned and left. The entire guard was written up as unsatisfactory. Even the old man, CO, came and put in a few words. Screw 'em! To this day, I will argue with anyone that if anything is to be classified as critical, then the means of protecting the person, area, or building should be matched by the ability of those assigned the duty. Don't order my ass on the line without any means for me to protect myself. Our army today

still has vestiges of this mind set even with proof of responsibility available from the Swiss and Israeli armies for two examples.

On the drinking problem with the top non-coms: We were on a week of tactical training in the spring of '44. However, there were no field kitchens assigned to the field. All cooking was done in garrison and brought to the field in mermite cans (sp.) (an insulated container probably about 10 x 18 x 24 in size.) This particular day the line for feeding was set up tactically and the men used their mess kits for the food. I noticed the cooks and especially the mess sergeant were quite boisterous, humming, and talkative. I thought nothing of it until I came close enough to smell the sergeant's breath as we talked. He reeked! He was in no pain, but why were they canned and where did they get the booze during the week? It hit me! I'll bet they helped themselves to my liquor - some brandy and rum I had brought back from a weekend to San Francisco (my first and last since leaving Berkeley). Sure enough, when we came in that weekend, my liquor was gone - all four bottles. "Yes, we took it, Chris, we'll replace it." (They never did.)

There's a story behind the booze with a learning situation for a country boy from North Dakota. I had bought the booze, two fifths of brandy, and two fifths of rum, in Berkeley on a weekend visit. I was carrying it in a cloth bag that just filled out perfectly with the four bottles. (You'll notice that there was no whiskey. Whiskey was hard to get about this time. If you knew someone or paid extra, amazingly, a pint could be found under the counter. And, what slop! I can remember one pint - cost \$3.00 - that was marked 90 proof, colored and flavored with wood chips. Made and bottled in Missouri.) It was six months old!

Anyway, at the train station in San Francisco a red cap approached me and asked to carry the bag. I thought, how nice of him. It never dawned on me that a tip was in order and that he made his living by tips and was not an employee of the railroad. When we got to Paso Robles and I got off to get to Camp Roberts - no bag. This boy from the sticks didn't know that one asked the conductor for one's baggage. The division point was San Luis Obispo. I complained at the depot in Paso Robles and the agent took my name and unit. Frankly, I kissed the booze goodbye. About a week later, I received (the unit orderly room) a call to pick up the bag. It had gone to San Luis Obispo, been taken off, and sent back to Paso Robles. I picked it up that weekend, intact, with all bottles in good shape. Could one expect such honesty today?

Looking back, I can now see that I should have recognized the fact that I was immune to death (unless stupid actions) and would make it through the war. During that week of tactical training, another incident, of many, should have told me that I was charmed.

We were firing the 4.2 with all types of ammo: HE-High Explosive, WP-White Phosphorus, FS-VariouS Colored Smoke, etc. Now, all are fired the same way. The shell weighed (if I remember) 27 pounds. It had an adjustable fuse - called variable time - and on the rear a projection, about 4-5 inches which looked like a perforated pipe. In the pipe was placed an ignition shell. It looked exactly like a shotgun shell. Around the

sides were six (or 8?) steel partitions, which held the propellant powder charges. These varied in thickness but not in size. The further the range wanted - the more powder charges were left on the shell. Just above the pipe at the base of the shell body, was a one-inch or so copper band with a lip pointing downwards. This is the driving band and when the shell is fired, expands to the rifling in the barrel - gains a twist like a bullet - and is stabilized in flight.

Let me jump ahead here. At the end of a day's firing or any fire mission, one will have increments of powder left. In training probably more than combat. These were extremely flammable and should be burned or buried, preferably burned. This one incident - a quick learning experience where no one was really hurt - had some burned eyebrows and second degree burns on forehead and cheeks - happened this week. A good-sized pile was left near the guns area. "Burn the crap!" came the order. No one had ever seen the increments burn. So, this kid bends over at the edge of the pile and lights a match while squatting. Whoosh! Up went the pile. Most of the flame missed his face and no one else was as close. We were informed later that you scatter the increments into little trails and burn that way. Actually, the powder for most weapons is of a nitro glycerin base. (I can still remember my high school chemistry - always pour the acid [slowly] into the water - not the water into the acid.)

This day we had been firing all types of ammo. The fire mission came and called for FS (smoke). All procedures were followed and command to fire was received. Down the tube went the round. "Poof" came the sound. Out of the barrel as if in slow motion came the shell, turning end-over-end and landing about 30-40 feet in front of the gun and crew. It did not explode. What happened - no one knew. I think someone pulled too many powder increments off (all) so only the igniter shell exploded. If functioning correctly, the shell slides down the tube at 8-10 ft. per second. The fixed firing pin in the bottom of the tube ignites the igniter shell. This ignites the powder increments and out the barrel with a change of direction from 8-10 ft. per second down to 400-500 ft. per second, up comes the shell. The pressure forces the barrel band to expand into the rifling and out goes the shell. With the FS round there was little change in directional velocity so no expansion or sealing of the propelling gases. Needless to say, all firing stopped for a while.

One day we were practicing driving a Jeep with a quarter ton trailer behind. Each trailer held a complete mortar for a total of 440 pounds. In the morning, all the driving was on hard topped (black top) roads. No one had any problems even with only two-wheel drive. We came back to the motor pool, parked the Jeep and trailer in their respective slots, and went to dinner.

A brief clarification here on the Jeep: Which type we were driving or what type the kid that had the "close" one was driving, I don't know. Two national car companies built Jeeps: Willys and Ford. They were built to specifications and looked exactly alike. But, the total weight of each was quite different. There was about 300-400 pounds difference between the Willys and Ford. Total weight for the Willys was about 1600 pounds and for the Ford, 1300 pounds. Why?

Back from dinner we came. We hooked up the trailers and headed for the off-road training area. Levity was in the air. The roads were dry, in fact, dusty. We drove up mild grades, down mild grades, around hills, over hills, etc. All this now in four wheel drive. The last part of the practice was to drive down a 10-15 percent grade in low gear and low drive without over use of the brakes. The kid ahead of me started down. To this day I don't know what happened but gearing wasn't enough to slow the vehicle down. He applied the brakes. The trailer started to swing. He corrected. The trailer got worse. Then the trailer started to whip back and forth. Wham! The Jeep and trailer flipped over. The windshield smashed, as did the steel frame. The top of the Jeep was all level with the ground. We ran down to help and the kid was crawling out underneath without a scratch. Lucky, lucky.

As we worked to get the vehicle upright, we saw what had caused the accident. The trailer canvas top had been torn off and instead of the mortar parts scattered around, there was a large pile of assorted chains lying around. What the hell? To make a long story short, when the driver returned from lunch, he had hooked up to a trailer, which held all the chains of the motor pool. We weighed the chains - 2200 pounds, over a ton. The trailer was made to hold 500 pounds.

The next few months at Camp Roberts must have been routine, because I don't recall any specific events. Then, we, the unit, received notice and orders pending that we were to be assigned to Camp Carson, Colorado. Good! Another change and closer to North Dakota and maybe now I could finally get home.

We left by troop train. I can remember a stop in Las Vegas. In 1944 it was not the city it is today. I believe the population then was fewer than 50,000. Where from Las Vegas? But, on a Friday we arrived at Camp Carson (now designated Fort Carson). How do I remember it was a Friday? Easy. I have the telegram I sent my folks, plus two more sent in the following days. Let me print the contents of each and then explain (next page).

- Telegram #1: DEAR FOLKS ARRIVED YESTERDAY 5:00PM
EVERYTHING OK LETTER COMING ASSIGNMENT HERE
POSSIBLY TEMPORARY TRIP PLEASANT VISIT HOME
IMPOSSIBLE AT PRESENT. LOVE = KEITH. DTD 9APR**
- Telegram #2: PLEASE WIRE \$40.00 CARE OF WESTERN UNION
KALAMAZOO MICHIGAN VERY URGENT. LOVE = KIETH
DTD 12 APR 945AM**
- Telegram #3: ON DETACHED SERVICE ESCORTED BODY TO
KALAMAZOO FUNERAL FRIDAY 300PM HOME SUNDAY OR
MONDAY TWO DAYS MONEY FOR REROUTE. LOVE = KEITH
DTD 12 APR 1143PM.**

On Saturday morning, 10 April, a man in my section was shaving. I was told that he stopped and put his head down on the shelf for a bit. When asked what was up he replied he felt light headed. He resumed shaving and then turned and collapsed. He was gone before he hit the floor. He was 29 years old - old by army standards. Whether he had a history of cardiac problems such as a murmur, etc., I don't know. I was notified later that day that I was assigned to escort the body to his home town of Kalamazoo, Michigan and then have a three day delay en route to go home to Fargo, North Dakota.

I can't remember whether we left on Sunday or Monday. Probably Monday. I drew a 45 for a sidearm but did not wear any armband identifying my status. The casket was placed on a train and we headed for Denver and a transfer to the Rock Island Rocket. One of our best at the time and still has a good schedule time with today's schedules. It could make Denver to Chicago, 1000 miles in 1000 minutes. That is an average of 60 miles per hour. Good. Wouldn't it be pleasant to be able to travel today by train at, let's say, 100 miles per hour with the scenery of this great country passing by instead of clouds or variations of shades from 35,000 feet? I will never understand the politics of subsidization.

The casket was in the baggage car and my orders were to be with the casket whenever the train stopped. What an escort does is insure that the railroad doesn't off load the casket for its convenience. The body has a first class ticket and price. The Rocket made few stops: a pick up section at Limon, Colorado and a stop in Des Moines. Otherwise roll, roll, roll.

I rode first class - club car and observation car. I can still remember the speedometer in the club car. The needle would hang around 92-94 and vary a few miles per hour only when running free. Quiet and comfortable!

The car was not full. Most of the passengers were women. Of all ages and sizes. There were some quite interesting and quite friendly. Ah, hah! Tonight! Not to be. When I sat down alone, I took the 45 and the cartridge belt off and put them behind me

out of sight. I had had a couple of hours of pleasant chitchat with a couple friendly beauties when lunch call sounded. I got up, turned for the 45 and belt, and the ladies never spoke to me again. No one did. There were glances, points and comments (subdued) but no more public relations.

I spent most of daytime that day in the baggage car. One could smoke there and the "baggage people" were good people. Pleasant visiting. One tried a bit of humor by asking why I was armed. I felt just a tradition and also gave me some authority to any request. Remember that the only real reason for an escort was to insure a straight through, and non-stop, shipment of the remains.

The train hit Chicago in the early a.m. The casket was transferred from the Rock Island to the New York Central. (Checking a map, Kalamazoo can't be much over 100 miles from Chicago. We reached Kalamazoo about 1030 and the mortician was waiting. He had a request and completed it for me. The father of the deceased wanted to handle all the details for the funeral on my arrival. He came to the funeral home, we visited, and then I went with him to the home. There was the mother, wife, brothers, sister, Kathryn, and other relatives. They insisted that I stay with them and my orders were to assist as long as I was needed.

I had been a bit apprehensive on the reaction and acceptance of my arrival but there had been no need. The family was of German ancestry and viewed and accepted death as part of the process of life. Please don't get me wrong, however. The death was a relative hurt and sorrow to all but God had made a choice - so be it. The brothers entertained me with pool and billiards. We drank some beer, visited, compared life notes, etc. Under the circumstances, it was a very pleasant time.

The funeral was scheduled for Friday a.m. The funeral home had been notified that a detail from Ft. Sheridan would assist the service, both at the funeral home and the gravesite. Good news! At funeral time there was no detail. We waited some time and started the service. A misunderstanding? The service ended and still no detail. There was another serviceman home on leave who attended the service and, with his assistance and four volunteers; we got the casket to the hearse. I was getting pissed. The absence of the detail was an insult to the deceased and the family, a negative reflection on the uniform and me and damn poor public relations for the army.

We drove to the cemetery. Maybe the detail was waiting. No way! Nothing. So, the serviceman friend, the four volunteers, and I carried the casket to the gravesite. The internment service was just finishing when a suburban drove up. We could hear the gaiety and laughter from the gravesite. Now, granted, this detail probably was assigned too many funerals in the area, probably could go through the procedures in their sleep, but to every deceased and family, their service is special. They don't want a routine, rote, procedure. They want and expect at least, a display of empathy and respect. Plus, when the sergeant in charge reported to me, I could smell the beer. He/they reeked. I curtly informed him that we were finished. The uniformed friend and I had folded the flag and I presented it to the wife. At least a gracious country could appear correct. They (the detail) left in a huff and good riddance. I believe it was

the father that I commented to that I was sorry, I apologize, and that drunken bunch hadn't heard the end of this mess. Maybe I was more upset than the family but I have never taken lightly a negative reflection that I did not earn or deserve.

There was a three-day delay en route to Fargo after the service. I left the next morning. Handshakes, hugs, maybe a kiss on the cheek from the sister? Nice people. They corresponded with me overseas and sent food packages. Under different circumstances I would have asked Kathryn for a date. I trust that you had a full, rich life, Miss K. I'll skip the three-day en route and complete the story on the "insult" detail.

When I returned to Camp Carson and the unit, I immediately went to the orderly room and requested permission to see the CO. I related the incident in detail and asked for his permission to see the battalion CO. This is not a common request or action in the old army during the war years. My CO approved my request with pleasure and was on the phone when I left.

I reported to the BN CO. He was ready and waiting. He put me at ease and had me sit down. Fill me in - the works! I started from the funeral home to the gravesite with no sight or assistance from the detail. The CO took quick and copious notes. He stopped me from time to time for clarification. Finally, he stopped, thanked me and excused me. He was already on the today's version of AUTOVON (phone) when I saluted and left. I hope those SOB's got the limit. "Peacetime" jockeys who probably never left the states. How many other families did they insult? One is too much!

I left Kalamazoo early Sunday morning for Fargo. In just a few short days and under sad circumstance I had become quite attached to the family. Good people! However, I had developed the ability to become immune to sentimental attachments. I guess one could call the attitude a form of self-preservation. A selfish mode to enable me to maintain stability. Anyway, no tears, but time marches on.

The travel reversed itself with the New York Central to Chicago, then a transfer to the Great Northern to Fargo. I couldn't afford a Pullman so rode coach fare. There were more servicemen on this trip, so with conversations, the time went quickly. The train arrived in Fargo in the early p.m. on Monday. The station was right across the street from a grocery store where the parents had traded all through the 30's. My dad was working there part-time. He had had a severe thrombosis attack in 1940 and wanted to augment a meager retirement. I headed to the store - hello - handshakes - visit. My family was not prone to demonstrative displays of affection. And, my father had been wounded four times in WWI so war was no stranger. We would continue our visit later that day so I decided to head for J. C. Penney's store about six blocks up Broadway and see the mother of an old friend.

Remember now that I was armed with a 45 without any armband identification. Up the street I went. In a couple of blocks I pass a uniformed policeman directing traffic. I remember his first name was Tony. Actually a pleasant, dedicated law officer, but I didn't find that out until 1946 when I was on the police force and was assigned as his partner. (Another story.) At this time, he represented an episode in my life (1941) of extreme disgust and lack of respect for our laws and courts. I had been arrested,

charged, and tried without any counsel or assistance - about as unconstitutional as one can experience. Tony had been the arresting officer and, along with the Chief of Police, Albright, Detective Houkum, and the local judge, Leonard, I was found guilty and fined \$35.00. (Another story and a lot of hours later in my life for clearing the arrest record for federal applications.)

I get to J. C. Penney's and was visiting with the friend when I felt a vibration or pressure on the holster. My reflexes were much better in those days and I grabbed for the "touch" and caught an arm and a scream. A young beauty had been tempted to touch. I was introduced and a quick apology from both parties.

Mother, of course, was in ecstasy. Her boy was home. Probably in the best shape in my life, except a couple months later (the ration tests), so immediately mother love decided that food was the answer. You're so thin! So gaunt! So! So! I didn't know then - at this age - not to argue or disagree. Mother knows best! I say to all men - boys to men - don't ever question a mother's sincerity and love. Her motives won't always be understood or make sense, but believe me, your welfare is her paramount concern. She took a walk in the "valley" to get you here - she'll always be concerned.

I had a couple of dates while home. Both famines! Wanted it that way as no time. I had a 38 Chevrolet that a friend of my father's let me use. I knew him as a young boy and bumped into him early that first day home. He was quite a pistol shot. Used an H & R target model and could take perfume bottles out of the air consistently. He lived in a flophouse, "hotel," that before the war had open prostitution. We were sitting in his room having a drink and one of the "tenants" walked by the door. I would say she was around 40 and quite attractive. She had a drink and then the friend openly comments to her that she should give me a quick "ride." She never blinked an eye, but explained that Chief Albright had made it quite clear that he tolerated no nonsense with the servicemen and would run all the girls out of town if any problems were to arise.

The time flew as it always did on leave and it was time to head back to Camp Carson. I don't remember if I was able to be reimbursed for the bus fare since I had a return ticket (TR) from Kalamazoo. I doubt it. The delay in route negated the escort ticket. Carson is about 1050 miles from Fargo and this was before the Interstates so it was a good two days travel. I got back during work hours as I saw the CO and BN CO on return.

A little nostalgia and history is necessary. I should have commented after I reached Fargo on the Great Northern. Way back when some trains met a faster schedule, they had an express status, some were regular and stopped more often and some were local. "Locals" stopped at every depot to pick up cream cans and drop off empties. This was only a small part of the baggage and freight they carried. For example: In 1952, I ordered 100 pounds of surplus gunpowder #4895 from a firm in Kansas. The cost \$.44 a pound, or \$44.00 for the 100 pound sealed keg. It was delivered to the depot at Gladstone, North Dakota. (I was teaching there after my return from Korea.) The agent called me down; I picked it up - no extra charges - \$44.00 prepaid.

The Milwaukee had a special train that ran between Chicago and Minneapolis. It

was called the 400 – “Four hundred miles in 400 minutes”. A similar train (Southern Pacific?) ran between Los Angeles and San Francisco. It was called the "Daylight." It also did 400 miles in 400 minutes. Whether the Milwaukee shared the same trackage with the great Northern, I don't know, but I do remember the Empire Builder - GN's best. It had 6 ½ foot driving wheels and could really go. It was steam driven. Anyway, it was over 600 miles from Chicago to Fargo and I got there in a day and a half. Not bad for any kind of travel - except air - today.

I returned to Camp Carson by way of St. Paul to Des Moines and then picked up the Rock Island Rocket there for the trip to Colorado Springs. This is a complete blank to me. I found a diary I had kept during the two months on the ration and clothing tests in June and July. (Coming up.) The dates in the diary show the dates to Kalamazoo with the three-day delay enroute to be 12-21 April.

Coming back on the Rocket from the escort duty and delay en route, I met a very interesting gentleman. His name was Thomas Zucco. He was a Civil Service employee with the Department of Interior or Game, Fish and Parks and he was assigned to the buildings area near the top of Pikes Peak. When we parted at Colorado Springs, he offered a standing invitation to come and visit him some weekend.

Leave was generous with the 89th so a week or two later a buddy and I decided to visit the Peak and Mr. Zucco. We took a bus to the Springs and then started up the road (gravel) to the Peak. About noon we reached a barricade. A good one! Federal property - Keep Out - quite explicit. We climbed over and kept going. After all, we were "employed" by the U.S. Government so the barricade didn't apply.

It was a warm, clear day. We were wearing khakis but had no jackets. We walked and walked and walked. How far is it anyway to the top of Pike's Peak? About 5:00 p.m. with the sun starting to go down behind the mountains, we were still walking. We hadn't seen or heard another living thing. So we decided we'd better get some type of shelter ready before it got dark and plan on staying the night. About the time we made this decision, we heard a car engine. Up the road came a lone vehicle. It stopped, the window rolled down and I recognized the angry face of Mr. Zucco. He was about ready to chew us out when he recognized me. Thank God! In we went in the car and up to the top. Once again, the Math of Probability had been violated. This was the first time Mr. Zucco had been down the mountain in six weeks. Coincidence? Luck? Or my lucky sign? What sign?

We had a good supper, good visit, and a few drinks. Soldiers drink, you know. Our bedroom had twin beds and lots of blankets. Mr. Zucco opened a window and he'll see us in the morning. Morning came and we awakened about the same time. Something was wrong. It dawned on us quickly that there was a foot or two of snow just inside the window. And, it had not melted nor was it melting. A snowstorm during the night had come up and dropped a new blanket. We got dressed, cleared out the drift, threw the snow out the window and closed it.

Smell the coffee! Mr. Zucco was up and waiting. He was about 41 or 42 and the service didn't want him. He had missed World War I by a year or so and now was a

year or two too old for World War II. (A man's birthday surely affects his destiny.)

What do you want for breakfast? I'll have pancakes, juice, and coffee but how about a fried trout on the side? Out we went to a creek - cold and fast. Mr. Zucco made three casts - three 14-15 inch trout and back to the kitchen we came. He kidded with a remark that the damn fish are so hungry you can't stand near the stream. (I don't want a fast exodus of all fly fishermen to this creek - it's probably off limits.)

About noon, Mr. Zucco brought us down to the Springs. Many thanks for a very gracious and pleasant visit. I hope the gentleman enjoyed a long and viable life.

Rumors on the status of the 89th were prevalent when I got back. Going overseas to Europe - to Italy - soon. (I understand that the unit did go to Italy in the summer of '44.) There must have been some fact to the rumors as the unit issued furloughs to all personnel on 4 May-14 May, ten days. So, home I went again. Feast or famine!

This time I took a bus all the way and how inefficient. The bus route was from Colorado Springs to Denver, to Billings, Montana and east on Federal #10 to Fargo. It was a long ride of over 1000 miles. Quite uneventful except for two incidents - no, four - that stand out in my memory. The first was in Cheyenne, Wyoming. We had stopped there for a break and were looking for a cup of coffee, etc. Clearly in the window on a cafe was a hand-made sign stating, NO DOGS or SOLDIERS ALLOWED. There was and is an active fort at Cheyenne, Fort Warren, now a USAF base so the uniform certainly wasn't a stranger to the area. Maybe local problems had precipitated the insult. Anyway, a few of us crossed the street to another cafe. In the group was a new second lieutenant - infantry. He was furious and muttering to himself. Suddenly, he made his decision. He bent over, picked up a good-sized rock in the gutter, turned and threw it at the plate glass cafe window. It did a good job. It shattered completely. The cops came but no one knew anything or had seen anything. They knew they were licked and probably agreed with the action. We had our coffee and got back on the bus.

East of Billings the next day I was sitting behind two young women. The bus was not quite full so seats were available for a quick change. One gal was doing most of the talking and she came through loud and clear. Her no good deserting husband had left her and a child and was working in Fargo. The SOB had not and was not sending her any support money. As she prattled away, she started talking about Fargo. It was big, dirty, smoky, ugly, cold, etc. Not one comment was positive. I couldn't take the BS any longer so I tapped her on the shoulder, excused myself and told her she was way off and wrong about Fargo. What a mistake! She immediately changed her demur to one of a sweet, desirous, available female. Did I live there? Was I going there? Where would I stay? Did I have a room? Etc. No, thank you.

Anyone who has been in the service knows that pockets are not for hands or items. No bulk was to show. A handkerchief and billfold in the back pockets were acceptable. In Casper, I had bought lunch and used a \$20.00 bill for payment. In the 30's and 40's Wyoming was a silver state. And, they wanted you to use their silver. So, for change from the \$20.00 I had received 17 silver dollars plus some smaller change.

This was 17 ounces of metal. Over a pound in either weight measurement of troy or avoir-du-pois. Heavy and seventeen pieces of bulk. Not only did the coins show clearly through the uniform pocket, but the coins would clank and clank every time I shift my leg. Poor soldiering!

The fourth memory was the next day at daybreak just east of Bismarck. I must have slept through our stop there. (I had planned on stopping, getting off, and taking the rest of the day on a visit with my two aunts and uncles in Wilton, North Dakota - 21 miles north on #83. I'm sorry I missed this visit as one uncle dropped dead in September '44 while hunting pheasants. As I woke up, I felt quite a discomfort like an arm or leg going "asleep." The reason my right shoulder and neck were stiff was the fact that a pretty head was sound asleep on my shoulder. She woke up shortly. She was headed for Fargo, would be at such address and the phone number was such and such. (Never found time to call. Life is so short!).

The leave went quickly. When you take two days off each end of ten, you have six in which to play. These ten days are more or less a blank to me. I do remember that the next-door neighbor gave me his car to use several times. Oh! One incident comes back to me. My brother was home for good now as a civilian. He had been discharged medically after a bout with pneumonia incurred while on flight training. The account of this active army fiasco I related earlier. The family, dad, mother, brother and I had been invited over to my dad's first cousin's home for coffee, etc. Another second cousin was home on leave and showed up at the gathering. It was a warm day and out came a picnic (2 quarts) of beer - served on request. We, brother and I, had a glass. Sometime later we were offered seconds. We took! A bit later came another offer - just leave the bottle. They did - we kept. Some stares, of course, but youth isn't known for social protocol.

A few dates, nothing serious, more visits with the folks, neighbors, friends, and probably a few servicemen home on leave and the time was up. Just came to me - in all the stops and stays while in the service, I bumped into only one serviceman I knew from Fargo. This was in 1943 while at ASTP in San Francisco in front of the Palace (?) Hotel.

Back to Camp Carson. I am a complete blank as to the route. Did I have a round trip on the bus? I checked a diary and went back the same route. Arrived at Camp Carson on 14 May 44 and from here on changes came quite rapidly.

In two days after returning to camp, I was transferred out of the 89th to the 201st Regiment. I know why but I don't remember how I made the decision to change.

The 201st was a bastard regiment that had just returned from Alaska. I can remember that the shoulder patch was round with a polar bear with blue stars overhead. I believe that all privates and PFC's had been transferred out and that the unit was way over strength in the top three grades - kind of a holding unit. Whether I heard, read, saw, or what, the rumor in information that the unit was scheduled for a ration and clothing test in the Terryall Mountains, I don't remember. I just liked the idea. Once again, I was bored and getting stale from the repetition of training and

wanted out. I didn't get any argument on my transfer request and in two days I packed my gear and reported to "H" Company, 201st Regt. The CO's name was Hanson. I remember this as I sold him a Savage 32 auto - like new - my aunt had given me - for \$50.00. It's fun to be rich! He was a good officer - gave us credit for common sense and realized that the top-heavy mix of rank could have presented a problem. I'm sure that some TO & E slots were staffed with rank that had seniority and longevity under their command. All in all, a quite homogenous bunch. Most had teamed up with others in common and the off duty relationships were as any unit.

I never had any regrets on this transfer or any prior or later. In life one must first learn to live and accept oneself. Then, one can adjust favorably to any situation involving mankind.

(I see in my diary dated 16 May 44: Transferred for overseas infantry replacement to the 201st Infantry Regiment.) And away we go!

CHAPTER 5

201st INFANTRY REGIMENT

Throughout this book I have commented both overtly and covertly about the commissioned corps – the “leaders.” And what a variety of personalities and values we find. The forth-coming story, I feel, codified by example, how I interpret the basic axiom of leadership: 1. The accomplishment of the mission, and 2. The welfare of the men. It takes a true leader to keep the two requirements in balance. (I don’t see, read, or hear of this balance from today’s Pentagon.)

The story! I heard it several times after I joined the 201st Infantry. I have no reason to doubt the authenticity of the incident. On close examination, however, it must have happened to one of the line companies A, B, or C, but not any of the heavy weapons companies of D, H, or M. (For the non-veteran, there are three battalions in a regiment. In a battalion there are four companies plus a headquarters company. The first three companies in each battalion are line (infantry) companies.) Since a BAR, (Browning Automatic Rifle), was used in the “elimination” event, I have to conclude that it was one of the line company’s deeds.

The regiment was stationed along the islands in the Bering Strait or along the southern coast of Alaska. It could have been units of Kodiak Island, or the Isles of Ten Thousand Smokes. Whatever!

Wherever you find men, you will soon find the indigenous wildlife. All are attracted by the possibilities of food or just simple curiosity. Some can be friendly and others not. Please remember that all are still wild animals.

It appeared that the garbage site of one of the companies soon attracted a new visitor – a large, full-grown Kodiak bear. It probably weighed 1,500-2,000 pounds. There had been no confrontations of any consequence, but the CO could vision the possibility. Now, here we have a problem: What to do? Even though the United States was at war, the area was off-limits to hunting and killing of all Kodiak bears. There was probably nothing in the AR’s (Army Regulations) or SR’s (Special Regulations) on how to handle such a problem. So, here we have the common sense, backbone, and ingenuity of a good leader, the CO. Correct the problem, hide the results, no one hurt, and move on.

The CO called the company to an “at ease” formation. He had selected which squad would do the “Valentines Day Massacre.” He notified the squad leader to “Clean up, no one hurt, and no evidence left of the incident. It’s your baby! We will be back in several hours and I expect no more garbage problems.”

(Please note that the CO did not spell out any details for the job. If you promote a man to the level of squad leader, give him credit for how to do the job.)

The bear arrived at his usual time and the squad was waiting. The BAR man was in the prone position with the BAR on its bipod rest. Five of the men were to kneel and four were to fire off-hand, or standing. The bear slowly moved into the correct position

and the order to fire was given.

(A BAR's magazine holds 20 rounds. Each M-1 holds 8, and if Springfields were used, they held 5 rounds in the magazine and 1 in the chamber. Anyway, and altogether, we end up with a total of 80 rounds to be fired, or 100 rounds, if M-1's were used.)

When the first bullets impacted, the bear roared and stood up on its hind legs, now making a 12-foot target. The impact of the bullets probably held him up. Actually, he was probably dead on his hind feet. When the weapons were empty, he fell like a wet sack.

When the company returned to camp, the men of the squad were cleaning their weapons. Somewhere in the area was a fresh mound of dirt, camouflaged from the general's eye.

Here we have a true infantry leader with common sense.

From 16 May to 9 June, I have little recollection of any particular day. I suppose routine army with reveille, formations, hikes and marches, and most likely close order drill and the manual of arms. When there is nothing to do - repeat. When one has been trained and primed to perfection and then allowed it stagnate, it's disgusting and destructive on your mental state and general morale. Let's get the show on the road!

Several incidents are clear in my mind, however. Camp Carson was a post holding and utilizing prisoners of war (POW). Two countries had POW's here - Germany and Italy. The Germans were all former Africa Corps soldiers (and tankers) and wore fatigue clothes with PW printed on the back in large black letters. The Italian POW's lived a much easier life. In fact, I never saw any of them on a work detail and they would wear our khaki uniform with a green "Italy" shoulder patch. They seemed to have had full run and access to the post. I never understood this partiality. POW's are POW's - why should any preference be granted?

One day while training on a 50-caliber air cooled, a detail of Africa Corps stopped for a break and smoke (our cigarettes). I struck up a conversation. Many, many, many of the soldiers in both Germany and Japan spoke better English than we did. But, they were cautious and clever enough to retain the bilingual-lingual fact whenever it might benefit them. Understandable! Anyway, we were visiting and I enjoyed the visit, and the subject of weapons came up. Now if you've ever heard a MP-40 Schmeisser (?) machine pistol, you'll never forget it. A cycle rate of about 900 rounds a minute. Our 50 caliber Browning machine gun did about 250-300. One went "brrup" and the other bang-bang-bang. Their light machine gun - crew served - was also faster in cyclic rate. The feldwebel (sergeant) was voicing his disdain on our close cyclic rate so I had to answer. I used my hands to demonstrate the large impact area of their machine guns due to the high rate of fire and ours - small pattern on the point of aim. He smiled and agreed. Both kill, however!

I noticed another fallacy - to me - of army values v. justice. In charge of this group of thirty or so former panzer soldiers was a single MP (Military Police) with a carbine. He appeared tired, sleepy and careless. Luckily the Germans weren't planning

on an escape. The war was over for them and they were alive. I believe they were paid a pittance per day under Geneva rules. I heard most saved this for the day the war was over and they could apply on cost of applying for U.S. citizenship. Most, not all wanted to stay in the United States. I read that very few were granted this privilege in 1945 and shipped home to a barren home, Germany.

This is hearsay, but I believe it true. Some of the POW's were assigned to work in the quartermaster laundry. Here they worked side by side with civil service employees. A lot were young women from Colorado Springs. Friendships began and blossomed, whether by love of just raw, two-way sex, cases of clap began to occur in the ranks of the POW's. Isn't it strange that here are the former enemies and killers of the U.S. and ARE soldiers now infected with gonorrhea? How forgiving our American women can be.

Another paradox with Army values and justice I remember clearly. Remember that with 30 or so German Panzer POW's on a work detail had one sleepy guard with a carbine. Now, here comes one of our own or a few P's (prisoner) on a work detail. Probably some young ignorant kid who wanted his mother or couldn't and really didn't understand the Articles of War etc. and went AWOL (Absent Without Leave). For this he got 60-90 days more or less. With this small detail, you saw an MP per prisoner, riot shotguns, harsh orders and voices. It is doubtful that these prisoners wanted to or were going anywhere but what a difference in captivity actions. Some prisoners were vicious and deadly. Some were executed. I believe the twelve men portraying the various crimes of GI's in the "Dirty Dozen" were quite accurate. I suppose it's the law of social averages. Take 100 men, age 20-35 off the street and you should have 1-3 who are dysfunctional from a social standpoint.

I can remember a Sunday quite clearly, which involved an Italian POW. I was away from our containment area - probably to see a show - and near the main PX. I saw and heard a commotion but not the actual incident. I approached the crowd, which had gathered, and on the ground was an Italian POW with a bloody face and just sitting up a

WAC with a bloody nose crying and sobbing. What had happened apparently was that the POW was with (dating) the WAC (who I heard later was of Italian ancestry and spoke Italian). They had been confronted by a couple of GI's who very emphatically charged her with being a whore and a traitor to the uniform. If she was going to offer sex to anyone, it had better be an American. The POW being a gentleman stepped forward to defend his lady's honor. He was dropped for his try. The WAC, then seeing her lover smacked, tried to hit the GI with her purse and got one in the chops for her actions. The MP's came quickly, heard the details, put the two GI's in their Jeep and went behind the PX. Stopped the Jeep and get the hell out of here - get lost.

Today the paper is full of sexual harassment stories. All quite similar in that coitus does not occur, only the verbal and physical foreplay occurred. I comment: all women are entitled to full control of their bodies. They alone control the finality of any and all relationships. In the case of this WAC, I think she used very poor judgment in

her public display of her dating partner. After all, we were at war with his government. This lack of judgment in no way can pardon the physical actions and pain resulting.

The next two weeks were probably a continual bore of manual of arms and close order drill. Nothing is more destructive to morale than basic repetition. We were trained, we were ready, but we stagnated. The rumors and then confirmation of the coming ration and closing test was like a Xmas present. We would have gone or done anything for a change.

I don't remember how the information was released to the units. Maybe by addressing a formation or the information pinned to the company bulletin board. Whatever, we loved it. Thinking back now I don't think the entire regiment was involved. I believe only the second battalion with E, F, G and H companies were involved. I say this because we bumped into E from time to time. If all the companies in the regiment, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, K, L, M, it would have been a mess even in the open spaces of the Rockies. You will notice there is no J Company. Like the superstition related to the 13th floor, J company would have been a jinx and insult to the members. There was a J company in the Revolutionary War that was commanded by Benedict Arnold, a traitor. Rather than punish and tarnish the names of good men serving later, the designation was discontinued. I concur!

An entry on 9 June 44 in the new diary comments on three days of range firing for record. This was probably my second crack at the new M-1 Garand. In 1942, I fired for record with the 1903 Springfield. I fired expert then as I did on every infantry weapon. The carbine came out for issue in early 1943. Later in 1943, we probably fired the M-1's. It was a good weapon for the average GI. A bit heavy at 9½ pounds but with the course Peep sights and the "horns" protecting the front sights made it easy to fire. Quite accurate! It didn't have the balance and feel of the 03, but it also was easier on the shoulder. The 03 had little drop in the comb so with a service load you got about 21# of free recoil. Also, if you held the 03 incorrectly, you got a fat lip. Your thumb would beat your mouth like a good punch.

We were about ready to go. On The 14th of June, we took our first AGF tests. I kept a record of all six that were required from 14 June-13 August (Last). Actually, there was not much of a change in the two-month period except my weight. On 14 June, I weighed 178# - on 13 August - 165#. Some men actually gained during the two months period, but most lost. We were probably in the best physical shape in our lives, however.

The tests were quite involved but as usual, the army had the personnel to conduct them. We heard that there were doctors from 42 different countries assigned to assist in the testimony. Most, I'm sure, were there to monitor the effects of the rations, vitamins, minerals, and fat, all ingested nutrients, as to the amounts necessary for maintaining a healthy body.

Here is the explanation I wrote in my diary on 16 June 1944: The purpose behind these two months in the mountains. The army now has a variety of rations, C, K, and now this new 10 in 1. All have been used both on this side and in combat areas. All

have been lacking in food value under certain conditions; topographical or climatical. We are to test all under adverse (demanding) conditions. We will be pushed to our physical utmost. Medical checkups will be made daily to determine the effect both pro and con of each ration. Urine specimens will show whether the body is absorbing the excess vitamins or the body is at capacity and any excess are excreted. These tests have never been tried before, so we are privileged in a way. The going will be damn rough but in many ways, we will benefit. The rest of the services and ourselves we feel justified and compensated for our efforts.

(A note dated 4 July 44: This above literary masterpiece was written before the mind was attached and overcome by the "canned vitamins" the army terms rations. Oh, for a strawberry shortcake and a T-bone steak.)

Back to the AGF testing: My pulse was constant in a range of 60-70 in all the tests. This was a resting pulse at about 9000 feet elevation. We would be tested for "pulse return" by getting up and down off a foot high platform for one minute and then timing how quickly the heart returned to normal. Sometimes our pulse would get up to $170 \pm$. Other exercises were chinning, sit-ups, and a 300 yard run. The run was in mountain sand with five 60-yard intervals with our new boots. My range in time here was 52-58 seconds.

The group and individual tests in the AGF were pushups, burpees (in 20 seconds), 300 yard run (150 x 2), a 4-mile forced march. The best time was 48 minutes, a 75-yard piggy back run (we were paired to equal weight buddies) and a 75-yard zigzag run. It was always a long day for AGF. First formation was 0430 - zu bett - 2000.

We never were told the results of all the vitamin tests, but I'm sure they were the forerunners of our medical knowledge in this area. We now know that water-soluble vitamins are excreted through the kidneys if not needed. The fat-soluble vitamins can be stored in the fat tissue to the point of toxicity. Also, that the role of the metallic salts in maintaining a healthy body and functional organs can all be found and regulated under the term of electrolytes.

There were also some items of clothing to be tested. One item was accepted at first sight, another was rejected (why - we loved them). We received our first boots through company supply shortly after we set up permanent camp. They were similar to our current issue, ankle-high shoes but that a two strap with buckles sewed on the top of the shoe for a maximum height of 10 inches. We received the 10-inch. I never saw the 8 or 12-inch issue, but neither would have been acceptable. The 10-inch became the issue boot within months after our testing. The other item was a vest-like jacket with long sleeves. It closed with large loops around buttons but was wind tight. The outside shell was wind proof and a nylon fabric construction. The inside pile lining was a synthetic material about 3/4 inch in nap. Warm - warm! I later saw some vests with a lining. Also, did we try the cushion-sole socks for the first time? If so, good! I hope you're sitting down when I write this - especially any ex-GI. What happened to the test boots at the end of testing? The army - yes, the army gave them to us. Oh, just remembered and should mention the leather in the boots was turned rough side out

like suede. You did not have to polish.

I heard a story of an incident in Italy during WWII. I've often wondered if anyone else heard it. I always think of it when I refer to the 10" rough leather boots of 1944. Like the story of Commando Kelly - how many heard this one?

Everyone has heard, some served with, the Gurkha soldier. They were dedicated, proud, capable soldiers from Nepal and served with pride in the British army. They were also efficient killers.

The story. Somewhere in Italy, the Americans had set up an OP (Observation Post) with a FO (Forward Observer) for the artillery. It was half set up a shale hill that one had trouble climbing in the daytime under the best of conditions, especially no slipping and sliding or noise. One black night the American FO, - a captain - thought he felt a pressure on one foot. A snake? Then he felt a slight pressure around his ankle. About this time, he knew someone was with him. A dark form appeared before him and a voice said, GI? "Me - Gurkha." What the Gurkha had done was climb the hill, enter the cave, and checked the boot(s) of the FO. He was feeling for the material and height of the combat boot. If it had been 8 inches and a canvas top, the shoe belonged to a German. But, since it was leather, it was a GI. The German combat boot was 8 inches later in the war - earlier the calf high boot of excellent leather. Anyone ever heard this story? I also heard that the shock and fear the FO experienced on the confrontation blew his mind. He lost all vestige of sanity - a PTSD in today's standards.

Maybe I should include the story of Commando Kelly, at least as I heard or remember it, under the Chapter titled Pot-Pourri. Since I alluded to it here, I'll finish it. Sergeant Kelly was a member of the 3rd U.S. Infantry Division. A good outfit! Supposedly, he and his unit were involved in a big firefight in a larger town in Italy in 1944. It was touch, go, and he and his unit were low on ammo and out of hand grenades. Now, since this was an in-town fight, outside support was probably nil. When you're eyeball to eyeball, you're on your own. Anyway, he or someone in the unit found some 60 mm mortar rounds. These are high explosive, weight about 3-4 pounds, and have a point-detonating fuse (PD52). By this I mean that after the round leaves the barrel (tube) in normal firing, the round will explode on contact of anything.

Normally the round must leave the tube to be armed. It is safe to handle until this happens. If firing in normal sequence, the round is dropped down the tube at 3-5 MPH or 5-6 fps. The cartridge primer hits the fixed firing pin, ignites the cartridge and powder increments (up to 6) and the round is shot out of the barrel. The change of direction from 5-6 fps down to approximately 400 fps up and out forces a set back pin to fall out of the safety pin and as the round leaves the barrel the safety pin is ejected out of the round. The fuse is now armed and dangerous. It explodes on contact. Probably why the designation of PD52 fuse. Point Detonating! What the 52 means, I don't know.

Back to the story: Sergeant Kelly knew the functioning of the PD52. He did not, however, have a mortar and the Germans were in the street below. What he supposedly did, I can't see with a great degree of success, was to arm the round by taking out the cartridge and then slamming the round - bottom down - in the window

sill. The change in direction was never 5-6 ft/400 ft., as the round didn't go into its arc. The speed and inertia effect was probably about (ideally) 125 feet per second. I base this speed on the fact that a good baseball pitcher can throw a baseball over 90 miles per hour. Anyway, if it worked, he had no way of knowing until he dropped the round on the street below. If good, "boom," if not, "klunk!" One could tell if the round was armed by checking to see if the safety pin was gone. If the set-back pin had been released, the spring-actuated safety pin would have been ejected. Maybe one can hear a loose set back pin if one shakes the round. It just dawned on me that sergeant Kelly could tell if the round was armed. If slamming the round down was fast enough to force out the setback pin, the safety pin would have been ejected. Amen!

There is a sequel to this story. After the war, I read somewhere that an office or department with the DOD or Department of the Army would accept and encouraged suggestions. The employees of the office would all be Civil Service or military.

I wrote to the effect that in an extreme emergency, the infantryman would have another chance at defending himself and life with these modified rounds. All I suggested was that the safety pin include a small stamped screwdriver or wedge to unscrew a small plug in line with the set back pin. Unscrew the plug, reach in and pop out the set back pin and then drop on the street below. I thought this was in plain English - just an addition to the current fuse.

I received a letter from the recipient assigned my suggestion. All negative! He missed my "clear" point completely. He commented on the weight of the 60 mm x 81 mm light rounds, the availability of rounds in a combat situation, the danger in arming etc. It was apparent that he had never seen combat. Who gives a crap with all the so-called above safety comments when the crap is flying? You do what you can do and hope it works. His comment: Sorry not feasible!

For a couple of weeks we completed a check list (with comments) at the end of each day. We found out later that female employees at Fort Carson would read and codify. I don't believe my language was inappropriate but apparently, some comments were quite lewd. One question (Yes or No) asked if we were experiencing excess flatus. Most of the men didn't know what in the hell the question meant. They asked, the term was defined, the comments started. Quite raw! Most of us did experience an increase, but in young men, excess flatus is not a liability. Ha! About a week or so into the test, the questionnaire was removed. (An early example of the fact that women will have trouble in the army.) We can't have exceptions for sex or age in any and all assigned responsibilities.

I have stated many times that the best infantry soldiers were from the central plains (mid-west) region - from Winnipeg to the Rio Grande. Why? Because every man in this region had a 22 rifle in his growing up years. He enjoyed hunting, knew how to hunt and shoot, respected and cared for his weapon, and used it during the war.

There are exceptions to any generality and I'll be the first to admit I met many of them. Men from the big cities, however, seemed to be unable to accept or enjoy an issued rifle. New York had the Sullivan Law before World War II so even basic 22's

were not as common as rifles in the entire state of North Dakota. Our motto could have been, "A rifle In Every Home!" It should be today the way this country is going!

For many days we trained or hiked, always with the M-1. I suppose to check the effect of fatigue and/or hunger on the body, we would fire 2 clips (16 rounds) at the start of the day and at the end. I kept track of the number of rounds I fired and the total was 646 rounds in the two months. Many men did not fire, pretended, and gave the ammo to me. I would make dum-dums out of the M2 ball ammo and use it on prairie dogs, etc. on our day off. Another story. Non-corrosive primers didn't get army approval until about 1953. So, all firing required an immediate cleaning. Really, no problem, but many men resented. I don't know if I'll get the spelling correct, but the early primers were from the Frankfort Arsenal (FA) and chemically were a fulminate of mercury mixture. Very stable to oxidation and could be stored for years without deterioration. Civilian and military primers since 1953 are composed of lead stahpylate. As you can see, both primers would contain a residue of heavy metal, both poisonous. Both are very unstable compounds and explode under pressure or a quick jar. American primers (Boxer) have one flash hole. European (Berdan) have two smaller flash holes. (Ours are very easy to reload).

Once again, I(we) were in a world without women. A few times in the 60 days we saw "ladies" in passing cars. Where they got the dollars and rations for gas, I wonder. Maybe ranchers' wives? So, once again in a period of my life I had a famine. Finally, I realized that one can live without any "vice."

Very soon into the testing we found that the term 10-in-1 was too generous. There was not enough bulk to keep the stomach placated. Enough vitamins, but not enough bulk. All-in-all the rations were quite good, at least to me. Some men bitched and bitched. But some men would bitch if they had a portable woman. One item I really enjoyed was a fruit bar. About 2-3 ounces and made in California. It was compacted dried fruit; grapes, pineapple, figs, prunes, etc. Good! A lot of the men didn't care for them, so I got extra free or traded some other item. Shortly after the ration was agreed upon to be not enough (10-1), we were allowed to eat a 5-to-1 assignment. The rations contained 4,000 calories for each soldier, but there was no bulk. The stomach cried fowl and demanded more bulk. So, one always felt hungary.

The crackers in the new rations were quite palatable; good texture, taste and dry, not soggy. The crackers or "biscuits" in the K rations were horrible. We had these for our tactical days, so there were always some around. We had the best judges and testers in the area to confirm our abhorrence for the crap - the area's chipmunks. They were everywhere. As is usually the case with men, after the initial shock and scare, the local "residents" soon joined us for subsistence. They, the chipmunks, would steal anything that was not tied down. They would sit just out of reach and stare. I'll swear they could understand English.

We also caught some prairie dogs and kept them caged. Some adults and a couple young ones. One day, someone took an adult and dropped it into the area where we had at least 50 chipmunks. What a fight and too one-sided. We had to put

on gloves and rescue the prairie dog. We felt he had earned his freedom. Actually, we let everything go. Couldn't lick em - join em.

One day early in the testing, we all received an excellent exposure to the illusion of distance in higher altitudes and air. From peak to peak, as the crow flies, is one distance. To get there on foot through the valley is another.

We left one morning for a full day's march. We ate our rations at 1130, up at 0530, and started off again. The CO's map showed a lake at such and such a distance, but maps are two dimensional and we had human error. Our 1130 stop was one of the highest points in the area, so the lake looked close. At 1400 or so it dawned on everyone that we weren't any closer and we couldn't make it by dark. So, turn around. A mess! The CO lost control. We, a small group, took off on our own. All down hill. Hit a key road and were back in the company area before 1800. No water since 1130. We fire 24 rounds and then were dismissed.

One good thing about mountains and elevation, our camp was at 8,500. The mountain we climbed that morning was nearly 11,000. It gets up to 100 degrees quickly during the day and water freezes at night. However, no rattlesnakes.

One day (?) we had a formation late in the p.m., sun was still up. We marched to a near area and here were strange personnel and several GP (general purpose) tents set up. We fell out, were called individually to one tent and were issued red lens goggles and had to put on the issue. Do not remove! At the time the entire procedure did not make sense. No one had any idea of what was up.

Today, in perspective, I can try and analyze the forthcoming, unknown evening testing. To my knowledge this was the first and only testing done during the ration period. I don't believe there was any source of comparison. Maybe, a mean had been established earlier or in another area. Were the medical representatives looking for deficiency defects due to the excess or lack of vitamins? I believe medical science knew of the benefits of vitamin A or beta carotene on the retinal rods in the eye in 1944. Anyway, was our night vision being enhanced or destroyed by our diet?

Under orders not to remove the goggles, we sat around, smoked and BS'd. The sun went down and it was at least a half hour before the testing started. One by one we were brought into the tent. All minor light was red, visibility was very low. We sat or stood in front of a screen, which had either letters or numbers, I believe numbers, made up of phosphorescence dots (similar to testing for color blindness). The screen was moved backwards until you were unsure or wrong on the correct number. If I remember correctly, the range of the average mean was 7-11 feet. I got an 8?

One buddy, I remember his name, really stirred up the tent personnel. On his first test he kept them backing and backing and backing until he quit at 26 feet. This was impossible! The testing was tried again and this time he quit at 27 feet. The tent buzzed with head shakes, low-voice discussion, and finally acceptance.

Little did they, the doctors, know that one's environment can enhance our abilities. Earlier, I had seen the buddy with a large wire on which was attached hundreds of stamped metal keys. What the hell? The answer: they fit the call phone

coin boxes. He, the buddy, made his living the year or so before he entered the service by working at night robbing, opening, coin boxes on pay phones in the L.A. area. He was a walking cat-man!

Early in the testing, we violated the contract on no outside food. We had each Saturday off and on one of our first "tours" we met a man who had been living in the area since 1919. He had been in WWI with the 41st Division. A true mountain man: Frank Williams. We explained the reason for our presence and the conversation turned to civilian food. Did you have some extra? Yes! How much? He was our source of eggs, flour, canned goods, etc. for the rest of the testing. And most of us lost weight!

Another time, a Saturday, I was with one buddy. I always had the M-1 with the doctored M2 ball ammo. I had found a file somewhere and filed the copper jacket point down until the lead core just showed. The trick is to stop at the point the lead core is visible. Otherwise the pressure that forces the bullet out the barrel can force the lead out of the jacket and then the jacket stays in the barrel. The next round sticks in the barrel with thousands of pounds of pressure and you have a ruptured rifle or worse.

We were about fifty feet apart and being quiet when he waved and pointed to his front. I saw nothing. He slowed down and walked very deliberately forward. He also was holding his bayonet. I started over. He reached the rocks, stood a second, and then stabbed at a hole. All hell broke loose. An ear breaking, high-pitched scream came from the hole. The buddy jumped backward, white as a ghost. I covered the hole with my rifle and we backed slowly from the hole. Nothing happened! Good! He explained what had happened. He had seen this furry back and bottom and stabbed it with the bayonet. Luckily the hole was big enough for the animal to go further into the rocks. Either a mountain lion or bobcat. One with a sore hind end.

Another time I was alone and approaching a curve in the road. I heard a shot, then another, then two in quick succession. I had the M-1 with my dumdums, so I started running. Around the corner and here was a rancher, still quite shaken up, his horse whinnying and "antsy," and a 300-400 pound black bear lying dead on the road. The rancher had rounded the corner and met the bear face to face. The horse had reared and screamed but the rancher got one shot off and hit the bear in the shoulder. The bear reared and faced the rancher. He got off three in the chest. The bear stood! Finally, it collapsed. Why? The rancher was using a Savage Model 99, 250-3000 with 87 grain soft points. Too light for bear. Until the bear stood and faced the rancher, the light 87 grain were blowing up in the fat on the bear's chest. The one that killed the bear hit him in the throat.

One hears or reads about facts or findings etc., but human nature (?) is always skeptical. Seeing is believing. Such was the case one night after a lecture by a Park Service director. The night was perfect. Cool and clear. Unknown to us, personnel from the Park Service or maybe other units, had been strategically placed at various points and distances from our position. Control was by PR-6 or 21 radios.

The lecturer commented on the need for security at night with all forms of light from matches, cigarettes, flashlights etc. He then proceeded to prove his points. A

match was lit in the distance - how far? If I remember correctly, the match could be seen over a mile. A lit cigarette, especially when one was drawing, hundreds of yards. The flashlight with its white beam for miles. Like the poster: Idle talk sinks ships, carelessness and stupidity can get one killed at night.

The above was the good old wars. Night vision scopes were yet to be perfected. I can remember a Meta scope (?) which showed if anyone was watching you. Was this WWII or later? Choppers and the A10 have 24 hour vision. Just ain't fair to the ye olde infantryman. No rest for the wicked! The early night version scopes were heavy and bulky. The electrical source for the scope weighed 20 pounds or more (if my memory is accurate.) Today, the weight, range and use are much improved. Please pity the infantryman of today's war - he can be seen, followed, and killed any time.

Funny how today any comment can immediately bring accusations of race and/or religious discrimination. In 1944 we had a common goal: the war and a successful conclusion. Even though all nationalities (not color) were thrown together, there were very few problems. Such was the case in the mountains. After we built and moved to our lean-to, four diverse backgrounds were thrown together on a 24 hour a day sharing basis. The nationalities were Russian, Polish, German and American Indian (Lakota Sioux). Some nights we had lessons in pow-wows with fire and dances. Many participated and there was no residual effects. Harmony is possible!

I found some comments in the diary written by buddies. I offer some 1944 humor and ration comments:

1. I shot an arrow into the air. It fell to earth, I know not where. God Damn! I lose more arrows. (the Sioux)
2. My only satisfaction in eating these rations is in knowing that the civilians are eating horse meat. (Ohio)
3. I love Fruit Bars! (He didn't) (Wisconsin)
4. I hate Fruit Bars (Michigan)

(I mention no names so believe I can comment. Why this thought sticks in my mind, and whether hearsay or not, have no idea where I heard or could have heard, but the above soldier was killed by a sniper shortly before the war ended.

5. It's amazing! (The Chaplain on hearing the type and extent of profanity from the men.) A young man's fallacy!
6. Now I know what it means to sit down to a good meal after eating horse shit for two months. No more bitching about food for me. (After first meal in camp on return.) (Chicago, Illinois)
7. "The mountain deal," would have been okay if it wasn't for Chris's big mouth. (My shared tent partner until lean-to on 27 June.) (Ohio)
8. It is a sad state of affairs to almost starve for two months and then be one pound heavier when we finished the test. Sounds like the writer is a "gold brick" but has as much mileage on his boots as any man in the company. (Chicago, Illinois)

With any group of men isolated from a normal societal interaction (women), the

conversation and thoughts usually turn to the "ladies." Such was the case with this motley crew. Also, there were some budding authors, writers, and journalists in the group. Some were gracious enough to pen their thoughts for posterity in my diary. I offer one and my own. Similar, but...?

Women (a terrific sense of humor) from Milwaukee, Wisconsin

A woman is a frail, delicate specimen, which all men or suckers pursue. They manage to gain a great monopoly on a man or sucker's currency. How do they accomplish these outrageous deeds? It's very simple, by their sweet talk, spicy touches, and loving scent. Camouflage experts special deluxe. Men or suckers what have you learned from your experiences with these witches without brooms? Nothing! The next one will take you for double. As for me, I'll take bananas because they have no bones. But yet it's love, love, love!

Women (Yours truly 6/44 - true today?)

The strangest species of living organism yet perfected by our Maker. A challenge to man! The key to the secret of understanding them is still to be found. The young man is curious, the married man thinks he understands, and the bachelor is disgusted. Woe befalls the man who attempts to analyze them. Science today is at its peak as far as perfection of theories goes but even science dreads to tread on the threshold of the secrets of womankind. If you tell them you love them - the sky's the limit - (the man is in control for a short period of time). After a while they say to themselves, "I wonder?" A 1997 comment: Looking back at life - who seduced whom?

I wrote another small essay on a subject which I still feel is a positive asset to an individual. The quality of sportsmanship. In the early part of this century, adages such as: "turn the other cheek," "play for fun" and "it's the game that counts," etc. were heard quite often. Today, listen to the parents at a sandlot baseball game, at a varsity basketball game, I guess any game, and the mothers are as bad as the fathers. Even fights!

Has anyone heard this story that is based on imbedded quality of sportsmanship common in our generation? Supposedly, early in the war in the South Pacific a small group of Japanese infantry waved a white flag of surrender. Conditions were agreed upon and two of the Japanese started toward our lines. This is a first for our men and, since a white flag was held and no arms showing, some started forward to meet the two enemy. When both sides were in the open and away from cover, the Japanese soldiers suddenly fell forward. On the back of one was strapped a light machine gun. The second man acted as gunner. We lost several men due to this violation of ethics and war. The Japanese also died for their efforts but at what price? Sportsmanship!

From boyhood the American youth is taught good sportsmanship. This positive characteristic is stressed from his early school days on through high school, even college. Fair and honest play is a "fine asset," but war and combat are not a game. Men fight for their lives, not a trophy. The American soldier goes into battle with a sportsmanship attitude. He fights fair and dies in the attempt. Slowly this boyhood

habit loses itself in the melee. Hate and revenge take its place. If he has been lucky enough to learn from experience and still lives, he makes an excellent combat soldier. The army's attempt at canceling this trait prior to combat through lectures and training is in most cases in vain.

I found a page in the diary that listed the shows we saw during the testing and the dates: 23 June – “Winter Carnival;” 1 July – “Foreign Correspondent;” 8 July – “Housekeeper's Daughter;” 15 July – “House Across the Bay;” 23 July – “Slightly Honorable;” 30 July – “Topper Takes a Trip;” 5 August – “So.'s Your Aunt Emma;” and 13 August – “Trade Winds.” Many of the shows were interrupted by generator trouble or mother nature provided the sound effect; wind and rain.

I will allude to the following comments later in the book and I wonder if the cause of the "venom" has changed. The 201st was an infantry unit with a swollen TO & E (Table of Organization and Equipment). By this, I mean the unit was way over standard ranking in corporals and sergeants, but all infantry trained. Then and now? There was, to our knowledge, not one soldier of Jewish genealogy in "H" Company. This notation and comment was made 1 July during a discussion of a heritage of Russian, Polish, English and German; all sergeants. The consensus of the four was "Kill the Dirty Bastards." We were bitter that not one was represented in this infantry company. Were they in the combat arms?

About the 22nd of July we received notice that the 10-in-1 ration was being renamed to 8-in-1. The calories were probably sufficient, but the bulk of the items was lacking. Ye olde stomach just growled and growled.

One Saturday late in July we, the lean-to four and a couple of others took off late in the day for a deserted ranch house. It wasn't in too bad shape and looking back we were truly trespassing. At the time we were only worried about being caught. We had some food other than the rations, cards, our smokes, etc. Each claimed a bed or shared. I forget who was the cook. We had to be careful with the lights and candles, so the evening was short. Homemade pancakes for breakfast and then back to the area. Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

In these 60 days, we did a lot of walking. We had forced marches (4 miles), regular hikes at about a 120 cadence on hard surface and route step on the nature topography. All this walking was hard on our "new" boots. I tore the sole off one boot and waited at least a week for a replacement. In addition to the planned formal hikes and marches, we had many daily off-trail hiking for the tactical training.

Let me digress for a second. An incident that happened during the tactical phases just surfaced in ye olde memory. We were assigned to be rear guard (squad) for a withdrawal exercise. We had been issued blanks and adapters for the M-1's. We were well hidden and "playing the game." For some reason I had rolled over on my back. I(we) heard the shuffling and here comes (a friend) running full out with a bayonet (sheathed) at me. I timed my move perfectly. When his bayonet came within reach, I kicked it up in the air, lifted my M-1 and shot him in the chest. All reflex! Remember, however, the M-1 was loaded with blanks. (Blanks have no projectiles but do have a

heavy, waxed waterproof seal in the neck of the case to protect the powder. A highly corrosive powder!)

The waxed plug went through his field jacket, fatigue jacket, undershirt, and broke the skin of his chest. All training stopped. I was worried sick. We walked back to company headquarters and the "blanked" solder and I told our stories. Thank God he supported my version and commented several times that he shouldn't have startled me like he did. The captain gave me a chewing, sent me back to training. The soldier was taken back to Camp Carson for a tetanus shot and returned to duty.

My comments in the diary on the miles walked are as follows: The totaled miles are hikes only. I have not counted all the problems - both night and day. I also left out the miles covered on the many small hikes on tactics.

Miles walked from 16 June - 14 August - 373 miles. The last three days we had the forced marches for a total of 105 miles. All men completed. We(I) were probably in the best physical shape of our lives. Four mile forced marches $\times 5 = 20$ miles.

Fox Movietone News was at the finish line as were reporters from Denver. A lot of publicity. Somewhere (?) I have a picture from the paper of us crossing the finish line.

I was disappointed with some of the unit members that last day. As a finale for the march and probably to show the ability of trained men in excellent shape, the unit had set up silhouette targets at various ranges against a steep hill. A loudspeaker boomed the information on the scenario. We were defending against an enemy attacking. "Ready, aim, fire!" There was not much fire. What there was not effective as dirt was flying everywhere but the targets. I fired correctly, as I love to shoot, but once again, the background of big city soldiers surfaced. They didn't give a damn. Tired and ready to go "home." "Cease fire! Cease fire!" came the order. No more embarrassment!

We came out of the mountains in the a.m. of 14 August. Oh, happy day! The 6 x 6's really rolled. My helmet blew off but the last truck got it. Big meal and ice cream for supper. It was quite warm, so we didn't get to bed until late. Plenty of competition with a good percentage of the men coming in drunk as hell. A lot of beer drinkers in the army. Only alcohol available. (Alcohol has been the "crutch" of armies until the Viet Nam. Then when drugs became easier and cheaper to obtain, the soldiers switched. For dire consequences.)

For a couple of days after our return, the army wasn't the army. Little duty, no formations, and we got to sleep in a couple of mornings. Something was brewing, but, as yet, only rumors (the 201st was shipping out?) The fact that ten day furloughs started 20 August enforced that rumor. We had been paid up-to-date, all equipment turned in, and were waiting for furloughs to start in the a.m. of the 20th. We finally received our "release" at 2030 (diary). I caught a bus to town and then to Denver.

I should mention one quick trip to Colorado Springs after we returned from the mountains and started our furloughs (14-20 August). A buddy and I went into Colorado Springs (population in 1944 was 40-50,000). We were wearing khakis and the

new boots (bloused). The buddy was quite a lady's man and an operator. We were having a beer and the waitress asked if we were a new unit at Carson. (This after staring at the boots.) The buddy answered, yes, and she asked, what outfit. Jungle engineers! A startled look and no more questions. Ha!

If I remember correctly, I decided to hitchhike from Denver. There was no bus for some time and hitchhiking usually worked okay during the war. Of course, Wyoming's traffic was light then and still is today in the open areas. I caught a ride on an oil tanker, loaded. No interstate in those days and some grades were steep. We "crawled" to Cheyenne. It's about 90 miles from Denver to Cheyenne and it took until mid-morning.

I decided to continue hitching. All were short hops by local ranchers. It was getting late in the afternoon when a bus came along - a little west of Lusk, Wyoming. I flagged it down, paid the driver and away we went. I woke up briefly in Rapid City, South Dakota. It was around midnight but I didn't get off the bus. To Pierre and then north to North Dakota and east to Fargo (why wasn't the same route available in May?)

The time in Fargo went quickly, too quickly. Leave time always does. I had gotten engaged in 1941 and my fiancée was there during the leave. She came from California, the same girl that stopped for six hours in Medford in April. We had discussed marriage, by letter, prior to this meeting. We had broached the subject to the mothers, but the reactions bordered on hysteria. So, no go. Actually, they were right. So many war marriages folded due to immaturity and separation. We were only "kids." We left for Carson and California together on a bus. To Omaha, then west to Denver. I kissed her goodbye at the depot. I went south to Carson, she, west to California. I didn't see her again until late fall in 1945. We did correspond during that period.

Back at Carson the rumor was now fact. The 201st was shipping out - heading east (in the U.S.). I don't remember if we knew the destination was Ft. Jackson, South Carolina, but that's where we ended up. The trip in between is a blank.

It was the old story at Fort Jackson. You could sense that the army really didn't know what to do with this bastard outfit. Way over TO & E in rank. No one could apparently figure out why and what with the rank for replacements. No one had combat time, although the original members had overseas credit time, Alaska. I was at Ft. Jackson about a week when I made my next calculated guess on beating the army rigidity. A memorandum on the company bulletin board read that all privates and PFC's would draw overcoats, overshoes, winter gear. Now, the army logistics leaves much to be desired at times, but I felt that these two ranks had to be going someplace other than the South Pacific. I walked into the orderly room and requested a break to private. It was granted, I drew the gear, and in a few days reported to Camp Shanks, New York. Shanks was a PE, Port of Embarkation, going out it was located in a heavily wooded area in eastern New York. High fences and continuous guard movements. Easy to get into, but hard to get out. All for security, so acceptable.

I have two quick stories about Ft. Jackson. One is that why do I remember a water tower on the post so clearly? I believe it was unique in its construction. Lower

and wider than the conventional towers? The second was a quick trip a couple of us made into Columbia. This was August and hot and humid. Columbia was a big city then and is now. After we got off the bus we started walking around. We hadn't walked but a couple of blocks (direction?) when here was a blockade. Off Limits to Military Personnel. Why? It looked the same on both sides of the blockade. No use in arguing so we turned around. We walked another direction (?). Not too far and here was another blockage. Whether we asked someone then or it just dawned on us that here was pre-war discrimination at its best. The blockades were set up at the beginning of the black residential sections. Being from North Dakota this just didn't add up. Later in more relationships with soldiers from the south I realized that the Civil War really hadn't ended in many minds.

The first and last weekend at Camp Shanks we (A GI named Thomas Van Eck and I) got a 12 hour pass. Tom lived in Philadelphia and we headed there for the evening. Supper at his house then "out." To this day I can remember the bar where we ended the evening. It was called the "Leo Lawler Swing Bar" at 26th and Woodland in South Philly. Two incidents I remember clearly other than the band played on a platform above the bar. One was a disturbance and resulting confusion. The cops came and after the crowd melted away, a young sailor was dead on the floor. Someone had punched him in the mouth and his partial had jammed into his throat and he choked to death. Quite sad. I have a question for the Navy. How did he pass the physical? The second was the eternal question of the sexes. An attractive brunette in a mink coat (?) made it quite clear that I should go home with her. I didn't, so I'll always wonder. As it was we were late in returning back to Camp Shanks. Late is correct. Instead of 0600 on a Sunday, we arrived at about 0800 on Monday. The pass was 1800 Saturday - 0600 Sunday. The camp was not the same as when we left. Armed guards at the gate, all traffic was going in, not out. We were escorted to the company headquarters. Name, rank, serial number. Where in the hell have you been? Why are you AWOL? Yah! Yah! Now privates are not recognized as being too bright. So, we put on a good dumb act. Privates also don't make much money. So, in true exasperation the officer shouted to get the hell out of his sight and back to our unit. Yes, sir! (All ranked NCO's were fined and Summary Court records filed in their personnel records.)

How we got from Camp Shanks to the loading dock, I don't remember. I believe we left in buses after dark. Did we (the Army) fool any foreign agents on the day of our departure? Since we arrived safely in Scotland, I assume so. The ship we crossed on was the Ile de France. (Since cut up for scrap) A peace-time luxury liner of 44,000 tons. It was a three sticker with triple screws. And, could cruise at 28-29 knots. So it traveled by itself.

Years ago I read somewhere why America is behind on strategic intelligence in the world then and today. The article made sense. We're new at the game, only a little over 200 years. The other major powers have been at it since the 1400's or earlier. We have had "representatives" located throughout the world for only 5-10 generations. Not enough time! Whenever there is political stress between political factions our "new"

representatives (5-10 generations) become suspect.

I was on my way to save the world from tyranny. Little did I know how cheap life really can become.

CHAPTER 6

PRE-COMBAT

I assume we left Camp Shanks by bus for the ride to the pier and loading on the Ile de France. Day or night? Probably at night as the "ride" to England was successful. Also, did we go on board during the day or at night? The dock was somewhere in the New York area. Apparently security worked, as the common adage at this time was: "Loose lips sink ships!" didn't apply.

The Ile de France was a converted luxury liner. The fourth largest in the world at that time. Being a French liner, I wonder if it was constructed in France. And, if so, at the shipyards at Saint-Nazaire? I mention this thought as the port is still building ships today...big ones. The Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines have their latest ships built at Saint-Nazaire. I was on a cruise in 1995 on a ship of 74,000 tons. Two were being built at 100,000 tons and I understand that one is on the drawing board for 200,000 tons. Floating palaces!

The Ile de France had to be a steam turbine drive. Weight was 44,000 tons with triple screws. I read(?) that it could run at maximum speed of 22-30 knots/hour. A knot is a British unit of measure and longer than a mile. One knot equals 6080 feet, while our standard mile is 5280. Every knot then is 800 further along in time. In 1944 this was fast. It is still excellent speed for a surface ship today. Sadly, the great ship was cut up for scrap in the 60's or 70's. Another part of history gone, but the dollar, pound, franc and mark march on (can't forget the yen).

I can't remember much about the crossing. As a lowly replacement private I/we didn't see much daylight. We did get on deck once a day for fresh air. I can still see one incident on one of these daily "outing." The Atlantic is known for its cantankerous weather. Our crossing in the late fall of 1944 received its share. Even with a weight of 44,000 tons and, I imagine, stabilizers, the ship did pitch and roll at times. And men got seasick. This one day here were two so sick that I thought they were dead lying in the depression in front of a door. Their vomit had clogged up the sewer drain and, with the rain and vomit mixture building up, the "mixture" slopped back and forth with each roll of the ship. They were impervious to the off and on slap of the "mixture" and lay as if dead. I hope someone removed them to a more accommodating area. (In all my travels, I never once "lost it.") I did get queasy a few times, but if I ate something immediately, I was okay. The only time I "lost it" was coming into Detroit, Michigan in 1955 on a Northwest Strato Cruiser with a ceiling of 350 feet. The ship was 50 yards off the center so the pilot gunned the engines and pulled up and around for another landing. I left my stomach on the floor as he pulled up. I quietly grabbed the "puke sack," emptied my stomach, folded the bag and when we landed I handed it politely to the stewardess. After we took off, I ate the offered meal.

There was a lot of craps and poker playing going over. Many men had some American currency and many lost or gained some. I could never understand why one

guy could furnish a blanket and act as "referee" during the game. For this he would "drag" 5-10% of each pot. Granted there were no fights, but even the blanket was the property of the U.S.

Young men can't spell mortality and don't have enough sense or respect to recognize and/or accept another faith. So, arguments were common between the Protestants and Catholics. Of course, nothing was changed. But, the antagonism and overt friction was far more direct than one sees today. Time helps! Remember that the war was the great catalyst on the mixing of America. One argument that always surfaced and still does today was the blessing of the wine in communion. The Protestants would argue that the blessing was symbolic and that chemically the wine was still wine. The act was only symbolism. The Catholics would argue that the wine was now the blood of Christ. (Now that both faiths serve communion, the answer is common knowledge.)

Youth, since the days of Cain and Able, have lived their early lives to some degree of hedonism. Do your thing – the future be damned. Only the elderly must worry. The glib tongue, good dancer beds the young and some middle-aged ladies – not the solid, sincere, educated, boring young suitor. Death is a phenomenon related only to funerals.

One other area of learning that came in handy a few times later, was that I mastered the art of getting in and out of a hammock. And, staying and sleeping while in it. Many men took some bad knocks on "entering" or "leaving" the suspended bed.

This daily routine lasted for 8-9 days. It was a quick crossing for any ship in 1944. Now we have the Concorde in an hour and a half. (Time marches on!) I believe we reached the port of embarkation after dark. Really don't remember. Why I can remember the port city so clearly, I don't understand. It was not a common port in 1944 and certainly not today. I did find the name on a large scale map once. The port: Goonuck, Scotland. A deep water port with probably an inlet approach to give more protection from the U-boats. (The 66th Division got clobbered after docking in Le Harve in late June or July of 1944.)

We unloaded and immediately were loaded on trains - third class. My first experience with European rails. Interesting. We headed south and never really stopped. I can remember seeing Nottingham (Robin Hood), Carlisle, London and finally stopping in South Hampton - a port. We were there a day or so before crossing the Channel. At twenty, a man is always hungry. So, I can remember clearly a large pile of canned food stacked in this warehouse. It had been saved from a sinking ship and just piled inside. Most of the labels were missing due to the water exposure. However, the shape can be indicative of its contents.

For example, sardine and canned fish are usually in a flat oval can, tuna is in flat round cans. #2 and 2 ½ cans can be anything, #5 and #10 cans are usually some type of fruit juice. Especially #5's. The pile was, of course, marked off limits but hunger and challenge prevailed. We had about a 50/50 record on our "guess" choices but did get some decent food. (If the can yield was wrong, chuck it back into the pile.) These

Yanks are messy.

After about a day we were alerted to leave. After dark we filed out to a dock and loaded on a ship (boat) only about 100-150 feet long. Above deck were large glass windows that were blackened out. We soon learned the ship was a Belgium Congo River boat and held only a couple hundred GI's. Also, the Captain and crew were Congonese. So, the language was foreign and so was the food. The 20-30 miles took overnight so we had one meal. That I remember. It was mainly goat. The trip was rough and many of the men got queasy. Some lost it! Some borderline cases matured at the chow line when chunks of greasy goat - with ribs attached - were pulled from the "stew." I took a whole chunk and shook it and shook it and wiped with a sheet or some cloth to get as much grease as possible off the chunk and then ate it. Not bad! (How many times did we get goat [in disguise] in the U.S.?)

The "ship" was built to carry 360 passengers. It must have had a shallow draft, as I understand it was used on the Congo River. It's name, The Leopoldville.

On Christmas Eve it was loaded with 2,223 replacement troops - all American GI's. The crew totaled 237 and consisted of British seamen on the AA guns. A Belgium crew with 93 natives from the Belgian Congo, and a Belgian captain who spoke only Flemish.

A German U-boat was waiting and one torpedo did the job. The order to "ABANDON SHIP" was given in Flemish. The entire 237 personnel of the crew made it back to port. About 1,400 of the GI's survived for a loss of about 823 K.I.A. - all American GI replacements.

After years of denial, evasion, silence, and cover-ups, the three governments finally agreed that the Belgian crew had been negligent in the performance of their duties. Please notice that the governments were not responsible the officers not guilty, but only the plain citizen was at fault. How about the 823 who died and the horror and pain experienced by the 1,400 survivors? Ye olde double standard of leadership.

It took over a day to go 20-30 miles. I think we got to Le Harve in the daytime. One could see the damages of war. There was a concrete retaining wall that showed the effect of heavy gunfire. We unloaded with our gear. This time there were no buses or trucks waiting. Where ever we were headed it would be on foot. Le Harve is rimmed with high hills so nowhere but up. As each GI carries his "home" and his "home" (duffel bag) weighed approximately 66 pounds, we walked at a slow cadence. It was overcast - maybe raining. After an hour or so we reached Camp Lucky Strike (Would the USA name their camps today after cigarettes?) Tents - tents. Quite new as grass was still growing for streets. (While at Lucky Strike - only a few days - the engineers were laying asphalt mats for streets. Quite an improvement.) How and where chow was fed I don't remember. Probably in line and with our mess gear with washing facilities in the area. If a GI hadn't learned by now the need for complete washing; rinsing of his gear tough. Especially rinsing to insure that all the GI soap was gone. Otherwise, instant diarrhea!

In retrospect and wiser and older, Le Harve and Marseilles must have been the

two ports of debarkation for all services in the ETO. Both were major ports and both received only minor damage prior to the invasion. Since all types of units unloaded here, their assignments were first made at theater level - then by army - corps - division - and final assignment. I mention this command function because as replacements we were the last men on the totem pole. Just numbers! And my next move was probably nothing more than an area change to study the demands for fillers due to casualty numbers.

I'm sure we left by truck for Givet, Belgium. The home of LeChatz Noir. Such pleasant memories of our short stay in Givet. Seriously, now as I look back on the move, we were about as far north as the USA 7th Army and at the south extremes of the USA 3rd Army. (General George Patton - while the 7th was commanded by a General Patch). Why I went southeast from Givet to Alsace-Lorraine, I'll never know, but thank you, Lord. I ended up in the 7th Army, not Patton's 3rd. (I served in the 3rd USA for the last month or so of the war.) I do not share the "aura of sainthood" that some have for the General. Although only a staff sergeant, I/we experienced the go-go-go philosophy with the utter disregard to common sense tactics (some worked, I'll admit) that emanated from his command. More on this later on our Hammelburg "excursion."

It was about a month before I found a home (unit assignment) and the sequences may not be accurate prior to my joining C company of the 19th AIB (Armored Infantry Battalion) in late November. Some incidents are still crystal clear.

I believe my next "reppo" replacement depot was at Epinal - probably army level. We were quartered in a large factory building. Some glass was intact so received some protection from the wind but roof did keep out the rain. As with my remembering the stories of rain and mud from WWI vets - partially true. I imagine the days were typical army. Formations (where could we go?). Chow lines and bunks. It was "hurry up and wait." I was there about a week and two memories stand out like yesterday. One was a thing - the other people.

The toilets in the building were bare stalls with a 4-5 inch pipe opening in a slight depression in the center of the floor with two cast iron (replicas) feet bolted or welded to the floor. One would drop the necessary clothing and squat over the hole with your heels locked on the cast iron feet. These were at an angle - seemed to be correct for most as one could squat comfortably for a period of time. This method of elimination makes sense. It's comfortable and thorough. When you were done, you knew you were done. And you felt done. Clean from the rectum to the ears. If there was a method of flushing, I don't remember.

Here again my inquisitive mind began to work overtime. Was the toilet stall(s) on the top floor straight down with the lowered floors attached by offset pipes or all floors offset. It seemed that the top floor went straight down. Now my high school physics came into play. The formula for a free falling body in space is: $V = \frac{1}{2} gT^2$. V = velocity, g = force due to gravity at a set rate of 32 fps, and T = the time falling from start to impact. Can you imagine the smack and spatter of a normal human excrement falling four or five stories. Wow! Let's see. If four stories are 20 feet/story, then: $V = \frac{1}{2}$

$\times 32 \times 32$ (first second 16 feet, 2×3 at 32 each = $16 + 64 = 80$. $V = 144$ fps, or 98 mph. If a five story building: $V = \frac{1}{2} \times 32 \times 3 + 20/32 = .6 = 3.62 = 12.96 = 207.36$ fps or 141 mph. There is a factor of terminal velocity that enters the speed results but this is beyond my math ability. I do know that maximum terminal velocity of the human body falling in space is approximately 140 miles per hour. One can speed up (to a point) and slow (to a point) the velocity by body positions, but at 140 mph, you're a mess.

A few more comments in this area. Wouldn't the ease, quickness, and complete delivery of a human birth be expedited by a squatting position of the birth mother? Gravity certainly would be a continuous assistance rather than the pelvic muscles maximum and minimum contractions. Not as convenient for whom?

There is one area in the initial screening of enlistees - inductees that have stagnated since WW II. We still do not have any type of measurement for dysfunctional minds. We still cannot isolate the bully, the coward, the user, the con man, etc. from the initial screening. Look at law enforcement - how "resting" it would be if we could evaluate why the person wants a gun and a shield. So we still have the percentage of shell shocked, battle fatigue or Pandora's Box. PTSD: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. And, what percentage of these veterans granted disability never fired a weapon, much less killed a man? Wouldn't the pre-existing condition - let's call it instability - be an individual or family problem, not a service, VA or government responsibility. If a veteran killed in the line of duty to save his own or unit member's life, the resulting death should be of no concern to him regardless of age or sex. If he can't or won't save himself, no one can help him.

So agree or disagree with anything in the book. But, if you haven't killed, caused death, seen death, lived with death, please keep your comments to yourself. You haven't earned my attention or time.

The Epinal "reppo" depot was a busy place. There were other bodies coming and going through the place besides just replacements. It was also a holding area for former wounded returning to their units. Here I met my first Nisei. These were second generation sons of immigrant Japanese parents born in the United States. By our Constitution they were American citizens. I am not a historian and only enjoy history of choice, but of all the nebulous insults, lies, and abuses by our government throughout time, and their disposition during World War II were the greatest abuses of power. The American Indian has treaties fabrication, the Blacks the second-class citizen status, but Nisei was all within my time. What an insult to God and Country.

These men were members of the specially form units, the 442 Regiment or the 100th Battalion. The units were sent to the ETO (understandable) to be tested and assigned every suicide, rotten, hopeless mission the academy "leaders" could figment. They survived all. The one soldier I visited with had been wounded several times already. I saw him in October and again in February when I came through, after being wounded.

One should be reminded again how the war broke up the isolation of people and the cultural pockets that existed in the U.S. prior to 1941. We all lived happily in our

own little worlds - safe and sound. I had never heard of or seen a Nisei. Maybe if I had lived in California in the 30's I would have experienced some of the "hysteria." Maybe! In the 1940 census in North Dakota I believe I heard this figure for Blacks. Six! Six in the entire state. Probably all in Fargo with a population of around 44,000 in 1940. As for the American Indian I had seen some in northern Minnesota around Walker, Minnesota. There were very few in Fargo. We had more hoboes and bums residing near the river than we had of any of the minorities. Our winters were and are severe and the negative aspect of their presence was the news of their deaths following an especially tough blizzard or cold snap. Flop houses and prostitution were common. This was during the depth of the depression. Good old days?

I was at Epinal for about a week and my name was called at a formation. I was on orders to report to an MP Escort Unit. It means nothing to me but got all my gear and fell in. Looking back I wonder why my name was picked. I had a year of CMTC and two years of ROTC but for the army to use any judgment in screening just doesn't jell. Probably a long word, propinquity, comes to mind. I was just near - handy. Also, the letter C is only the third from the top of the alphabet. (You get paid sooner, though.)

Away we went to Saverne, a little town nestled in a valley. Here was an old factory - roof only - and about 1500 POW's being held for screening and assignment. My first look at a German soldier. Where and how and by whom they were captured I have no idea. Most appeared to enjoy their status as the war was over for them and they were alive. As with all POW groups the officers and enlisted men were separated. Also, some of the units. There were SS in the group. These fanatics were something else - here and later in combat. Their zeal for the cause, dedication to the Fatherland, and non-stop-go-go methods in tactics were a problem. They were (some) also quite surly. I can honestly say that I have never abused a POW but if one wants to act like an asshole, I'll help him - if he insists. The SS were so proud of their status that they were tattooed for identification. The original units (Hitler's personal body guards) had a death's head-skull, crossbones under their left arm - later units had a six-sided figure - could have been eight? So, all we had to do was have the man strip to the waist and look. The original tattoo was called a TOTSKOPH.

Another area of identification marks or scars were the wounds of the two armies. The Germans to expedite the time lost while wounded would staple the incisions and lacerations of their wounded. We, the USA, stitched ours. But, this meant coming back and having the stitches removed. The staples anyone could remove. Also, the residual scars on the German soldier were much more noticeable and jagged. After the war I noticed this at the shower points set up at the camps. So, you put five ex-German wounded and five ex-American wounded in a shower with substantial scar tissue and I'll tell you which army they were in.

We were quartered in a large two-story house on the other side of town from the POW site. A mile or so away? I don't remember a name or a face of anyone in the unit. Even those who were assigned with me. We were assigned to four hours on guard and

eight off. This gave us some time to look around, but where? Overcast and rain - typical fall weather in France. Also, a couple of times while I was there the Germans would fire one of their Big Berthas. About an eight inch shell, but could go 30 miles. If one hit a house - allus kaput!

I was issued a rifle and ammo for the guard duty. About time! The Germans were within 20 kilometers or so and closer at places along the line. The Siegfried Line ran parallel to the borders of France and Germany. The Maginot Line originally faced the Siegfried but after 1940 was useless and unoccupied. Anyway, I finally had a rifle and ammo. Isn't that what war is all about? Why the American Army and Government today still handles and issues the individual weapons as they did in the past - I'll never know. You enlist and are issued a rifle. It can be new (doubtful) or reconditioned or maybe just cleaned. Or, it could be a piece of junk. You are held responsible for its condition subject to Article 15's or Summary Court Martial. Funny that the Swiss and Israelis issue a personal weapon (new) to all participants active or reserve during their years of obligation. (They also assign the women in the services differently!) But, I now had my Springfield 03.

A few memories. The house where we were quartered was quite nice and large and unique. It had a bathroom - no running water but a bathroom with a toilet build in. The toilet was build in the corner. (I see now that some toilets are offered this way.) I was relieving myself one day and in rushes this guy with his pecker already out. Got to go - got to go! I moved over and he stood facing my left thigh. I asked him what the hell are you doing? About this time his stream started and it went directly and straight for the bowl opening. "What the hell? Oh, that!" came the comment. "I hurt myself on a bicycle when I was a kid and the urethra tube comes out at right angles to the head. Really no problem!" Then his comment that I remember like yesterday, "When I have sex I don't spray 'em like a normal dick, I douche 'em."

One night on duty I made my rounds but always ended up at one area. Someone had made a mistake in the screening that day (us) and left two German medical doctors still in the general group of POW's. They were supposed to go to a hospital to attend their wounded. One spoke English quite fluently - the other had no understanding of English, so there was always a pause in our conversation for interpretation. The only light at night were the flames coming from the barrels used to get some heat for the hands and feet. There weren't many of us but most of them didn't want to leave anyway. The two doctors were internal medicine or surgery type but had been delving into the phenomenon of mental telepathy. (Hitler tried everything). I can accept this theory to a point and being a young know-it-all was very much interested in their comments. After all, if an EEG measures brain activity electrically, couldn't it be possible that two minds could get on the "channel?" One night (they were there two) I spent most of the four hour shift visiting with the gentlemen.

Going "home" that night after the tour in total darkness we were talking, laughing and smoking when we heard a window being opened. No way, Jose! Away we went. No grenade or what for us. Maybe entirely innocent, but I never did trust the

Alsacians. Most or more of them had German surnames than French and seemed to prefer to speak German among themselves.

I can offer proof that I was there in Saverne. If anyone reading this is in the area, ask about the location of the old factory. From the factory leading in from the hills, was a road - hardly more than a foot path. One day another GI and I on finishing our tour started up the trail for a hike and look-see. Now quite stupid as things were quite fluid in late '44, but youth is stupid. After a half mile or so this dawned on us and we decided to turn back. About 2-3 hundred yards to the front was a small church - with the belfry bell quite visible. Now no one would be in the church - out here - in the war Who knows? Anyway, I decided to see how well the Springfield was zeroed so I aim, hold, touch it off and bang - clang. The bullet ricocheted off the bell. Bells are either cast iron or brass so I'm sure that there is a gouge somewhere on the bell's surface. We realized how stupid the act was so the distance back to the factory was covered in record time. Never heard anything. After all, we were in allied territory, not enemy!

This TDY lasted about a week and those of us (all?) assigned earlier fell out and loaded in a truck. (I kept the rifle and ammo.) We ended up in another replacement depot. (Smaller but same.) This time the town was named Molsheim. Probably a Corps depot - just another step closer to a permanent unit assignment. How long I was there, I don't remember. Not long and once again, I'm sure, ye olde fall in-out, formations with chow and sleep. Typical army. Then another change.

This time I really hit the jackpot. You knew you were about there. Now there was background noises and flashes on the horizon at night and more vehicle movement. I imagine this was part of the division trains of the 14th Armored Division.

During the day - after formation - we had the day to ourselves. I had seen deer several times so decided I/we could use a change in diet. I went hunting. Several guys were along and we would cover and drive select areas. We jumped several deer and finally one was close enough and I got one. The full jacketed bullet put it down with one shot. The deer were quite small around here. Probably 60-70 pounds undressed. So, after skinning and gutting we had 40 pounds of fresh meat. How to fix and eat? Easy! A little bartering was in order. I went to the kitchen with an offer. One front quarter for a big skillet and field kitchen burner and some lard. Done! There were about eight of us that changed around with butcher duty - cooking duty - and "grunt" duty. By morning the meat was gone. Although fresh, none of us got diarrhea or upset stomach. We did fry thoroughly to insure complete cooking. (Oh, for the life of the young man with their cast iron guts.)

A couple of days of this life and once again I was on the move. This time by Jeep with one other guy about my size. I mention this because, looking back, I had my first hint at what my destiny in life and war turned out to be. There were other incidents and hints but I just didn't put it all together at the time. Call it luck or God's will or the Book of Fate - our tomorrows are all laid out somewhere.

Finally, I was going to get a chance to save the world. I was going to a combat unit and Pvt. Christensen, 37318887 - ready. What a revelation youth has with a war.

CHAPTER 7

COMBAT

Combat is like the parable of the elephant and the five blind men. What you did, what you saw, what you remember all depends on where you were standing. Witnesses of an accident or a crime seldom agree on exactly what happened and yet all were in the immediate area at the time. I believe this has something to do with our individual values and perspective on life. A woman would probably remember more accurately the clothes and color of the individual in question while a man the size and actions. Both would be right.

I read someplace years ago that all armies have a percentage of non-combat troops in their makeup. Certainly true! Some percentages quoted were so offensive to me that I still remember them. Once again, I quote: "He that has borne the battle.....!" Ha! The American army, no surprise, has the largest number of non-combat personnel. Supposedly, only 7% of the servicemen in the USA were in combat. So, out of 16,000,000 men in the service in WW II, 1,120,000 did the dirty work. This is not quite accurate for within many units the percentage was higher or lower. For the Marines, probably 25% were combat; Navy less than 10%, USAF the same?; Russia's ratio was around 6-7 to 1. (They do not have all the frills.) But what is so maddening and damaging to a line veteran is that after the "ball" is over all veterans are classified under one title, Veterans. Our politicians seem to fear a truth of commitment or find it advantageous to close the books on, "A job well done. Thanks!" Why do Americans lionize sports figures and accept their outrageous salaries and commissions when the greatest personal interaction of any competition between man and combat is immediately and hopefully shelved as soon as the war ends? The only "sport" today where the loser can really lose. And, the government pays a pittance for the activity.

Leadership wins wars! But, it takes time to determine true leadership. I was blessed with good company officers. They did not wear pearl-handled 45 colts. They dressed as we did. They allowed some latitude on the completion of an order and most of all, all (the CO and the Platoon CO) practiced a basic philosophy I still practice today. They asked nothing of any man in their command that they couldn't, wouldn't, and hadn't done themselves. One was a college graduate on commissioning and the other received a battle field commission. This is another area which I feel did not earn a high percentage of success.

As usual the United States got caught with its pants down in WW II. A lot of plain American boys died because of this. Yet we continue to lionize some of the "leaders" who made this possible. We needed men, we needed material, and we needed leaders. So, what did the services do? They equated academic achievement with leadership and generously applied this highly questionable and debatable theory to a short cut to the leadership scarcity - then granted commissions to far too many college graduates. The ROTC program, OCS, CMTC, etc. did at least use some time to measure

the recipient, but money, name, family, connections, and intervention gained thousands of commissions - many without leadership potential. More men died! When one accepts a commission the paramount responsibility in the mind should be that the lives of his or her command are always first priority.

I considered using a comparison of the battalion history with my recollection of the event but decided this would be too lengthy and inaccurate. I have read our history over and over. Some events are as I remember them, some I can't believe I was there. From time to time I will allude to the history - names of the myriad of small towns are available - or to reemphasize the differential from the parable of the blind men and the elephant.

I had always planned on a POTPOURRI chapter to be used as a catch-all. Time and time again a certain event would return to me with clarity after my initial effort. Maybe I should have included all the comments and opinions under such a chapter heading but since combat changed my life style and philosophies forever, I've chosen this catharsis as a preface to the combat chapter. I could summarize a thousand words with the statement that with death as a companion most men live a simple, honest life. Peace returns mankind to the squibs and squabbles of every day living. Where recognition is too often based on money instead of deeds.

Since I joined my combat unit as a private and a replacement for casualties, I must include an exacting description of the veteran vs. replacement written in a social psychology book and copyrighted in 1948 and 1956. How the authors, man and wife, were able, without any combat or service time, to be this accurate is a mystery. Whatever the source of this data - it was accurate. Oh, my combat unit was C Company of the 19 AIB (Armored Infantry Battalion) of the 14th Armored Division. Their comments in a 102% accurate assessment:

"COMBAT PEOPLE ARE AN EXCLUSIVE SET, AND IF THEY WANT TO BE THAT WAY, IT IS THEIR PRIVILEGE. THEY CERTAINLY EARN IT. NEW MEN IN OUTFITS HAVE TO WORK THEIR WAY IN SLOWLY. BUT THEY ARE EVENTUALLY ACCEPTED. SOMETIMES THEY HAVE TO CHANGE SOME OF THEIR WAYS OF LIVING. AN INTROVERT OR A RECLUSE IS NOT GOING TO LAST LONG IN COMBAT WITHOUT FRIENDS, SO HE LEARNS TO COME OUT OF HIS SHELL. ONCE HE HAS "ARRIVED" HE IS PRETTY PROUD OF HIS CLIQUE AND HE, IN TURN, IS CHILLY TOWARDS OUTSIDERS.

"THAT'S WHY, DURING SOME OF THE WORST PERIODS IN ITALY, MANY GUYS WHO HAD A CHANCE TO HANG AROUND A TOWN FOR A FEW DAYS AFTER BEING DISCHARGED FROM A HOSPITAL WHERE THEY HAD RECOVERED FROM WOUNDS, WITH NOBODY THE WISER, DIDN'T TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT. THEY WEREN'T EAGER TO GET BACK UP AND GET IN THE WAR, BY ANY MEANS. AND MANY OF THEM DID HANG AROUND A FEW DAYS. BUT THOSE WHO DID HANG AROUND DIDN'T FEEL EXACTLY RIGHT ABOUT IT, AND THOSE WHO WENT RIGHT BACK DID IT FOR A VERY SIMPLE REASON - NOT BECAUSE THEY FELT THAT THEIR PRESENCE WAS GOING TO

MAKE A LOT OF DIFFERENCE IN THE BIG SCHEME OF THE WAR, AND NOT TO UPHOLD THE TRADITIONS OF THE UMPTEENTH REGIMENT. THEY WENT BACK BECAUSE THEY KNEW THEIR COMPANIES WERE VERY SHORTHANDED AND THEY WERE SURE THAT IF SOMEBODY ELSE IN THEIR OWN SQUAD OR SECTION WERE IN THEIR OWN SHOES, AND THE SITUATION WERE REVERSED, THOSE FRIENDS WOULD COME BACK TO MAKE THE LOAD LIGHTER ON THEM." (An outline of Social psychology, Sherif & Sherif, Harper Brothers, NY, NY, Chap. 5, pp. 159-160)

(Also please note that all references to personnel were masculine gender.)

Status was basically a matter of time. A man could have only a day, a week, and several weeks more time on the line but he automatically had earned your respect. You didn't have to like him personally but you didn't question his longevity status.

I was ready for war. I knew my abilities and limitations. One limiting factor on my total self - I wore glasses. Vision was correctable to Snellen 20/20 but I wore glasses. Good enough to die as a private but not as a commissioned officer. I wore glasses. Yet, as time went by I saw and served with officers with glasses. I can irritate some people - maybe a lot of people - but if disagreement is a form of insubordination, I am guilty as charged. To come from the war and see and hear the arrogance and ignorance of some returning veterans - who received the same pay and in some cases more rank. The post war years with the GI Bills and the VA compensation are rife with examples of recipients with unearned benefits. All veterans!

I was complete in all the training. Our 81mm mortar section in 1942, early '43, could go into action in 30 seconds. The best time at Ft. Benning was 29.++ and that's all these "show" soldiers did. (VIP demos.) I could out shoot 99.9% of any infantryman and outrun 99.00%. I grew up with a rifle, knew how to use, respected, and considered a rifle my best friend. Like a dog it only did as I ordered it. Also the BAR and 1911A1 were a known item due to CMTC and ROTC.

War was like hunting. I was to match wits and wiles with another man in a different uniform in a different country. Like the basic rule of all hunting you looked and watched for movement. And, you put yourself in his shoes. Where would I hide? Which way will he come? Just get ready. This is warfare as I expected and wanted. I didn't want any part of D-Day - any river crossing, and amphibious landing on any scale. How can one hide, dodge, move, duck, shoot in water up to one's neck and offer any kind of defense? You can't! Therefore, to any and all veterans of any water landings, my unconditional respect. You didn't experience war - you lived in and hopefully through hell.

I have been on both sides of the fence in two wars - WWII and Korea - and earned two CIB's as a private and second lieutenant. I have shot at and "dropped" at least two dozen men. (One seldom picks up a kill in war season.) So right or wrong, I have some strong, firm opinions on combat, leadership and men. I have had the privilege and pleasure to have served with some fine men - enlisted and commissioned - and conversely suffered through times with real pricks.

All of you have told and heard your share of war stories. Some gush - some freeze! I don't argue with anyone on how and what he tells or writes. Memories fade or become jaded. But please remember that you and your God, and if you've been in combat you don't question the being of a greater force than you, know the truth. So remember, if your "tales" become too fancy, you will answer someday. How great thou art! Millions of rash promises by prayer when you needed Him and He's never called in His chips. Proof alone?

All death is permanent so how a person went really isn't so important. How he would have liked to go isn't either. It's much more glamorous to go out with a pile of enemy dead in front of your machine gun or with your hands still locked around his neck than falling off a truck. So, when some veterans attempt to equalize their role - no matter how tough or mild - with a line soldier, I get a bit impatient. What percentage of enlistments were made to avoid the draft to the infantry? I suspect a fair percentage. If no one enlists in the infantry, why? Here again, I don't care to argue, You and your God know why.

I have searched for an easy analogy to explain combat. Not too long ago, I had a flash revelation. How about this? Combat is like a house with a dozen rooms. All the rooms vary and some have furniture and luxuries, hot and cold water, good roof, chow, even a fridge. But, in combat every room has a cobra hiding somewhere within the room. So no matter what time of day, what season, what year, you can't relax for death is near. If you are in armor, how many rooms are available. Artillery, engineers, finance, navy, air force, marines? You know and I know that few branches or services have to live twenty-four hours a day with instant death.

Even one's assignment and MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) – what you are trained for decides your exposure to death. I have a personal example for the above comments. A friend of mine was assigned as the sergeant major of a regiment in the 34th Infantry Division. A good division – saw action in Africa and Italy – (France, Germany?) Of course, he worked his way up to the sergeant major slot. I asked him how many casualties were there in regimental headquarters. His answer: one and that was due to an accident (drinking). (Some of the line companies in the regiment lost many men in the moves from Oran to Rome).

Combat is experienced and then learned. All the manuals, histories and treatises in the world can't make you a combat veteran. It's like motherhood. Read and study all you want. Attend every lecture offered, assist at birth, but you are not a mother. (Sad today that a certain percentage of women experiencing motherhood do not become mothers.) And, with medical science today allowing a woman to deliver by Caesarean section rather than the birth canal - what do we have?

What makes a good combat soldier? Is strength a basic criteria? Would glasses prohibit perfection? Right or wrong, I offer a complete and/or accurate description of a combat soldier. He does not have to be 250 pounds, six foot six, and be able to press 400 pounds. If he can run fast, it's a plus, but not a guarantee. Our professional athletes should make good combat soldiers. But would they? Perfections of manhood with

honed ability but...? Why? Because at twenty feet I could cut them in half before they raised the barrel. One factor they lack which if they lived long enough to realize, would make excellent combat soldiers. They have absolutely no sense of self-preservation. Why should they? Powerful, tough, and quick. All the masculine traits of manhood and have used these as a total to benefit themselves. Now, however, comes Private Public. He's five foot six, weighs 135 pounds, and wears glasses, but great up on the street. He can judge a man and/or situation like a computer. And, he has an equalizer; a weapon. He's at home in the dark, as well as high noon. He's street-wise! While the athlete looks at him as a non-threat person, he sees the athlete as a threat to his life. Bang-Bang!

The day finally arrived. I was to be assigned to a unit. I reported to an area with all my gear and waited. There was one other soldier their waiting. About my size and age. We chatted and found that we were both going to C Company of the 19th A.I.B. (with more years and more experience, I realize now or did after this last move, that we had been in a holding area of the division trains.) Today, I understand there is a replacement company at every division level. About time! We may be new, privates, scared and what have you, but we are in the uniform of the United States Army. And in many cases, better soldiers than a lot of men we are joining or replacing.

Alsace-Lorraine is not all that large. It is a northern province of France. Most of my combat condition occurred in this area. So, when the Peep (Armoy called Jeeps - Peeps) came to get us that day in early December we knew we didn't have far to go. Ten-15-20 miles. To C Company we went and both of us were assigned to the second platoon and the same squad. I believe the squad was down to 6 or 7 (10, if full) due to recent casualties. Our assignments in the squad was the #1 and #5 slot. We flipped a coin for the choice and I lost. It was the best loss I ever made. The number one slot is/was the scout position. He always went first. Sometimes this was a break and others no deal. The number five was the BAR slot. We both wanted it. He got it and within a week or so, he was gone.

On checking the battalion history, I'd guess that our reporting date to C Company was around 17-18 December. The mission leading up to the area was to secure and cross the Lauter River into Germany. A mile east of the river was the Siefried Line. I never saw it! Most of the unit pulled back to the town of Schleithal and set up holding positions. It was here that we reported.

The platoon had an outpost east of town. One squad would be on guard duty for a day. Sound power phones connected the squad to the platoon headquarters. Each two hour shift (on two, off four) was in pairs. There was a single large house with a small building about 40 yards east of the main house. East of that was a thick grove of trees. Down to our right was a road that led through the woods to the river. To the left was a hall-like opening with mature trees all around. I was only here for a couple of days, but several incidents I remember like yesterday.

On one shift in mid-day with the sun shining but cold and snow on the ground, I spotted movement in the open area of the horseshoe woods. A beautiful 4 or 5 point

buck. I still had the Springfield rifle and ammo I got while on the temporary duty at Saverne. No license needed and no season. I'd always wondered what a tracer would do, so I carefully laid down - jacked in a tracer round - checked the sights - aimed and squeezed. Boom! Like a laser the tracer headed for the deer's shoulder. But, all of a sudden at a sharp angle up went the tracer. It had touched a tree branches. Away went the deer - good - and the phone rang. What was that shot? One of guys shooting at a deer. How lucky for me I missed. Looking back I'll bet that pretty, quiet, calm, open area was mined to the hilt. I would have died getting my deer.

That night a German patrol came down the road through the woods to our right. One of our tanks was parked down the road. Whether they - the patrol - were after the tank I don't know. If they stopped, listened quietly, they could hear the hum of the radio. Anyway, a brief fire fight and they withdrew. No one hurt on either side and luckily they didn't come our way.

Here we have a tactical practice I don't understand. Germany had lost hundreds of thousands killed and captured on the eastern front. They were taking - accepting teenagers and men over 40 into the Wehrmacht to fill the ranks and yet they kept bleeding themselves to death slowly with the attrition effect of these daily skirmishes west of the Siegfried Line. It was built for defense and if it had been manned properly we would have paid dearly to cross. As Von Clauswitz taught in his doctrines of war; a good offense is a good defense. When so many are lost winning, the attacking unit(s) actually lose. Oh well, what does an old North-South Dakota boy know about war. If war were jackrabbits, ask me. Ha!

The night before we got to the unit an incident happened that I've never heard of another. It could have happened and the guys had nothing to gain or lose by fabricating. And the subject of the story was in the family and the house. I saw her several times. A cute, blond girl about thirteen or so, the guys involved - about four - were all young - 19-20, etc. - American young men. And normal American young men do not become involved or even consider a liaison with a child. Only our "sickos!" They had taken their sacks to a room and gone to bed. No heat in the house so cold. Probably had BS'd a bit because none were asleep. The door opened and in comes this child with a candle and carrying her feathertick. Nothing was said. She made her bed and climbed in. This presence of a child stopped the BS and all finally went to sleep. In the morning she was gone but obviously had a positive story to tell her parents. They were overjoyed and their actions betrayed this mood. They had little to share but insisted on the men having bread, etc. She never came to the room again.

A practice which I only saw once and never heard of elsewhere was started in this area. We were leaving in columns when all weapons were turned each toward the Siegfried Line. Tanks, anti-tank, probably artillery, 50's, 30's and individual weapons. I don't remember any specific setting or timing but all would fire toward Germany. It is doubtful if there was much damage to German units but I'm sure it got their attention. With that temporary roar one would guess an attack is coming. When we quit - we high-tailed it out of the area. The response was late or we could have caught some

shrapnel. It earned the title of "Turkey Shoot."

I see by the battalion history that we were relieved by elements of the 79th Division and we billeted in Hohwiller. Wasn't this the town where Audie Murphy received the C.M.H. for his actions? Must have been before December '44, as that area was pretty much ours after mid-January. Here again, one has the German units coming up to fifty kilometers from the Siegfried Line and losing personnel??? I can't see where and how these little towns were of any tactical advantage. Maybe just a matter of top brass pride with the blood of soldiers as a prize. Same old shit!

I really don't remember any of the towns where we billeted after pulling off the line. Really not important, but I do remember clearly some incidents. One of the best answers to the "WHY" of death came from a young chaplain of the Catholic faith. There were three types (faiths) of religions represented by the Chaplain Services: Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish. Any one could and did offer a non-denominational service of about twenty minutes when possible! Most were young men with the rank of first lieutenant or captain. They had a Jeep with a portable organ on board as their base equipment. Young men foolishly argue religion. I was no exception. I got to know the Catholic Chaplain quite well (name?) and visited with him several times - one-on-one. Later in the war one of the men was killed in Germany. Caught one right under the nose. Killed instantly. This "kid" didn't smoke or drink. Never swore. Never discussed sex or looked at the "femmes." A perfect Christian by definition. So, when I saw the Chaplain after things had quieted down, I asked him why. Here was the perfect Christian and never knew what hit him. Look at some of these other slobs. Why? He looked at me for several seconds and then said, "Did you ever stop to think, Chris, that he was ready? I'm sure that God in his over-all plan for each of us expects each of us to have a full, fruitful life. If interruptions occur they are due to man, not God, and the span is cut short that also is not God's will but man's."

We had Christmas dinner in Hohwiller. Here I must congratulate our Quartermaster Corps on the quality and quantity of food offered during the ETO hostilities. I have no complaints. (Also true in Korea in '51-'52, but transportation, etc. much improved.) Excellent menus and even candy and nuts. This is a good spot to comment on the much maligned SPAM. Granted a prepared meat composed of ground parts but all-in-all nutritious and tasty - if prepared correctly. This is the crux to the reputation of dear old SPAM. Some kitchens and cooks took common sense approaches to preparing and others just served it in the liquid fat that came with the cooking. If the fat was poured or drained off as the meat heated, the result was a dry, ham-like meat. If not, when the span hit a cold mess kit, instant fat (lard). My father who was in WWI wounded four times, Silver Star, used the metal container of SPAM to ship me the overseas packages. They always arrived secure and dry. Sometimes I heard remarks on seeing the SPAM container but all enjoyed the contents. I realize that the personnel involved with the ordering and shipping of material during wars, the logisticians, have a low casualty rate, but they do deserve kudos and accolades for their work. (The success of Desert Storm was mainly a logistics effort.)

The rest and calm lasted until 30 December. The area was now a fluid mess with many units, both U.S. and German, on the move. It was also cold and with a cover of snow. I doubt if the next few days were any more traumatic than any other in war but I have a complete blank of the activities and movements of the unit until we reached a town named Goetzenbruck. In fact, on examining the battalion history closely, I cannot find any reference to what I remember, a move - with vehicles - down a valley to the hills surrounding a large town named Bitche.

It was early in the day when we moved out. From where:? The streets and roads were icy. One tank slid into a retaining wall sideways and blocked the route temporarily. (Our tanks had rubber tracks - the German's were steel.) Ours were more quiet but worthless on ice. Our engineers came up with a solution to this problem by bolting extensions of angle iron to the existing track width which increased the weight distribution and gave better movement on ice. Kind of like the studs that are put in snow tires. At least in some states - hard on concrete.

We drew no fire the entire time we were in the valley. I see by a map in the history book that there was a town named Lemberg about a mile north of Goetzenbruck. I do not remember it and I'm sure we went further than a mile. Bitche was about two plus miles north. I'm sure I saw a sign the few minutes I was on top of the grade. Anyway we parked, dismounted, and our squad formed for a recon patrol. Away we went on a path-trail with snow covering everything. It was still and cold. Here is where the loss of a flip of a coin may have saved my life. One of many incidents that should have told me that I would make it back home alive. I was the number one scout. We have moved several hundred yards when an 88 came screaming over and hit down the hill to our front. (Once you hear one, you'll never forget - fast. No hiss-hiss-hiss of most artillery shells.) Experience from this day would tell me that one shell is only for correction. So you get hit with "Fire for effect!" The next round was about half the distance from the first to the path we were on. (Some FO - forward observer - was watching us. The battery was now making their final adjustments.) We/I never heard the next salvo. You never do!

Like TOT (Time on Target) the rounds hit simultaneously on the path. All behind me. I turned around and a mess. Debris and smoke covered the trail. But, I could see forms on the ground. Four men out of nine were hit. One I remember had a slight shrapnel wound but also the shrapnel had exploded some 06 rounds in the M-1 clip in his ammo belt. A couple of the bullets had pierced the skin in his hip. The #5 man, the BAR position I flipped for, was down. Medics came immediately and we continued on the path. Much wiser now. I reached the top of the grade - military crest, topographical crest, forward slope, whatever, and could see the town. I think Bitche. Someone hollered Let's get the hell out of here. (Actually the Germans had started a flanking movement.) Down the hill I went, fast. So fast that when I nearly lost my balance on a trip wire, I was another 20 feet down the hill when the grenade exploded.

On the bottom of the hill where we started was a medical Jeep with a stretcher and a body. The feet were together and straight up. I saw the Jeep and body once again

10 minutes later and there had been no change. It had to be the BAR man - name? I asked about him at the time and later. Wounded! Bull shit! It was him and he was K.I.A.

It didn't take a genius to know that something was wrong. I had climbed all the way to the top and looked down on the town. No artillery! Where was the German FO who directed the initial hit on the path? We had better bug!

The vehicles left - we walked. Once again no artillery - no small arms. Probably the Germans were on the move at the same time. It was cold and plenty of snow. We reached the approach to the north end of Goetzenbruck. The road turned right and had a fair grade up into town. Whether or not there was a house at this turn I don't remember. I do remember that what was left of the squad (5) was considered as a rear guard at the junction. Five cold, scared riflemen. Against what? Nothing but rifles! Stupid. Someone realized this and we entered the town with the unit. We quartered in a house, covered up the windows (it was still daylight) and settled down for the night. What an odor we had in the tight, closed room. All of us were wearing the new shoe pacs. Leather uppers and rubber bottoms with a gray flat wool pad insert. They were warm and a blessing but they were not made for a three mile hike. My feet were a mass of blisters. We also had the cushion sole socks by now as an issue. All were off and hanging to dry. Feet odor (Jalaric acid), pad and body perspiration, cigarette smoke - you name it - quite an odor. It made me a bit nostalgic to see the socks and boots that I helped test just six months before. Our vehicles were in the area so I went to the half-track and got a pair of boots. No more pacs. I had found some German shoe polish and I applied this liberally, several coats, to the boots. Remember, this was still the Brown Army Boot in 1945. It helped waterproof. Smelled like kerosene! The boots were 10 inches high with a top wrap around leather with buckles. Actually, a pair of shoes with the leather wrap. German boots later in the war were similar, but had canvas top.

I'm hard on continuity of thought but it is time for a story. How many of you vets ever heard of the "boot" story during the Italian Campaign? Certainly could be true. There was an American FO located in a small cave on a shale hill in Italy. In the daytime one would slip and slide getting to the cave so all felt safe and secure at night. One night - black as usual - the FO felt something lightly touch his boot. Or did he? Were there snakes in Italy? Anyhow all of a sudden he sense someone was in front of him. A voice said, GI! Here stood a Gurkha - the British soldiers from Nepal. Proud, Strong, excellent soldiers. They view their assignment as an honor for life and competition is keen to be accepted. How did he get there? who knows. What he was doing when the FO initially felt the light touch on his boots was feeling to see if leather or canvas. If leather, GI., if canvas, German. Was his knife called a Kris? Whatever, the FO lived because of the leather top. (I understand the FO flipped his wig and totaled out mentally.)

The Germans started their attack in the wee hours of the morning. Actually, the town was surrounded, but we didn't know it. We dressed and moved out to the NW edge of town. It was cold! We quartered in a large two story house. Across the street

was a one story house (found out later a duplex). With a partner, I went on the first guard shift. I opened a window to see and hear better and stood aside. Further out in an open area was another house - probably 100-150 yards. Here they come! One voice - CO or officers - was screaming 5 and 80 Company. Eighty-fifth company! I noticed a flashlight moving in the trees. Our flashlights were tubular - the Germans rectangular with the lens and light on the flat side of the case. I was still carrying the Springfield and without thinking, I snapped a shot at the light. It fell and the screaming quit. Did I hit or scare? Our shift was over about now and we were relieved. The Germans knew where we were but no action started. It was soon daylight and the odds changed. During the next shift one of the men heard a shuffling in the house (the other half). He sneaked out and threw a grenade into the room - nothing. But, when daylight I understand a German walked out and surrendered. No wounds but the grenade had blown a piece off his boot. Just not his time.

The Germans had dug in - or tried - outside the houses we controlled. One was still working on his position in daylight. He couldn't go anywhere and wasn't. One of the squad leaders crawled out and got him to surrender. I thought at the time, how stupid. The guy was no threat and couldn't go anywhere. Why risk your life on this? The squad leader received a battlefield commission and stayed in the army after the war. He retired as a BG. Congratulations to him, but I hope he didn't receive some citation for his actions. I still think stupid. There was an incident a bit later that day that deserves a citation.

Three Germans had walked in and surrendered. A S/Sgt. had met them on the street and was ready to move back with them. I was standing beside the lone house near a stairwell. A mortar round hit right in the middle of the group. I think a 120 mm. All died. A touch of war - why would a unit kill their own men? Because they gave up? Just one of a million questions of war that never have an answer. Maybe never will.

Elsewhere in the town some of the attacks were fierce and men died on both sides. The back of the attackers was probably broken that first night. The Germans didn't withdraw but were so decimated they just held. Our assault gun went out and shelled the lone house in the field. We got some POW's out of this. For the next day or so we watched and waited. About the third day the platoon got a call that mail was in. Units had broken through south of town. Big deal! I'll go get it. Away I went to the Company Headquarters. There was a rock wall on the north side of one street that gave some protection. I got the mail and started back. I guess one of the German FO's didn't care for my blatant disregard of common sense. He called for a fire mission. The first round was behind me but I knew a correction would be made. I had two or three bags of mail to slow me down but I took off wide open for the end of the street. The rounds followed me up the street. They were good - the Germans. In Korea the Chinese and/or NK didn't have this ability. The Germans were/are good. I got back with the mail but screw it - never again.

I did not secure the house the night we moved to the NW section of town. I

assumed someone did. So, about the third day I/we were quite surprised to have an elderly man appear in the kitchen. He was speaking German and between all of us linguists we finally decided he was asking if it was safe to go out to a well near the street and get some water. How in the hell did we know! Any movement up 'till then had brought a mortar round. But, the uniform is held in respect and a soldier is infallible. We agreed it was okay - go ahead. The poor old fart goes out and barely starts to get his water and in comes a round. They followed him to the house. If looks could kill - we'd all be dead. Hell, what do we know.

A very pleasant incident happened next. There were more people in the basement. Up came a pretty young girl. She was 16. In every group there are the self-appointed lovers and experts on female behavior and needs. Immediately, one of these started on the girl. You could see she was frightened. I was trying to shave and had a broken piece of a mirror. I couldn't get it to stand. The lover finally grabbed the girl and said, here's my sweetheart. The girl said, You not my sweetheart - he is. She came over to me and held the mirror until I finished shaving. I can still remember her name. I hope she lived through the war and had a happy life. Her name: Juliet Borgmann. Under different circumstances? A bit too young? Dream on!

The history states that we pulled out twelve days after our first commitment. It didn't seem that long. A couple of days did, however. A unique incident happened one day. It was clear, sunny, and cold. I had gone to the half-track parked on the south side of town to get some clothes and cigarettes. I heard this roar and looked up over my shoulder to see a 109 at roof level - doing 80-90 knots - speed just above stall level. We, the pilot and I - were within 20-30 feet of each other. He raised one hand - I acknowledged - and he was gone. He did hit the throttle and point her up soon after he passed overhead. At least he could report one GI and one half-track at his briefing. Ha!

The area around the town was still quite fluid. Although I think the Germans had paid greatly for their actions, they continued to probe. I know they lost many men in a wooded area to the west of our positions in the early days. We could see the activity during the day and knew they were there. How many? TOT was called on the area. TOT means Time on Target. Here every piece of artillery of all sizes concentrates on the target area. The distance of each battery or tube and size is all calculated so that all fire at different times but the time of flight ends simultaneously on the target. A real bastard if you're receiving. This TOT lasted about 30 seconds and we could hear the cries for medic and help a half mile away. Ft. Benning used to put on a demonstration for the "dignitaries" called the Mad Minute. Every weapon available to an infantry regiment would concentrate on an area. Loud, effective and scary. The artillery would use some time-fire and had panels on the ground to emulate troops. The panels jumped and moved under the effect. I heard the cost was \$40,000/minute. It is no longer offered. Wonder why. This "treat" to me was in May '50 as a second lieutenant taking a month's refresher course prior to Korea.

Back to 1945 and the war. One day we got orders to move out of town to a wooded area and dig in. Defense! Why? From what? It was cold and snowy and I had

started to wear the boots with the German black polish. Somewhat waterproof but not cold proof like the pacs. The night was cold! I kept my feet from freezing by continually moving my toes. I couldn't bang the soles together because of the noise. Daylight was welcome. There was some mortar and artillery fire and small arms from both sides. We had company in the area as elements of the 36th Texas Division were in the area. The history alludes to the 179th Regiment. But, if I remember correctly, the 157, 179 and 180 Regiments were part of the 45 Infantry Division, also, Oklahoma and New Mexico National Guard.

To our right, east, was a town named Althorn. One morning the assault gun was assigned to try and get a quick look at the town. The CO of the vehicle was Lt. Alvin Sweitzer. A fine officer! I was to work with him many times after this first episode. He came up in a clearing - snow - and some grade to the hill. So, with the rubber tracks he had to be careful not to slide into the woods. It would have been a mess to get him out. He asked for volunteers and away I went. Anything to change the scenery and get my feet warm. We (four of us) reported to him and were sitting down from the vehicle about twenty feet waiting to go. Whether or not the German machine gun could see us or the vehicle, I doubt it, but opened up on the sound. I don't know. It opened up about 20-30 feet to our left and started traversing to the right. The snow and dirt were flying and we sat stunned. What the hell? Where to go? As quick as it started the firing stopped - about ten feet to go. At the same time Lt. Sweitzer received information on his radio to cancel the patrol as other units were already in town. I ask myself now, why did the MG40 quit ten feet to our left? Another hint I missed?

This "outing" could have been one of our last acts. I remember nil of any action. According to the BN history we pulled out of Goetzenbruck early in the morning of the 12th. A short rest and a short day. I hope I had time to clean my rifle and check equipment. About 2200 that evening we were called out and on our way. This area was very fluid for several months. One could compare it to a small Battle of the Bulge. Granted I don't think the quality of soldier or training or experience was as great as the SS and Panzers used in the Bulge, but war is war. I heard that the following action was considered one of the greatest defensive battles of the ETO????

We marched to a town named Niederbetschdorf, arriving there in the dark. This town was due west of our objective about three miles. Another town, Rittershoffen, was a little bit north of the route and about 1½ miles northeast. The older members of the company, platoon and squad were quite familiar with the area as they had moved through all three towns a month before on the way to the Siegfried Line area.

We headed a bit south and then east to the advantage of the heavy woods and were in position to attack about the time the sun came up. Due south of Hatten. My memory of this time is brief. Small arms, mortars, tanks, etc., all were involved. We were in reserve. I do remember clearly that just before we started forward, I was able to have my morning elimination. (Paper was carried under the webbing in the helmet liner.) Also, the barrages of the 88's which luckily in our area fell in the open fields. During one heavy hammering, one of the GI's stands up and starts walking to the rear.

He was like a zombie. He never looked sideways, ducked at a close one, just walked slowly. Here was a true case of shell shock or today's terms: PTSD - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

The command pulled back. Then went west a bit and then started the attack on the west end of Hatten. Friendly units of the 79th or 42nd Division were holding this end and gave us some cover. There was a big two story house by the railroad in this area. A depot? Anyway, we reached this and stayed here several hours. I found some strawberry jam in the basement. Delicious! Outside was a mess. Tanks moving! Tanks burning! We were losing all our tanks from flanking fire about 500 yards away from Rittershoffen. Some tankers finally realized this and some tanks turned 90 degrees and shelled the front areas of the town. I think they did some good. As for the tanks knocked out, they and the dead tankers stayed there until March before we once again held the area. A real mess.

Late in the afternoon we got orders to move. Not much small arms due to friendly troops holding the houses but mortar and 88 barrages. Just before we reached the town the CO, a Captain Murphy, was hit. Apparently he had a bit of a tummy and I heard one lieutenant kid him that if he'd been a bit flatter, the shrapnel would have missed. I remember moving along a rock wall about three feet high until called back to the platoon. We got into town and our first house. About twenty feet away was a good sized barn. Our guard was set up and we started the night. All-in-all probably the last quiet night for me. As a young man I could sleep the sleep of the dead. Hear, see, smell nothing. I awoke once to see the squad members at a table with a candle. I was cold and my eyes felt gritty. I asked what in the hell was up. I was told to look to my left. I did and I could see the outside and feel the cold. A large chunk of shrapnel had blown a big complete hole in the outside framing with dust, splinters and plaster scattered all over. What had I done? Sat up, looked, grunted and lay down again.

It was clear the next morning and cold. A tank destroyer pulled up near the barn. Was the TD white? The staff sergeant was a black soldier, the first I'd seen. He was laughing and smiling as they had just met and won a scrap with a German SP. I believe the TD was a M-18 with the new 90mm rifle. Could do 65 MPH but armor was nil so had speed only in its favor. He left and I never saw him again. One can't win them all.

The air was acrid from all the TNT exploding - both theirs and ours. Early in the war maybe the German TNT was more pure, but in later years I don't believe the quality control was as good. Why? I could tell you which side was shelling by the color of the smoke from the explosion. The German TNT was much blacker than ours. Ours was more gray. Both killed, however.

I was on guard duty that second night, 14 January, with a guy from Oklahoma. He had been with the division since its inception. We had not been on guard too long when a fire fight started up the street. Yells and loud footsteps came closer to the barn. I was standing back from the door and my buddy further in by a stall. Four Germans stopped about 30 feet away behind the outhouse. They were in a tight group and

discussing what next. I had no grenades so I kneeled down to steady the BAR - armed - squeezed the trigger. The open bolt on the BAR went forward with a "clunk." Too slow to fire the round. The noise seemed deafening to me but the group showed no change. I was helpless. If they, the German patrol, had headed for the barn, kaput - "allus ist tot," etc. They went north toward the more populated part of town.

Daylight came slowly and certainly welcome. I had removed the magazine in the BAR and been working the action to hopefully loosen it up. Otherwise, just a 20 pound clip. The mortar barrage started about 50 yards from the barn. Adjustments were made and we realized they were after the barn. About the time we realized this we leaped forward into one of the stalls. I landed on my back, and my buddy on his stomach. The roof disappeared and shrapnel was singing everywhere. Something kicked me in the right thigh. No pain - just a good kick and then numbness. My buddy complained about his back. A piece of fragment had pierced his ammo belt, overcoat, fatigue jacket, underwear, and broke the skin on his back. Without all the padding ----? We were relieved and company headquarters was notified. It was now only about 0700 in the morning of the 15th. The medics didn't get to our location until the middle of the afternoon. By then the leg was quite stiff. They started carrying me and incoming shells started falling. I had them stop and I hobbled along with them faster than they could carry me.

That night I got out in a half-track used as an ambulance. Nowhere was one safe from observation. I heard later that we were the first and last out that night and the next night the half-track hit a mine and all were killed. (German teller mines had 14 pounds of TNT - U.S. about 7+. They do everything in a big way.) I stayed until dawn in Niederbetschdorf. Got a chance to see how the rear echelon lives while men are dying a couple of miles away. I heard later that one of the first JU 262's shot down in the war was by a cook in this town. Story goes that he pointed and held the single 50 ahead of the 262 and it ran into the rounds. True? The next three weeks or so was on another planet. If you want a break in a war, don't get yourself KIA - just WIA. Hot food, a bed, pretty girls (nurses), and little noise. Heaven!

The next day an ambulance backed up to the door. On the left-hand side were two stretchers with feet uncovered. Both sets of feet were snow white. After I got in the ambulance I saw that the rest of the bodies had dark skin. My second and third look at black soldiers. I'm sure they lost their feet. The ride to the 21st General Hospital took over an hour, maybe two. One has no idea of the direction or location of the hospital from inside an ambulance. I found out later and after the war, checked with some French major, as to the location. The 21st was located in Merricourt, France, probably 25-30 miles east of Epinal and near the Colmac pocket held by the Free French. It was a converted building only in the sense of type of patient. From originally a place for the mentally insane to a hospital for U.S. wounded. My folks were elated to hear that my wounds were minor, but I was out of the cold and off the line. My mother saved the telegram from Washington, D.C. which read as follows: "Regret to inform you your son Private Keith Christensen was slightly wounded in action fifteen January in France.

Mail address follows direct from hospital with details. Signed: J A Ulio, the Adjutant General." The address card was dated 1 Feb 45 and stated I was making normal improvement from penetrating wound right thigh. You bet I was making normal improvement and loving every minute of it.

I guess that even today in war surgery that fragments or bullets are best left alone unless endangering the heart, spine, or other organ. Such was my case, so I remember an operation room the next day - five tables spread like a star - and next-next. Just like you see or saw in MASH from heavy casualties. All they did was cut a slot of 1-1½ inches and clean out fibers, etc. - sterilize - and close. (It was 1984 before we opened the leg again. Another story.

A very common anesthetic used at this time and I guess even today was sodium pentathol, also known as truth serum. The Germans used a drug with similar effects called Scopolamine - an alkaloid of the night shade plant. Very often used as a pain reliever in childbirth. The actions called twilight sleep. Both, however, had a control effect on the mind in that when the drug effect approached the hazy line between consciousness and unconsciousness the patient could still hear and respond to the spoken word or sounds. But, the active mind had lost control over the responses. In other words, one could not lie. There was no reflection in the voice and the talk was slow and deliberate. We saw many examples of this effect as the men would awaken from the anesthetizing effect. I was told that I said nil but was hanging on to the male appendage to protect and save. Smart Boy!

I'll never forget the day that the patient next to me was wheeled in and deposited in his bed. He was out cold. About the time he arrived chow came and we received our trays. That day was Spam, dehydrated potatoes, white bread, and fruit cocktail for dessert. (Now, in any group you always have a wise guy, the jester, the story-teller, etc. This ward of 30 or 40 beds was no exception.) As we were eating, the patient started to stir and mumble. Over came the jester. "Hi, man, how's she going? How are you feeling, etc." The guy answered slowly in a flat voice and then asked, what's for chow? The jester answered, steak and fries. The guy's mouth actually drooled in anticipation the jester then asked if he wanted some. Yah, man! Open your mouth - mouth opened and in goes a chunk of Spam. It was eaten with relish. Then, open your mouth for some fries, in went the dehydrated potatoes. Such ecstasy! About this time a nurse happened by, she saw what was going on and screamed at the jester to back off. Then she read him the riot act for his stupidity. It appears that in this semi-conscious state nothing really works too well with the voluntary and involuntary muscles and the guy could have choked to death. Luckily for the jester after the guy woke up and heard what had happened. He was not ambulatory for a while. He would have killed the jester.

The nurses and doctors were all angels. No BS, pure sincere medical dedication. They practiced empathy, not sympathy and seemed to have time and patience for anything. And, in this ward there were the complainers, the mother's boys, the self-appointed lovers, etc. One thing we all had in common was colds - coughs, sneezing,

etc. Probably some cases of pneumonia. Penicillin was just coming into the medical arsenal and was available and used at the 21st General. I heard that the cost at that time was \$7.50 for one million units. This brings the sense of humor and deviousness of the American GI. Even in a hospital setting, probably in pain, the GI keeps all avenues open.

Because of respiratory problems and excess coughing, the nurses were very generous with the use of terpin hydrate. Every evening their carts would have half ounces of the compound ready for use. You just asked! This was my first exposure to codeine sulfate - the narcotic in the compound that affects the cough center. In my case, however, and even today, I get constipated, but quick. Instant bricks! Here comes the ingenuity of the GI. One of the ambulatory patients would get the nurse's attention and another would then steal as many of the half-ounce glasses as possible. The nurse would soon notice this and would threaten punishment if - - -! No way. Usually there was a trace of a smile on her face so we knew we were home free. After she left her rounds we had our "drinks" and the temporary euphoria. I soon quit "drinking" when I correlated the codeine with the constipation.

At the end of the ward was a young kid encased in a total cast. His eyes, nose, mouth was open and I guess some leeway for the body functions. He was going to make it. He had been standing on one side of a concrete wall when an 88 hit. His body was perforated with concrete, shrapnel, dust, dirt, etc. Penicillin kept him alive. He was in good spirits and always smiling (what you could see) because he found out that the telegram informing his parents of his wound read - slightly wounded. How his mother wouldn't have to worry.

I was using crutches for a short while and learned how to really go. Each ward received a bulletin of the week's activities. There were about twelve wards in the hospital and each week three different shows were rotated through the wards. We found early that if we wanted to see them all we had to do was circulate around the wards. One night we entered a ward from the back end. A light was shining at the far end. We were talking in normal conversation when we approached the light. Here was a single nurse busy with records. She looked up and her face clouded. She asked, where the hell do you think you're going? We're looking for Ward ???. Well, gentlemen, this is Ward ??? and it's a restricted ward. Spinal meningitis only! Get the hell out of here! We got! Another time we entered a ward which apparently was head injuries only. We were there a few minutes getting directions when I noticed a guy in pajamas and bathrobe. He had two feet, two arms, and I could not see any bandages. What the hell? He was standing with his head slightly turned to the right. All of a sudden he turned his face to the left. Wow! Somehow his wounds had caused the entire left side to move forward. His left ear was forward toward his left eye. Did the entire ear move forward and leave the ear channel? Man! And I felt guilty with just a little piece of shrapnel in my thigh.

As I stated earlier in the book how the age range (18-42 and later 18-38) included skills of questionable legality. It was no problem to find some skilled in padlocks in the

ward. At the end of our ward was a storage area for bread and gallon cans of fruit cocktail. The bread odor would permeate throughout the ward each time the storage was filled. (GI bread was white and light.) Our expert would wait until lights out and then quietly pick the lock. We would take just enough of the bread and usually a gallon can of cocktail to eat. The can was then hidden. We got caught, of course, but once again the trace of a smile showed no penalty.

I had and had had a plantar wart on my right heel. Whenever my feet got tired or wet from perspiration the wart would burn. I asked about this and the doctor said that casualties were too heavy at the time to help. An aid man insisted he could kill it. To this day I'm sure he used what he said was a carbolic acid pencil in the area. No doctor or pharmacist I know has ever heard of one. It was soft, a light yellow, and spread easily. Probably a petroleum base using salicylic acid as the medium to destroy the wart. A couple of weeks after I was back on the line with the old outfit I felt an irritation. On checking, here was a solid piece of skin about 40 mm in diameter and 2 mm thick at the center tapering to a thin edge. A series of various size holes were left in my heel where the wart had been. It never came back. What was the pencil?

Probably about the first week in February, I was pronounced medically fit. I agreed! One can only take the luxuries of illness so long. An analogy might be comparing the three weeks to a vacation or leave. One knows there is an end so let's get going. Also, I wondered what was left of the old outfit. I really wasn't in any hurry to get back on the line but I was healed and that's where I was heading. I believe that I didn't go back through the same route of Epinal and then the depots to get back to the outfit. Molsheim sticks in my mind. This town was north and closer to the Alsace area - near Saverne. Here I met and visited with a member of the 442 Regiment - the Nisei. He had been wounded before I met him in November and was on his way back to his outfit when I met him at Epinal and now had been wounded again and was going back to his outfit. The United States Government and the United States Army can never right or justify the treatment of these people. There has never been a politician in our history that was astute or intelligent enough to ever evaluate the true allegiance of any individual or group - and there never will be. We have minority groups, the American Indians and the Afro-American, who have felt and experienced the same arrogance - ignorance but these groups were maligned before my birth. I cannot undo history but I can comment on the present. They deserve more! I understand token adjustments have been made but with proud people, vindication means more than plain dollars. With the U.S. Army - did any other unit receive the same number of suicide missions during WWII? I think not!

The unit was quartered in a town named Freidolsheim when I reported back. There were a few new faces in the squad. You get briefed quickly on the missing and then get to work. One concern I always had in the Alsace area, I don't know if I was alone, were the civilians. They were never any trouble but at time some, men, seemed too interested in our conversation. Not that privates knew anything of the pending "picture" - just too interested. And, if you checked the surnames - all were of German

origin. So, I tried to be careful whenever one was in the area. The CO was now the CO I refer to as CO, Captain Jack R. DeWitt. He had assumed command on 25 Jan and promoted on 1 Feb. On 8 Feb the company moved to Landersheim. (History). The history also alluded to my return in the following manner: During this period the battalion received ninety-nine new reinforcements in addition to the lightly wounded, who returned to us after short periods of medical care. All the quiet, horse shit training and rest area living came to an end on 18 Feb. We were moving up again.

C Company ended up in a town named Ettendorf as the reserve of the battalion. I honestly don't remember staying in this town. All my memories are of Lawalk. Being in reserve sounds good but actually in fluid situation is the worse assignment one can get. You are used for every job available while the front units hold a drive on the assigned objective. As soon as trouble erupts - here comes the reserve. In defense, the reserve unit had the bulk of all patrols. So, that's why I remember Lawalk maybe for this reason. We were in a large house on the edge of town. Nothing between us but open space and the Germans in the next town. After a couple of days one of the cooks was sent up to "open our rations." The CO thought they could and should be doing more than BSing back in "reserve." I heard later that they, the cooks, got a bronze star for volunteering to come up under fire to cook for the men. Ha! Hope it's not true. Quite common, however, as the cooks trained in the States with the unit (Division) after its initial formation. I would like to see a study of medals vs. time with the unit and I'm sure that replacements would not fare well.

I see that at 0100 20 Feb I went on a patrol. We moved out and after reaching the objective, we laid down in a star position and waited and listened. The sounds of night are always clearer and seem magnified. The "cough" of a mortar would get your attention. Whose - where - for whom? One can hear the hiss of the round at night. Where is it headed? Is it for you? Have we been spotted? We got back okay - objective completed.

An incident happened a few days after I was there. It has happened since - both in the ETO and Korea. Wherever it happens, it's wrong. Men have died for the "cause." The "cause" - the GD VIPs who the rear echelon top brass bring up near the line to show off and flex their pretty muscles. We were scheduled for a company night attack on the German occupied town, Bitschoffen. The history doesn't show exactly what day the attack was originally scheduled but it was postponed one day due to a VIP. I don't blame the man but I've always thought of the one day delay resulting in deaths due to his visit. The VIP, Henry Cabot Lodge III. He probably came up to a secluded protected OP and looked through a BX (?) scope. They were 60 x 150 mm and gave one a better view than most patrols. His visit set the night attack back one day later.

We got the day off. Down the street was a large factory with the warehouse walls pretty well shot up. The office part was intact. Other than no windows and empty of all equipment, it was intact. In one room was a chest of drawers. In a business office? We touched it and knew something was wrong. It was cold to the touch. And heavy! Ah, ha! It had to be some kind of safe. We rolled it over to the

window for more light. There were no key holes or gaps. However, we discovered the middle drawer (5 in all) showed a black line gap between the quarter round edge and the drawer proper. Pushing and pulling all of a sudden the edge swung up and back. Underneath were a series of holes. Ah, ha! But what was the combination? About this time we heard the voices and footsteps. Looking down about 1½ stories we saw two men in civilian clothes speaking French. FFU - Free French Underground. They hated the Germans, most for personal reasons and would resent our presence. We waited until they entered, and then jumped about 10-12 feet. (A young man then.) We hit the ground running and looked back. They were in the window shaking their fists. They didn't shoot and we didn't have to shoot back. As usual the GI was out of line. One hears many stories about personal incidents during the war. Some quite profitable. I wonder if I had it all to do over again if I would have done what I kiddingly have said many times: Next time I'll shoot half days and loot the other half.

Americans really don't understand the meaning of true hate. This is good! We bruise easily and are capable of blind, uncontrolled insanity, but the rage doesn't last. We do not possess (a few?) a warriors faith in the existence of a "Valhalla." I have heard stories, however, of a few GIs that liked to kill and would go out on their own at night to attempt an ambush of the enemy. Somewhere they flipped but to each his own. The Free French has in most cases experienced the cruelty of someone in a German uniform - probably the SS or early in the war the waffen SS. (Insane assholes) Their hate was ingrained and daily life was the medium of getting even. (I believe they were also referred to as the Maguis.) The Free French! Little did I know that in coming months I was to experience this blind hate of retribution. Very, very personal.

The night attack took place on 26 Feb after a one day delay. (The VIP). It did not go well. I can't help but believe that the "day off" we had, alerted the Germans to the fact that something was up. We were not lead platoon but initially the company moved along slowly. It was clear which helped both sides. We would stop and go. Machine gun fire - theirs - started up and then artillery and mortar. Some units were pinned down. This all hit when we were in last year's cornfield. We were sure that the little trough between the stalk rises were mined but one couldn't walk on the rises the troughs were mined. (Shu and Bouncing Bettys.) One lead squad leader stepped on a Shu mine and when it threw him in the air he fell on another. He was killed instantly. Needless to say, the entire attack was blunted and it would soon be daylight. The company withdrew. The next morning a patrol under a white flag went out and recovered the body. No trouble. The Wehrmacht usually respected the flag of truce. We were in this area for about another week but other than patrols (which are a big war for the patrol members) most days were quiet and routine. We stayed in our sector and the Germans in theirs. Even artillery slowed down.

Our next sector was in a town named Schweighausen. This town was about a mile west of Hagenau, a large town in both hands. We got off to a bad start, however, as one clown shot a stork off a roof top. Storks are a good omen of good luck, fertility, so we were on the "list." A good sized creek was north of us and a destroyed factory in

that area. The Germans were in and around the factory. We could see anything and everything from our location but patrols were sent out and across the water. Men died - for what? If the S & G2's had to accompany all the patrols they initiate, I wonder how many we would have? Less, I'm sure! I remember one patrol we watched from a church next to our position. They got in trouble and were pinned down. We couldn't see the German position but the dust and tracers indicated about where. So, I open up with a BAR. It was less than 1000 yards so maybe I did some good. The patrol did withdraw. About then I got one of my "analysis" ideas. Could I fire the BAR on 550 cycle? Two choices of automatic were available - 350 and 550. On 350 I could fire the BAR as a semi-auto. Why not 550. Dumb! Dumb! I was facing the factory through a large window. (Glass gone) I set the selection lever on 550, wrapped the sling tight and set my feet, aimed and held the trigger. Like slow motion the first few went out the window, then the plaster started flying on the wall - up to the ceiling - I was being knocked over and down. The magazine holds 20 rounds and at 550/minute, this all took place in about 2 seconds as 550 is 9.16/second. I never tried it again. Someone on active duty should try this today. Get a big man - weight should help. Ha!

Next to the church was a corrugated steel hut. It had dirt piled up about half way around so gave protection on the floor if a shell were to hit. Not from the top, however. It was a storage house for a house next to the church. We didn't know this at the time. We set a guard schedule and settled down. Near the door was a large wooden cask. It was about 3/4 full of straw or so we thought. It was a handy dump for our ration cans and crap so was filling up fast. After a couple of days in comes a woman of about 40. She sees the cache and turns and glares at us. Then she starts throwing the cans etc. out. Busy-busy. Then the straw. We went over to watch as she reached in and took a cover with short handles out of the cache. She reached in and comes up with a handful of - we recognized shredded cabbage. She tasted, tasted, turned to us and we could see that she had calmed down. She left! It dawned on us that she had originally thought we had contaminated the year's supply of sauerkraut. She had re-packed the kraut with the lid and straw and we respected her supply. No more garbage and junk in the cache.

From the same house an older woman came out one day with a like-new 1927 A1 Thompson. With help we finally understood that the SS had thrown it in her cesspool. She had retrieved and cleaned and now wanted the Americans to have it. Sounded good. The cesspool was used about a week or two later when we pulled out and I dumped machine gun belts and hand grenades into the slop. All German!

I don't remember why I went down a road east from our position. There was no cover and open to observation, but we went. About 500 yards from the hut near a road junction, the engineers (whose?) had collected and stacked a large supply of teller mines. These are anti-tank mines and are armed with 13-14 pounds of TNT. It struck me as odd that the engineers had stacked so many in one pile. At least a 1000 pounds of TNT was in the pile. A couple of days later - without any warning - bang goes one of the piles. The ground shook and we felt the concussion in the air wave. Not too bright!

I did learn something this summer, however, related to exploding duds and similar ordnance. Fifty years ago we called it sympathetic detonation. In essence you would use one explosive (a stable one like TNT or primer cord) to explode another. All explosives are to varying degrees unstable so if enough force is applied to one, both will explode. This summer I learned (1997) that this is not exactly true. The explosive used to set off the ordnance must be equal to or greater than the force waves of the ordnance. For example: TNT or primer cord would set off ammonium nitrate, but ammonium nitrate would probably not set off TNT. I'll get in trouble for this but explosives are like the female animal - there is always an exception to the norm.

I remember a time in the states before I went overseas where we were assisting a lieutenant on a demonstration of explosives. We wrapped a half pound block of TNT with a triple turn of primer cord to insure a 102% detonation and the lieutenant alluded to this over the PA system. Fire in the hole - boom - at the base of the post was half a pound of TNT powder. (We couldn't do that again if we tried.)

These days spent in this area were probably the easiest I had in the war. A half mile away men died, but in our little world, it was a routine duty. We knew something was up. This couldn't last. You can't win a war waiting or sitting. Finally, we got orders to move. The Texas 36th Division had cleared Hagenau and was moving north. The command was near Hatten for a period of time. The history book mentioned how some made a quick trip to the area and described the total destruction. I don't remember going but I do remember all the tanks strewn about the field. (Both ours and theirs). Remember that some bodies had been in the tanks since January and this was mid-March. We followed the same route as in December and entered Schleital. Standing on the street waving and crying was the same family where we had billeted. And the same twelve year old girl. The next morning we moved out and some action remains very clear in my mind.

We pulled through the infantry unit which the history states was responsible for the carnage to be seen. A German supply column had been caught on a valley road and annihilated. I always thought the Air Corps was responsible. Catch the front and rear of a column and destroy so no movement was possible and then methodically destroy everything in between. I'll never forget the cries of the wounded horses. Dead men are no problem, but animals. Also, a few stupid die-hards would fire on our column. A turret would traverse and boom - no more MG34. As we came up on the flat again - out of the woods - here was a town named Rohrbach. I don't agree with the history at all in this attack. We supposedly lost three men and raced through town. Twenty rear guard were supposed to have surrendered. BS!

The road turned right after we got in the open. I noticed movement to the left of the last house to our front. The CO, Captain DeWitt, was in a track a couple vehicles up. I got his attention and pointed. Whatever, we dismounted and started for the buildings. I could see the AT gun to my front. The history says it fired at us and was knocked out by our tanks. I saw no evidence of it being hit or even manned as I approached. About this time the "movement" I saw started flanking fire. They never

were suppressed in any way to my knowledge. A new replacement was to my left and two paces back. The crack of the bullets was deafening. He hollered, grabbed his face and fell down. Here a bullet had hit parallel to his cheeks and went cleanly through the bridge of his nose just below the eyes. I never saw him again but assume he was okay.

I got to the first house and ran through to the attached barn or stable. There were cries and screams coming from an open door to beneath the ground. Some GI may have thrown a grenade, but since I could cover the door and wanted a crack at the "movement," I took a barrel for support, steadied the BAR, and away she went. Why the "movement" hadn't rushed the building to get shelter I don't know and why now they would get up and run one or two at a time, I don't know. Some I hadn't even seen. However, they did and I had a field day. I carried eight magazines for the BAR with 20 rounds in each. As the "movement" would get up and run, I would aim one squeezed shot and let a couple follow. All of this was within 200 yards. They kept getting up and running and I kept dropping them. As I shot, the cries and screams grew louder from the shelter. After three or four minutes of this turkey shoot, nothing was moving. I waited a while and then rejoined the squad. One guy had been with me during all this firing.

Our track came up and I got more ammo to reload the magazines. There was one POW near this house. Our platoon leader, Lt. Robert Lingle, had captured - convinced him to surrender. Lt. Lingle had just turned inside a door in an outside wall and the German was standing there with his hands on a grenade. Lt. Lingle spoke fluent PA Dutch and talked the guy into surrendering.

We mounted up and started forward. There were trees and we cleared the crest of a hill when all hell broke loose. The Germans were below in the bunkers on the Siegfried Line. Our vehicles backed up - lost some - but the 20 mm would hit the trees and shrapnel was flying like razor blades. Tracks have no top cover in the rear and only 3/8 inch armor plate so 20 mm rounds of any type are deadly. We jumped out and deployed further back. All but the driver and squad leader. The driver came out okay, but the squad leader was seriously wounded. I never saw him again. This is the same man that was hit in the back near me in the barn in Hatlen.

The history alludes to one hell of a fire fight taking the town. Outposting that night. I remember nothing of any of this period. The next day we moved out and I do remember being in reserve. Last company in the column. Here again it was in the early p.m. of the day that I remember clearly again. Why?

As I just stated, I remember nothing from the time. I expended 160 rounds with the BAR in the initial attack until about noon the next day. We were now on the edge of some woods about 1500 yards SW of Germersheim. The area was flat with and without trees and the Rhine River about a mile east. Excellent observation for both forces but they were there first. We were still in reserve. About this time a large German ammo dump blew up. How many pounds or tons of explosives I don't know, but we could feel the concussion in the air waves and the ground vibrating. The history states that four were killed and 15 wounded in our unit in the point. We got orders to mount up

and move.

We entered the town and moved to the right flank of most of the buildings.. One building was at least 3-4 stories and probably the walls four feet thick. The windows were rectangular slots with the window opening angling out. One sniper could have held up a company. We dismounted. The homes were large and elaborate in our area. On the street ahead was a dead GI. What outfit? We were receiving some fire so got the hell off the street. A large home with the door locked with a large iron bar and padlock was to our front. I took the BAR and blew the lock and hasp off the wall. In we went for a time. Later, down the street of the next block, we entered another house. Some of the buildings were burning from the artillery strikes. We held that night and in the morning. A company of Germans - branch? - gave up. Our Lt. Bob Lingle accepted the surrender.

The company came from a large headquarters about 200 feet from our location. To our right was a large building - we learned later a barracks - and two of us went into to clear. It was big, cold and quiet. Large halls and we noticed each large room was full of double-bunk beds. Hanging on the end of many bunks were Lugers and P-38's. What a haul! Not for us as we kept only what we could carry. About this time we heard voices. We had been cautious and quiet so had made little noise. We stopped and waited and around the corner from one hall came three Germans. All fully armed. We all looked at each other, they dropped their weapons and raised their hands. Were there more waiting to sucker us in? Quickly we had them move to the entrance and out. After depositing them at platoon headquarters, we re-entered the building but this time with all senses on full alert. We found no one.

As with most GI's, boys grown up, a lot of looking and finding was done after the entire town was in our control. Some found a warehouse full of rabbit vests. Quite a novelty. Some of us put them on but not for long. We were wearing OD 33 uniforms - all wool - and the hair from the jackets made us look like hairy dogs. Also, the white stood out like a target. So - off! I did find a gross of light blue dress gloves. They fit! For the next month I had the cleanest, softest, most proper hands in the ETO. I changed several times a day when needed. I don't see these anymore. Remember the skin-tight dress gloves with a snap for closing around the wrist with tucks on the back of the glove? Like the Mafia, a true hit man always was correctly dressed. Ha!

Once again I remember nothing of the next few days. We pulled out of Gernersheim to reserve positions in other towns. Where? I'm sure I cleaned and cleaned and cleaned the BAR. My BAR, incidentally, was a stripped version because I removed the tri-pod, flash-hider, etc. to lighten it up, but it was still 22 pounds. According to the history we were in reserve positions for about five days. This was to be our last break. The month of April had 26 hour days and more KIA's and WIA's than any other month. Winning is expensive!

On the way again - 30 March 1945. Through many towns and I read in the history we cross the Rhine east of Worms. Remember now that there were NO German troops west of the Rhine River except scattered pockets of resistance. Only civilians and

they were not friendly.

We crossed the Main River on a pontoon bridge, courtesy of the U.S. 3rd. Etc., etc., but now my memory returns. We were approaching a town, Lohr, on a small road in heavy woods and cover. We were the lead company. To our left the ground rose steeply up to at least 500 feet. Small arms fire was heavy. The new assistant squad leader was hit by a sniper underneath his nose and died instantly. Another sniper got the squad leader through both lungs. He had been in a Peep along side of our track. We weren't aware he was even hit. When, where, and how much later he died I don't know.

We tried to dismount to our left but the rise of the ground was so steep that within a couple of yards we were higher than the tracks and our protection. I remember one sleeping bag, mummy with down, on the right front of the track disappearing in a burst of feathers from enemy machine gun fire. The only solution was to move. We were sitting ducks. Tanks and tracks and men were lost in the next couple hundred yards to town. I climbed into the turret and got on the 50 caliber machine gun. I was now the oldest man in the original squad when I joined, so I was the squad leader. Close to town I looked down to my left and here was a German SP (self-propelled) gun pointing up the grade. It was unmanned. They could have put a round up our exhaust pipe. However, they would have no place to go. About this time I had an experience I was to have and see several more times during the month. Why?

All movements during war are a matter of judgment - right or wrong. This time wrong - for the Germans. Where the two Germans, probably tankers from the SP had been hiding, I don't know. Why they decided to run I don't know. But hide and run they did. I had been covering this flank with the 50. They ran right into my line of sight. I just opened up with 20-30 rounds and the area disappeared into a cloud of dust. So did they. They had been running toward a house and that also absorbed some hits. They never knew what hit them! But, why did they move?

We hit the main street and dismounted. The first building was a telephone building. Inside the door was a large room filled with glass batteries. Reserve for shutdown. Glass! Glass! My favorite target. I had a carbine now and fired and broke several of the batteries. But, one I hit exactly 90 degrees to my front. In went the bullet - energy had no place to go but out, so out came a stream of sulfuric acid. Some got on one leg of my pants and boots. Luckily before the sun went down I had access to the track and another pair of pants.

I took the squad to the left of our entry. There was a lumber yard down the street on the left side of the road. We had gone about half a block when I noticed movement to our rear. I turned and here came a spectral image of a man enclosed in white smoke like an apparition. All of a sudden his hood flapped and I knew it was a GI. He had been hit with white phosphorous and his clothes were on fire. A couple of the men helped him with the jacket and I believe he was okay. The phosphorous had not had time to burn through. It's wicked stuff!

Shortly after we cleared and set up in the office area of the lumber yard. I

noticed a house to our front, about 150-200 yards away. Suddenly the door opened, but whoever opened the door stayed back in the shadow. Friend or foe? I considered shooting through the door but decided against it. In fact, throughout the entire war, I never fired unless I was sure. Try dusk or dawn and see if you can tell OD 33 from field gray. How many thousands of soldiers in all armies have died because of mistaken identity. You have the trigger-happy type in all armies. Like the guy who talks about a couple of "sound shots" during deer season. At least my conscience is clear. There are men alive today, at least I didn't kill them because I wasn't quite sure.

The next morning the assistant squad leader and I were outside and noticed movement on top of the hill to our right front; the same hill that was on our left flank coming into Lohr. He was carrying an M-1 (bullet was 153 grain full-metal jacket at about 2750-2800 feet per second.) To our knowledge, we had no patrols or units up there so when a figure appeared running, the assistant threw up the M-1 and fired. Down went the figure. Probably 800-1000 yards. Later in the morning one of our patrols went through the area. The assistant asked about any bodies. Yes! One German on top hit just behind the left eye under the helmet. Never knew what hit him! Nice shooting! But he couldn't do it again if he tried. The luck or lack of in war.

The next morning A Company continued the attack. From a flat area with a rise to the left flank of the road the Germans ambushed the column. Panzerfausts, etc. hit the column. Several tanks were hit and the fight became personal - hand to hand. The history states we had five KIA and the Germans 30.

Because of these casualties we pulled through (C Company) and continued the attack. A couple hundred feet high on a hill was on the left side of the road to our front. As we approached we received machine gun and small arms fire. The hill gave the Germans excellent observation and fields of fire. But their choice for defense had two glaring faults; the fire was plunging fire, and they had no way to withdraw. We called in artillery and it was all over in minutes.

To the right of the hill was a series of buildings. The third squad leader and I ran across the road and entered one. We cleared and were in a room on the second floor when the other squad leader went over and looked out a window. He jumped back and the right frame of the window disappeared into splinters. What happened? As he looked out, he was nose to nose with a German sniper. When he was seen, he jumped back, the German fired his Schmeiser. He edged over with his pistol and shot randomly out the window at the sniper. All of a sudden here was the SOB making a run for it below me under my window. I got one round off and the GD carbine jammed. A "stove pipe!" The case was stuck between the bolt and receiver. But, I had hit him and he was down. I think I got him in the left hip or high in the left thigh. I worked on the jam, cussing, while the German started to drag himself toward a barn to the left. Of course, the harder I worked, the slower I got. Just as he reached the barn I reloaded. He disappeared around the corner, still crawling, and I raked the wall about a foot high for six feet. I never checked to see if I got him. We were hollered at to get back and get moving.

This route we were on was the same route that a week before a company team from the 4th Armored Division had taken to try and get to the same objective; Hammelburg, a POW camp. They made it, with heavy losses, and the day after they took the camp, they were cut to pieces. If there is any consolation for them it is knowing that they had the German High Command running in circles. The Germans thought that at least a division was running amuck behind their lines. The entire fiasco was due to an order from General Patton. He had learned that his brother-in-law was at Hammelburg as a wounded GI. He allegedly has said that his only mistake in the war was not sending a combat command (4 to 5 times bigger) rather than a company team. I wonder what Roy Hickock (sp.) from New Jersey would have to say about the mission. I turned him over near a fence in this area. He had been hit in the heart. Probably died instantly. How many died to suit the whims of the great general to satisfy his need for information and/or aid for a relative? (The brother-in-law, a LTC, was found and released at Hammelburg – maybe son-in-law. A Ltc. Walters.)

We were still lead company and about 1400 in the afternoon resumed the attack on Germunden. It was flat and wide open all the way to the river which was on our side of the city. We got air support in the form of P-47's. They had eight 50's and 250 pounders. They were good! Always and cooperative and easy to work with. I guess that says something about the personalities of the pilots as when we had P-51's to assist, we never got the cooperation or accuracy - at least from my experiences. As we moved forward the P-47's came in low over our heads - not 500 feet up - and started strafing the outskirts of town. Suddenly, some of the men fell down and some started cussing. What happened? The brass or cartridge cases from the 50's had hit several men in the back of their helmets and several in the back and buttocks. It hurt! No one was seriously hurt but ached for a while. After all, these cases were moving at 250-300 feet per second. Ouch!

We reached Germunden about 1600-1700. We did not receive much, if any, artillery or mortar fire, probably due to our air cover. The P-47's bombed and strafed the frontal edge of the town on the German side of the river. They did an excellent job. We came in near the blown main bridge and cleared the house to our right flank. I seem to remember a concrete wall about three feet high on the river side of the sidewalk or walk-way. There is a significance to this wall. (It saved my life.)

Shortly after we had secured the houses and made the platoon assignments, the platoon leader decided to have a look at the bridge. He asked (did not order) me and a new man in the squad to help him. We went out and looked and decided we needed a rope to check on the bridge and river about twenty feet below. The new guy found a rope - a big one - and we tied it around his waist and lowered him down. It was getting near sunset so we decided to quit and hauled him up. At this time, the German machine gun opened up. Everyone scattered except me. I had the GD rope tied around my waist to help hold when we lowered the new guy. I started running, dragging the rope. It didn't help my speed or movement. Here, however, the regimentation of the German Army saved my life. The "stream" of bullets were about two feet to my left and

two feet off the ground. The tracers showed this and the bullets were hitting a sand pile to my left front. The Germans did not traverse the gun in any way. So, as I got to the sand pile I high jumped over the stream of bullets and ducked behind the concrete wall. Since I had made it, the laughs at my performance were shared. To this day I wonder where the Germans were while we went out to inspect the bridge, went back for a rope, climbed down, checked, and only after we were nearly through, did they open up. Were they sleeping or just misjudged our intentions?

I have to describe another status which will be used later. About 150-200 yards to our right flank was a railroad bridge that angled into town. In the middle of the bridge over the river was a lone grain car. The doors were open and one could see the sand bags in the doorway. Excellent observation and field of fire but no way out for anyone in the car. Remember we had tanks available immediately for help.

At dawn, after an uneventful night, the engineers set up a river crossing procedure. They used rubber boats? All the troop got across okay until the last boat. (This is hearsay, as I was over and in a building when it allegedly happened.) Once again, the German machine gunner must have been sleeping. He, or they, were in the lone box car on the railroad bridge. He got off a burst, wounded and supposedly killed one in the last boat. He never was able to tell of this of his deed to his children or relatives. When he opened up one of our tanks smacked one round of 90 mm and the sand bags et. al. flew.

From their side of the river to the nearest buildings, about fifty yards, was nothing but destruction from the P-47's strafing yesterday. Some of the areas had bricks which were nearly red hot. One could feel the heat on your face and feet. If any of us had been hit and fell here, we would have burned to death in no time. Luckily no one fired. One of our lieutenants with several men had entered and secured one building. Other buildings to our left flank were in our hands. Somehow a German squad surprised the lieutenant and this detail was captured. One man, however, had been sent upstairs to check and watch. The history states how the German sergeant shot and killed one of our squad leaders as he was running up the street. Whether this was to be a more dramatic descriptive, or heroic, I don't know. (I guess all of us would prefer to go out in a blaze of glory but the how is seldom our choice.) What really happened was that the squad leader and squad had cleared a house across the square. The house had large windows with steel shutters. These shutters were opened in a V towards the room. The squad leader was sitting back in the shadows observing out the window. Apparently not far enough to be invisible. The German sergeant must have seen movement or something reflect as he stood by the edge of the doorway - armed with his Luger - and fired. The bullet hit our squad leader under the nose - his teeth flew - he was dead when he hit the ground. And, one of the men had watched the entire action without realizing the exact result.

The guy upstairs was wondering what was up. Luckily, he didn't holler or speak, but slowly came down the stairs to check. He was about half way down when he and German sergeant (feldwebel?) were eyeball to eyeball. Before either could react,

he ran down the stairs to the entry door and flattened himself against the wall. He was carrying a BAR. The German sergeant came over to the left frame of the door and would reach around and quickly snap off a couple of rounds with the Luger. No sound! Did he hit or didn't he? He edged up and slowly peered around the frame. His eye and right arm to the elbow were exposed. Our man was waiting quietly and when the arm appeared - a burst! The bullets caught the arm and shattered it and one hit the Luger and blew it out of his hand. The fortunes of war changed immediately. The Germans gave up and were now the POW's. About this time we arrived. A personal friend of our dead squad leader wanted to take the German sergeant back to the POW cage (an expression - company headquarters) but was refused. It was obvious he would have killed the wounded German and with the war as fluid as it was, we couldn't afford this type of action.

I went upstairs and shortly afterward saw movement below. Here was a lead scout from units of the 3rd Division. They had come into town from the east and met no resistance. Our units finished clearing this area and about this time here was a news photographer from *Pathe News*. He wanted some pictures and asked us to "pretend" a squad on the attack in a city. Most of my squad were new - I remember no names - but this one guy was quite tall. We were to move - "act" with the camera on our left flank recording all of this war effort. As this tall kid came in front of the camera he turned and smiled. Cut! Cut! Do it again. We did! Same story! So, the folks never got to see their son in the war. It turned out later that this one was not too bright - and more trouble than help.

Actually, most of the replacements the last two months of the war were former Air Corps pilot trainees. They had been in England and when the demand for pilots slowed, we used them in the infantry. Remember that in basic training all basics learn to use and fire the rifle. Everyone is basically a rifleman and a skilled soldier secondly. This bunch at first whined, whined about how they weren't supposed to be here. I reminded my squad replacements that I had nothing to do with their assignment but they were here and they damn well better join us or they wouldn't last long. Within a week, they were old-timers.

I got a good night's sleep that night. I was tired and a young man. Youth can sleep the sleep of the dead. We found a hotel building about 4-5 stories and helped ourselves to a room. I don't remember any security and suspect that units of the 3rd Division furnished all the guard details. They had taken this part of town. Our bed was a feather tick type and you sank into blissful comfort. Very little back support! Also, rumors of a rest started around. How wrong that was. Even here, half way to Hammelburg, we had no idea of where, what and why we were going. Squads and platoons just fell in or mounted up. What a pile of crap! If a man is about to die, he deserves a brief explanation of why; nothing elaborate - but the truth would help. We got our good night's sleep but up and rolling at daybreak. No rest. Rumors - bah!

A couple of miles out of Germunden we (the column) hit a road block. I can remember a German artillery unit set up on the edge of town. It was not manned. The

town was to our right and the road turned left. We dismounted and I took the squad left of town and into the woods. This allowed the engineers to break open the road block. The woods thinned and ended a couple hundred yards from where we entered. I had moved to the edge - keeping back from the edge - when I noticed movement to my right front. Watching closely I could see tanks jockeying behind some buildings. Range about 800-1000 yards. These tanks were tanks from the 4th Armored Division which, as part of A Company team, had gone this same route a week before. They had liberated Hammelburg, but been cut to pieces the next morning. Now, the Germans would try and use the tanks against us and our tanks.

I remembered that we had TD's (tank destroyers - M-18's?) attached to us so I radioed back for support. Two came up and a lieutenant asked for a quick briefing. I took him to the edge of the woods and he observed. Back to the TD's - it was beautiful to watch. They coordinated by radio as they moved up and out of the woods. First one on right flank would scoot out - bang would go the 90mm and the TD would reverse back into the woods. Out went the left flank - bang - back. I believe they fired four rounds in all. All hits. The captured tank and a tank retriever were hit and burning. Any Germans who were in the tanks had to be dead. What the Germans had intended to do, and good tactics, was to wait until our column was on the road and then flank us with direct fire. Didn't work!

Into Hammelburg. Such rejoicing. Smiles. Hugs! Tears! One felt a bit embarrassed. But, some of these men had been POW's for years. There were wounded GIs and the wounded son-in-law of General Patton was there. Our saved, but less desirable ration cigarettes went in a hurry. In fact, it dawned on me later in the day that I was nearly out of some for myself. Also, our rations went fast. We were glad to give. These guys were certainly deserving to any and everything we had. This short episode taught me that the basic values in life are really what life is all about. Oh, what we take for granted in these great United States. (For example: How many of you have had a leg or back injury that prohibited you from putting on your socks?)

A very unique association began this day of liberation. I couldn't call it a friendship although I hope we were. But, for two weeks or so I/we lived to end the war. He to kill everyone in a German uniform with me to hopefully help end the war. The man had been a POW for a year or so. He had been shot down and on landing (parachute) had been really roughed up by the SS troops that captured him. His right? cheekbone was deformed where a rifle butt had smashed it that day. He lived to get even. All Germans were SS and this was so unfortunate for about nine Germans who died by his hands the next two weeks. Four died when I was present. The other five, hearsay. He thought this infantry business was the greatest. One could get eyeball to eyeball. His first choice of weapon was the M-1. This was too heavy and bulky even though he was my size - 6 foot and 170 pounds. Next, he tried a carbine. No go! A peashooter. He finally found and kept an M3, 45 machine pistol. He used it!

Here again I remember nothing of the next couple of days and the history alludes to some good fire fights and casualties. However, one event I remember like yesterday.

The history took one sentence to describe this event. An event which very few combat soldiers experienced. An open city! The history's sentence was, "The route took us through Bad Kissingen," Here's how I remember it.

We were in a heavy wooded area when we were ordered to halt. As we stopped I saw movement to my right front (we were lead company) and here was a battery of 105's (German) about two hundred yards up the hill. I swung the 50 around and was just about ready to press when the CO waved no-no! I thought he had gone nuts and pointed up. He gave me a calm down look and sign. He knew of the open city - we did not. Finally, we started to move and down into town we came. Right up main street. We were in vehicles - the Germans on the sidewalks. No infantry - mostly medics. The reason for the open city agreement was a large hospital at the edge of town - full of wounded. Some ours! So, let's not subject the wounded to more death. We passed through town without any infraction of the truce - both sides. About five kilometers later, the maximum limits set for the truce area, the war was waiting.

Once again I have complete blank spots in the unit's movements. Does one get "routine" when death is a constant companion? Some incidents, however, stand out very clearly. Here again the history makes no comment on one day of importance - at least to me and should have been to all American troops. The day of 12 April 45. Why? Think about it! We had taken a town with electricity intact and had access to a radio - civilian - and BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation or Company). On 12 April 45 in the morning our leader, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, had died at Warm Springs, Georgia. Our leader, our mentor, was dead. Now what? Do we quit? How can we continue? How sad! There were the questionable looks the civilians wore on their faces. You poor American soldiers. How wrong they were. The war went on as per usual. Why shouldn't it? These great United States are set up to continue regardless of any loss. And the war continued...

My new "replacement" - the POW pilot followed me every day. He had traded the M-1 for a carbine and maybe had settled for the M3 45. Whatever, he was a daily part of the scene. Up until now I don't remember any killing incident or had we had such encounter but this was about to change. We had chatted about everything soldiers talk about and after the 12th of April, a new subject became the base for most conversation. A new word - a new order or command - DON'T FRATERNIZE. It was foreign to us as being front-line troops we saw no women and were hated and feared. In retrospect, the rear echelon was already enjoying the fruits of our spoils. Sad to say but I doubt if any change has been made in this scene since all early wars. The pretty boys, the home-town heroes - still get the ladies. They have the time. When will the, for lack of terms, "war winners" get the recognition and "rewards" they deserve and have earned?

We used the autobahn several times in this area. Built for war but a marvel of engineering. I'm sure our "autobans" today used the German super highways as a guide. Once again there were several incidents on the luck or stupidity of war. We were stopped in column about noon one day - receiving some fire from their artillery

and small arms from the surrounding woods. To my front was a cross-over in the form of an arch used for pedestrians. I had seen no movement to the right or left of the cross-over when from the left came two German soldiers running wide open. Why? Why did they leave their concealment? What was so GD important about getting across the highway? They never made it. They were about 75-100 yards in front of my track and I had the 50 pointed straight ahead. They disappeared in a cloud of dust. Of course, some half-wits on the other side of the arch fired also and we had some ricochets - no one hit. Then I had orders to dismount and clear some machine fire from the right side. To this day I'm not sure I saw what I thought I saw. We were in the woods - heavy woods - and dark. The vegetation was also heavy and I thought this odd with so little sunlight. All of a sudden about twenty feet to my left a machine gun opened up. But, I couldn't see any gun or crew. Then I noticed the leaves and greens vibrating in a narrow patch. Muzzle blast but no muzzle. The cone of fire had to be only a couple inches off the ground. Very ineffective. I started for the placement when the radio called us back. I never fired a round. I've often wondered if I had raked the area with bullets - what? Was the emplacement actually manned? Fire by control? What? Remote control?

I keep thinking about the POW pilot. He would come and go and was not with me or the squad at all times. Where did he sleep? Did he go with either of the other companies? Maybe sampling the field before he decided what unit to "travel" with. No answers.

The history alludes to an attack on the 19 April. Supposedly sixty SS troops were in the area. As we moved through the woods in platoon formation I thought that if there are sixty of the SS and less than thirty of us - what the hell are we doing here. There was a road ahead in a clearing and all of a sudden here comes a man on a bicycle, a civilian. One of our machine guns opens up and the guy flies off the seat, lets the bike go, and stands with his arms raised. One bullet had hit the seat on the bike. Not his time but certainly his day. On rereading the history this may not have been on the 19th.

Around 18-19 April we took a town in the mid-afternoon. I don't remember any trouble. Below us down a steep hill was another town. The history says Dorlbach which had an underpass crossing of a canal. A blank. About four or so of us went down. We looked over several houses and went back up the hill. I imagine we were being watched as that night the Germans attacked the house where twenty-one engineers had been sent to outpost. One escaped, one KIA, and nineteen POW. (They were released some days after, when our troops caught up to their group.) Treated quite well. I understand that the one KIA was the platoon sergeant and either made too quick of a move or mouthed off. I found him the next morning. He was shot once under the left arm. Probably hit lungs and heart. The hallway and both floors were littered with the engineers' M-1 rifles. (Who picked these up?) Not the infantry!

We were called out that night to pull some of our tankers out of a night mess. A town named Rasch. Don't remember how far - couldn't have been too far - how we got there - but did get there before dark. Our platoon made our way up a hill near a large

area of stacked lumber. I was in the lead. All of a sudden a machine gun opened up. Down I went - helmet flying and the sawdust flew. The only thing that saved my ass was a slight washout depression in front of the stack. The platoon leader laughed his ass off from the rear. I failed to see the humor. The gun quit - it was one of ours - the bog gunner on a tank below with a nervous finger. Shooting at shadows?

I sent one man ahead - man, he was a nineteen year old replacement I had received at noon. Married and two children. His draft board should have been lined up and shot. Anyway, about half way to the house the moon came out - he was a moving shadow. I was following as number three. Three shots rang out. Carbine shots. You get so you can tell the weapon by sound. The kid hollered, "I'm hit," and fell.

Out of the shadows comes a tanker lieutenant and his loader. They had left the tank below and that tank had fired at me. The kid hit never said another word. We brought him into the house - laid him on a table - and found one carbine hole in his left thigh. He died on the table. Scared to death, hemorrhage from a severed artery, severed sciatic nerve and resulting shock, or, whatever, he died. (I have asked several doctor friends through the years and all said that any of the above could have been the reason.) I was surprised to learn that if the artery had been severed there could have been no external bleeding because the thigh can hold up to a gallon of blood.

The lieutenant was near collapse, in shock. He had killed an American soldier. He was wrong, out-of-line, apologetic, pure humility. I think all I said was we all make mistakes, sir, heavy on the sir. (He comes into my life in a few days in another situation.)

At daybreak we withdrew and heard we were to attack. Dorlbach, the town I had checked briefly the day before. We dismounted and with armor started the attack. There was a lot of small arms and machine gun fire and some tank fire in other sectors but we sailed right through to the edge of town. To the left flank was a medium graded hill leading to a wooded area. It was here the tanks had fired at movement. I thought I'd take a look. With a couple from the squad we started up running in the depression. It was not perfectly clear and had undergrowth and branches in our way. Out of the corner of my eye I caught an object in my way. I turned and ducked but not in time. Hanging in a branch was either a lung or the remains of a stomach. It hit me in the cheek. The body was lying alongside the bush - a direct hit from a 90mm HE. Not pretty. About this time it dawned on me - what the hell am I doing here. Dumb! Dumb! We quit and withdrew. Let the Germans come to us. They did.

When we got back some POW's were already being searched and interrogated. Two of the GI's were of the first-class prick type. Heroes when the odds were 100% in our favor. Slobs when even-steven. They would search and look for anything American. This German group was part of the unit that attacked the engineers the night before. They found cigarettes. One of these "heroes" would count the number cigarettes and then wearing big asbestos gloves hit the POW in the mouth or head. I stepped up and said, "Enough of this chicken shit! Send them to the POW cage or kill

them, but no more of this."

They quit and watched two approach from the hill with their hands up. They went out to get them. After a couple of minutes went by I wondered where the two and the two POW's had gone. I went around the building and heard noises coming from the barn. Here were the two "insults" smoking and laughing and the POW's dead on their faces. One commented that one round each had killed them. I asked what they were going to do now? Nothing! Bull shit" You'll bury them - at least you can do that much and get them out of view. Everything was still fluid and the tables could change. Why give up when you know you'll be shot. Take all the assholes you can with you.

An empty machine gun, theirs, was nearby. I helped drag the bodies to the hole. One went in easy and no part of the body would be uncovered. The hole was not six feet in length so the legs had to be bent. The second body could not be covered as the legs showed above the ground. So I took the spade and broke both thighs and folded the legs over the chest. Today I look back on the whole sick episode - we aren't even animals at times. Did the locals dig up the bodies? I hope so. They were deserving of a decent burial and deserved a better death. I cursed these two "heroes" out and from then on, I couldn't stand the sight of them. And with the working of God's will, strange as it is, both lived through the war. I don't think either were even wounded.

As I write this personal history and try and keep it chronological, my mind keeps releasing short memories of the same period. Not all are combat related but are part of the events. Before I forget them, I will record for permanency. Here goes!

In the summer I graduated from high school, 1939, I worked a month in a filling station. Quite a story! Today I'd be a millionaire after suing the employer. What a crook! But, he drove a car quite unique - even in 39 - a 1937 nine passenger Pontiac straight eight, the wheel base was special - how long?? and both front fenders had wheel wells where the two spares were mounted. Covering the spare wheels were metal covers the same color as the car. Quite a machine! An early attempt at the stretched limousines of today.

Early in the last push of the war, probably somewhere west of the Rhine, we were clearing a small town. In the rear of a house, not visible from the street, I was stopped short in amazement. Here, on blocks, was a twin to the 1939 car, a 1937 Pontiac nine passenger Pontiac. It appeared to be in excellent shape. No rust, windows all okay. No bullet holes or damage. What was the story behind the car? How, where, when, why? I'll never know.

Another time we took (cleared) a town by mid-afternoon. We also caught a lot of civilians in town. SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces) had started their attempt at easing the surrender of the Germans by use of white flags - no resistance, etc. and there would be no damage. (I believe it worked.) But, Hitler had poisoned the civilian populace with tales of rape, death, torture, horror, etc. So, whenever possible, I would try and modify this apprehension.

In this house was an elderly couple. Clearly quite frightened and awaiting their fate. Since they posed no threat to me, I wanted to put them at ease. Remember that

my command of the German language was practically nil and this was mid-Germany with many dialects. Also, some German words sound quite similar but have far different meaning. I said to them, "Ich bin veil mude heute. Ich habe viel." I had to pause. Which word did I want? Was it "shiessen" oder (or) "sheesen" (sp.)? Either "shitting" or "shooting," I wasn't sure. I decided on the former, "shiessen," but the looks I received told me that I was wrong. As scared as they were a trace of a smile appeared on the woman's face. A look of one-half chastisement for swearing (mothers universally) and a glower look of how dare you, the kind of look your mother would give you to show her disappointment of something you were doing when she couldn't get to you to correct on the spot - like church. I corrected my mistake with "nein, sheesen." Ah! Then I put my foot in my mouth again. "Haben sie eire? Und coldt milch? Ya! Bringen mir." Up to now I had tried to say that I didn't feel too good today - I had too much shelling - shooting. Then have you eggs and cold milk? Bring me. (In the track we had coffee and sugar in cardboard packages. I had a squad member get the sugar.) Then I broke twelve eggs in a bowl, added the milk and sugar (egg nog) and we drank it all. This once again brought on the behavior of fear. Why? (I find out later that Germans do not eat anything raw. Sorry!)

One more stupid act. Outside in front of the barn was a fairly new and fair condition Opel (version of the Chevrolet). This is war! All must be destroyed. So, I put a couple of carbine rounds through the hood. Not too bright.

I received a replacement just before the last push into Germany. He was a big guy and a staunch Catholic. Actually a blind hypocrite to his faith. Before the war mixed these great United States into a healthy homogenous blend of a war effort, we were only small islands of biased, blind fanatics living in our isolated states. One's faith was the only faith. No tolerance granted to understanding or accepting the same God. We had gangs that were differentiated by the church of choice - not purpose. The fourth street gang battled the sixth street gang - Protestants versus Catholics. Even today one can ask and argue. Is the wine now blessed still wine or symbolically blood - or actually blood?

Anyway, one day we were clearing a town and here in a heavily damaged church (Lutheran) was my replacement. What was he doing? Urinating on the corner of the altar. What in the hell are you doing? Taking a piss! Are you nuts, this is a church. It ain't mine. Ah so! A couple of days later in another church (Catholic) I got his attention and returned the favor. This has always bothered me but I believe I noticed a positive change in his comments and behavior from then on. I'm 76, as I write this and not in too bad of shape. I've lived through two wars - infantry - only wounded once. Doesn't this show any and all skeptics that the Good Lord is a very, very understanding and forgiving Lord?

Late in the war we took a fair sized town - put out our security and settled down for the night. The civilians had put out white flags and were still in town. In the house I was in was a German chemical engineer. I don't think he was BSing me and my skimpy memory of organic chem matched his comments. He worked in an

underground factory in town. (Never did see it - we moved out at dawn.) He spoke excellent English. I furnished the cigarettes and had some excellent wine from the track. Somewhere in the conversation he made the following comments: "I don't understand this, sergeant, but here we sit visiting, smoking and drinking an excellent wine. I have helped develop explosives that I'm sure have killed American soldiers and airmen. Do not you hate and mistrust me for this?" I answered: "You were doing your job for your country. As we sit here visiting and I'm enjoying it, you do not pose any threat to me. If you did or if you do, I'll kill you where you sit." He smiled and said, "Very clear and I now understand fully." We continued our visit.

Within days after the war ended, I was in a small town on a motorized patrol and the kids would stop, wave, and chatter whenever we stopped. Now, if anyone wants to win a war with the U.S. just flood our area with kids and dogs. I know of few GI's who don't love both. We had just received fresh rations and had a rare treat - fresh oranges. I handed one to each kid near me. Immediately to the mouth the orange went and the teeth snapped down on the rind. The look they gave me could kill as the bitter oil drowned their taste buds. "Nein-nein!" I took the oranges back and peeled both. Both were quite juicy and sweet. I handed back and said: "Essen!" (eat). Cautiously, they sampled and after the first bite and taste, they inhaled the fruit. I found out later that Germany had not had oranges and some fruit available for the common people for years, so an orange was unknown to young kids.

Around 23 April 45 the 14 AD was assigned to the 3rd U.S. Army under the command of General George Patton. We had been heading NE toward Berlin at this time or shortly before and now we swung nearly south toward Munich. This I find was the fact from the battalion history and a good map of pre-war Germany. Rather than try to keep our movements in true confirmation of fact, I'll refer to events as I remember them. I'll use the history for the name of the town, etc. Please remember that all we knew as a rifle squad, S/Sgt. - highest rank, was fall in, mount up, dismount, etc. We never knew directions, places, etc. (This I'll discuss later, but when a man is about to die, he deserves more than short commands.)

The town of Beilngries was located in a valley with high ground to the east and south. A river ran west and then swung east of the valley. It was a defensive heaven. We were ordered to attack.

One of the companies was stopped and pinned down trying to approach from the east on the high ground. (Hearsay to us!) We, C Company, were south of the high ground on the south side of the river. The river was about 20-25 feet wide, deep, and cold. Near our area was a blown bridge. A tangled mass of steel girders. We had no concealment or cover and if they (Germans) had had good artillery available we would have been mincemeat. They did use mortars, but these were ineffective. After an hour of milling around, I took my squad over to the blown bridge. This was the day that the POW pilot decided to stay with me. How unfortunate! Such are the spoils of war. Standing on the girders were two men in the squad. One, the former squad leader, relieved of duty and broke to private in February for drunkenness and another private.

They were standing and waving their arms. The high ground was 800-1000 yards away or better. All of a sudden the ex-sergeant swore, jumped down and looked at his hands. I believe the right one had blood showing on the back side and an enlarged flesh area. He had received a bullet through the hand. At the same time, or shortly later, the second man swore, grabbed his chest and doubled over. Oh, shit! I checked and another freak event of war. Stuck in his sternum was an 8mm .323 bullet. He pulled it out; little blood. We had not heard any "crack" of bullets being fired at us while at the bridge. The velocity must have fallen off to less than 1100 feet per second, approximately the speed of sound. Any velocity at 1100 or less, the bullet will hiss, not crack. It wasn't their time! In fact, I believe both lived through the war.

I brought the squad across the wrecked bridge and spread out. The POW pilot stayed with me. He was carrying a M-1 Garand that day. No order to attack was forthcoming. Finally, the old man came and decided that we would "feed" across the bridge and make the attack. We had to get out of the way, so – "Let's go!"

Away we went...running. Immediately, the Germans opened up with machine guns, etc. After a couple hundred yards the impact became so heavy we couldn't see ahead for the dust. A blessing in disguise. We couldn't see ahead and the Germans couldn't see us. (I didn't lose a man.) It was stupid and against all principles of attack, but that's why it worked. No one was supposed to attack across an open field with no preparation or support. Another factor that saved our asses was the Germans instead of placing their M34's on the same level as the field we were crossing had placed them up in the woods so the bullets were impacting at a 10-15 degree angle. This is called plunging fire and is only effective if one has the exact range. Also, some of the bullets may have stuck in the ground instead of ricocheting. A comedy of errors and we won. (Coming behind us one lieutenant was hit in the stomach and died that evening.) The CO told me later when he watched the dust and impact that he thought all of us were gone.

We reached the edge of the hill where the timber started. Pooped - out of breath. Where he came from nor did I see him get up, came a German walking toward us with his hands in the air. "Comrade!" I motioned him over to me.

The POW pilot and I were at least 30-40 feet ahead of the nearest squad member. The POW was about two feet to my right front and I gave him the thumb to keep going back. (No time or place to stop and search) Bang, bang, bang goes the M-1. Down goes the POW. He was dead when he hit the ground. I turned and the POW pilot just stood there. "You dumb son-of-a-bitch! No one will give up if they saw this. You dumb shit!" (No, sir!) He never uttered a word.

About this time - from where? - another German made his break for the woods. He never made it. We all fired and he crumpled on the run. I ran over to check and he was dead. I turned him over and he wore a small Sauer 7.65 pistol as a side arm. I took it and brought it back to give to the POW pilot. (You'll notice I don't have a name or rank for this psycho. I remember his rank but not his name. I've often wondered how or if he ever adjusted to peace-time living. Had to be a long haul.)

The rest of the company joined us in the woods. Up we went and into town. It was about an hour before dusk and we needed to get a foothold before dark. We cleared a big house on entering town. It had a barn attached and we got up about three stories. Excellent observation! The house had a high wall extending nearly to the street. Across the street was a house with a window facing the street. Movement - here comes two figures (now near dusk) and they stop and talk to someone inside the house. I knew they were German but not 100% sure. I could have killed all three with three rounds.

We went down to the house. The CO left to control the rest of the company waiting in the edge of the woods. About this time we could hear vehicles and traffic. Some armor, (we had none). Also, by crossing the field to get to the woods and hill we had flanked the line of defense for the roadblock. They could be or would have to pass through or near us to get back to the town proper.

The track noise got quite clear and seemed to stop just to the right of the wall in front of the house. I went out and quickly threw two grenades; back to the house. I was in a room to the left of the hall leading to the front door. The POW pilot decides to throw a grenade. Just as he passed the door the world ended - temporarily - in a cloud of dust and mortar with the blast going back down the hall. In that fleeting moment I also saw the body of the POW pilot flying by. (I never threw any grenades again. I don't like the odds. I threw two and got a panzer faust in return. Bad odds!) I rush into the hall. At the end was the POW pilot cussing, spitting, coughing and wiping his eyes. He looked like a white zombie. Not a scratch. The panzer faust had hit above the door and the wall had absorbed most of the concussion and fragments. He caught the blast as he was going forward to throw the grenade.

Our position in town was getting quite tenuous due to no armor so the CO had us withdraw back down the hill. Since I had come up first, he had me lead off first to go down. A night without incident, I guess. I slept the sleep of the dead. I heard that the hill was strafed by a 109 but I can't confirm. Just before dawn, all artillery within reach fired TOT (Time On Target) and we went back up the hill to an empty area.

This end of town was soon cleared. In fact, I believe, it was clear. Why the Germans left the advantage of height, I'll never understand. The road back and bridge leading to this section was now in our hands so the vehicles moved up. We mounted up and slowly started forward. After a short distance the road started down and we could see movement. Why the Germans remained in the valley doesn't make sense. A couple of our tanks had pulled off to our flanks to cover the front when one of those huge German half-tracks made a run for it to our left flank. They didn't get 1200 feet. One tank round of HE (high explosive) hit it directly in the center. Most died right there (I looked at it in passing when we left town.)

Since we knew the Germans were still in town (how many), we dismounted and started to clear the houses. One barn to our right flank received a new treatment. (We had discovered that tracers in a hay-mow equal quick fire. Out go the snipers - if any - and no one stays in the burning barn.) To our left was a rectangular house that was

perpendicular to the barn. Like a T. Here about to happen was a modification of the English fiction story of *The Lady or the Tiger*, written by Guy deMaupassant. However, the results of choice were final and tragic. Two men died and the lives of two women probably altered forever.

By coincidence the POW pilot had chosen once again to accompany me. Maybe he thought I was a better hunter or delivered more action, I don't know. I had tried to talk with him about his indiscriminate lumping of all Germans as SS. He never argued with me. He would politely stand and listen, even when I appealed to him to consider the facts that any observation of his actions would result in a fight to the finish. More of us on both sides would die in these last weeks. I should have realized that he never heard a word I said. I liked the guy. He seemed immune to danger and never showed any emotion.

We started to clear the house. Another guy and I went in the front door; the POW pilot and another to one end of the barn, and a third pair the other barn door. We had nearly reached the door to the barn when a commotion started. Voices raised, some comments were incoherent, all this in a matter of seconds. Then, several bursts of sub-machine gun fire. (The POW pilot had settled for a M3 grease gun by now). I opened the door and here were the POW pilot and the GI who started with him, the two from the other door, and two screaming, hysterical women holding their dead husbands or boy friends heads on their laps. Both were dead. I guess I lost it and called the POW pilot every negative adjective in the book. And, there were no "SIRS" in this verbal eruption. Once again he remained stoic - no emotion.

As soon as possible, I looked up the platoon leader and got the OK to see the old man (CO). I'm sure I got to him that day because I never saw the POW pilot again. (In later years the CO, when asked if he remembered the POW pilot, gave a very positive answer with pronounced facial expressions. He had been a thorn in many hides, it appears. The POW pilot outranked our CO since the CO had only made captain in February or so, while the POW pilot had been a captain when he was shot down. For this reason, the battalion commander came up and ordered the POW pilot to get in a Jeep and away he went. This direct order was with witnesses so there was no choice. I believe he wrote from England within a week or so. Also, after killing three with me - the fourth I think I got, I heard that he had killed 4 or 5 more. Supposedly had encouraged the 4 or 5 to cross a small river in a boat and when they reached shore, he killed them all while still in the boat. If true and there were German witnesses, how many of our GI's died?

(I was lucky that day. Another example of common sense in most soldiers on either "side of the fence.") As we reached the outskirts of the town at the bottom of a hill, the road where the German half-track had started it's run, I was walking between a house and garage, like a courtyard. There were windows in the garage door and a little voice told me that I was seeing movement. With the "hint," I had a couple of the men run to the corner of the garage. More movement and the door opens and out come seven German soldiers to surrender. They had watched me and several of the men and

could have easily killed us. But, wasn't the war about over? What was gained by a few more deaths and then theirs? I'm glad they weren't the psycho SS.

We were headed due south most of the time after the Beilngries or Paulushofen scrap. In studying the history, I had to conclude that we did not attack Beilngries, but did Paulushofen. This town was also on a hill and about a kilometer or so south of Beilngries. Once again, much of the march and action is a blank. There are clear episodes, however.

About dawn one morning north of Munich we were dispersed and quietly and carefully picking our way around AA emplacements. A lot were 20mm. The birds were chirping and the usual morning sounds. All of a sudden, one of my new replacements opens up on a rabbit. Bang! Bang! He woke the dead. Luckily for us, all the area was unmanned. This guy was a continuous source of trouble. In fact, I got rid of him in a short time - to company headquarters. He could shoot and soldier, but a real loner. The hell with the rest of the world.

Another time the column was held up by a road block and bridge down. There was no action necessary as neither areas were being defended. So, another GI and I dismounted and went into town - carefully. We entered a nice home and here were two young women - scared shitless. One spoke a little English. "Haben sie eire?" (have you eggs?) Between the two of us we got the request across. Eggs - "ersatz" (coffee). We also violated a cardinal rule - we didn't clear the house. The women had settled down and their voices no longer denoted any sign of fear or danger. Maybe one of them even smoked? We heard a noise. Footsteps. Here in the door opening steps a Wehrmacht Captain in full dress uniform. I can't remember if he was wearing a Luger or P38. Whatever! In excellent, perfect English, he stated that he wished to surrender. We obliged with the courtesy due his rank. He had a cup of coffee and cigarette with us and we left for the column on the road. He probably lived through the POW period after the war. Thank God our POW pilot was gone.

On the same day we were north of Munich when we received a change order. Originally, we were headed for Dachau which meant nothing to us. It had been taken by elements of the 157th Infantry Regiment - 45th Division and some of our tank elements. We just veered off and kept going. I regret this change very much as although Hammelburg was a POW camp, it was all servicemen. Moosburg east and north of Munich was also a POW camp that we were within miles of when it was taken. Mostly our Air Force POW's there.

A hearsay story of Dachau which I have no reason to doubt shows the division of common sense between the line soldier and the "carpetbagger" rear echelon. We earn the right to make a snap decision and they take days and months to change it. I don't see any change in today's actions. Will the top command ever learn?

Anyway, the prison camp at Dachau was taken after a short fight. Our troops had taken it and appeared so quickly that the prison guards were still at their daily duties of destroying bodies. Our troops, at first, couldn't believe their eyes or noses. It must have appeared to be their hell on earth. This was not war! The troops recovered

and rounded up either 9 or 10 guards still working - took them to a wall and down they went. Now in the area - where? - was the CO of the 157th. When this story or news leaked out, he was arrested and charged with manslaughter because he had not been controlling his troops. I believe the charges were modified, but his career was done. (In Nam, wasn't there a CO who was flying at 4000 feet in a chopper while members of his unit killed indiscriminately? A second lieutenant took the rap for that fiasco - alone!)

Another time we took a town in mid-afternoon. Cleared it and settled down for the night. We were hungry. There were chickens in the yard so I coaxed one near and blew its head off with a 45. Out of the blue comes a mad second lieutenant. A stranger! Probably replaced Lt. Osbourne who was killed at Beilngries. Who fired that shot? I did, Sir! GD didn't you get the order that there would be no shooting unless justified? No, Sir! (And we hadn't). He stomped away with threats and mumbles. Piss on him. Brand new and worried about shots. Every weapon has a distinctive sound and we knew them all. But, an order is an order. We enjoyed the chicken.

In the barn at this same place was an old horse. Skin and bones! I was born in a small town but never learned to ride a horse. (If the horse went up, I came down, My coccyx!) I love animals and here in the barn was a bin of oats. Now I remembered that horses love oats, but, how many? A helmet full? Should be okay. I filled the helmet full and in went the oats. I came back later and the poor horse was down gasping and shaking. In the squad was a guy with farm background. You've fed him too much and he's floundering. Get him up and walk him and no water. We did and he made it. Whew?

A German supply wagon was in the yard. There were many oblong tins about 4 x 6 by 1 or 1½ on the wagon. In the U.S. that meant fish. So, open comes the can and yes, it was fish. Very good! Fish in type of tomato sauce. These cans were labeled but we couldn't read German.

I missed a combat sequel in the battalion history that occurred on 21 or 22 April. The history addressed the incident as the town of Pyrbaum and how one tank and a squad of infantry (mine) moved boldly into town. The Germans out-numbered us and began to close in. We broke out but left the tank mired in the field. This was way too general and quite incorrect. Actually, we reached the outskirts of the town in late afternoon. We were in heavy woods a couple of hundred yards from the nearest house with a plowed field separating us. My platoon leader, Bob Lingle, ups and says, "Let's go into town and take a look. Chris, bring the squad." The tank commander was with him and when he saw me he immediately said he would go along. (This was the same lieutenant that had accidentally shot the young replacement on 20 April. Did he feel that he owed me some support?) In we went. I put one man up in the house and one in the barn. The others took up positions in the perimeter. The tank pulled into a corner of the home and barn. It's tube (90mm) pointed out toward a large pyramidal pile of split wood. We hadn't been there long and here comes movement. Down a path leading to the wood pile comes two German scouts. I'm sure they saw the tank or heard it as the engine was running and the radio humming. They came in front of the

wood pile. The tanker lieutenant slowly swung the turret to use the 90mm on them (over hill). They realize what is happening and run around behind the pile and back up the path. I open up with a carbine and dropped one. The other stops, helps, but out of sight. Then more movement on left flank. A quick call back and get the hell out. I took the squad out and back on the right side of the area in a ditch. I had each man make his break about 50 feet in separation. All made it back okay. I took off last and was running, when here comes an artillery shell. I could tell it was behind me so kept running. Bunk! It hits. Rumble, rumble, rumble, something is gaining on me. Then one hell of a kick in my right ankle and down I go. Beside me is a shell about 3x5" diameter artillery shell. A dud! I flew the rest of the way.

The tank did not get mired. As it was pulling back, it got hit in the tracks by a panzer faust. The lieutenant was hit seriously in the right foot and evacuated. I never saw him again. One of our lieutenants volunteered that night to go out and fire all the tank ammo, etc. in the tank. This was done and at daybreak when we moved into town we retrieved the tank. (One squad found some German wounded and remembered one wounded in the left thigh or hip.) Got em!

One of these days we had a break in the "death" routine. We had fun and still it was war. About noon on a clear day we heard an airplane. Looking up, there was a red biplane putting along at 4000-5000 feet. Certainly not ours. Everyone opens up. Tracers were flying. Along goes the biplane Putt! Putt! Finally, one of the AA's puts a 90 close by and down he comes, slowly. I didn't see him land, but I'll bet he wasn't hurt. Another enigma of war. Why was he up? Where was he going? What the hell did he think he could do?

The town of Pforring was hit hard by artillery before and after we got in. All night the Germans poured all sizes of rounds into the town. A lot of houses were burning. Here once again, one had to insure that he didn't silhouette himself against a background fire. We lost a tanker CO that night. A large round penetrated the roof of the house he was in and killed him instantly. (I never stayed on the second floor except when in a barn and had no choice.)

I just remembered, we came upon a town in the late morning one day. A lot of activity below us. To my right flank was a small brick building - an outhouse? Suddenly from across the valley - the town sat in a depression - and the main road out on that end was up a slight grade - some German troops started to make a run for it. Many of their vehicles were civilian. It was less than a mile, so I opened up with the 50. The tracers looked good but I'll bet I was hitting low and behind. One of our attached tanks got envious of the turkey shoot and swung out and alongside our track about 30 feet away. His tube - barrel - was about even with the track. He touches one off. Wham! Now the muzzle break on a 90 is bell shaped with two large holes to help vent the gases sideways and back to help with the recoil. They work. The blast was deafening and knocked my helmet off. (All my life when I'm around rifles or any firearms I've kept my mouth slightly open - this, I think, helps equalize the pressure on the ear drum. Outside and inside on the Eustachian tubes.) I believe this saved my

hearing. It suffered but came back quickly. I swung the 50 over to cover the turret and hollered over to get the GD tank ahead and don't fire again or I'll blow your ass out of the turret. One dumb S.O.B. How many GIs died or were permanently injured by similar stupidity in WW II and later? I'll bet it would be frightening to know. Didn't Desert Storm have an incident where a CO of a chopper unit wanted to play tank destroyer and blew up an armored vehicle with nine men dying? If you want to play infantry, if you think the branch is more exciting, join it.

Somewhere in these last weeks two incidents just returned from the memory bank. We had taken a town and cleared it and settled down for a hopefully routine, quiet night. The town was full of civilians; a lot of young girls. Immediately, our self-appointed lovers went to work. And, as usual, the girls were scared stiff. But some men are more persistent than others. This is all circumstantial hearsay. Supposedly there was a rape or nearly so. But, in the morning - early at daybreak - I heard a lot of voices and crying and wailing. I go outside and near a small bridge over a deep, cold, mountain stream were some people of various ages. I go over and look down and here was a body standing straight up in the clear water. The head was only a few inches under the water and showed up clearly as a bald head. The story goes that the deceased was a grandfather who tried to stop the forced love and got himself shot and killed for his efforts. Sad! We do not need this kind of crap in war or out of war. "No!" should be "NO!"

Civilians in another town were quick to warn us that the German engineers had planted and wired a fair sized bridge for destruction when and if we arrived. I climbed down below the bridge ends - both sides - and sure enough, there was at least 100 blocks of one pound TNT ready to go. We contacted our engineers and in no time the TNT was away from the footings and all were cut. This was not uncommon in the later stages of the war as everyone knew that we had to destroy a city if there was resistance. Why wreck what was critical to the life of a town and would have to be rebuilt after the war.

We knew something was up; the sounds and lights of war were changing. Also, with exceptions, it was getting more quiet. Our company on 6 May 45 was billeted in Taufkirchen. We took the town without a shot. I heard that there had been about 15-20 SS in the town but the women with brooms forced them out. The women knew (and so did the SS) that the war was over and that if the SS stayed we would destroy the town with artillery prior to assault. I left a trademark in the main building in town, the City Hall. This was the site of the bergermeister's office. Head man in those days and who carried a lot of authority. It was wise to gain his support. (This I found out later - too late). What I did was to take the Luger I carried in a shoulder holster and slam two rounds through the largest window facing the square. This turned out to be the mayor's office. In a couple of days I was working out of the building as the Sheriff of Taufkirchen. To maintain the continuity of this tale, let's jump to 1966-67 in Rapid City, South Dakota. I was transferred to the high school there in the fall of 1966 as a counselor. In time I got to know the entire faculty. One teacher, Henry, "Hank" Stein,

German instructor there, and I were comparing notes and stories and we found that we both had Taufkirchen in common. (I left there for Erding and a new POW camp after about two weeks and Hank came there at that time as an army interrogator. Henry was in Intelligence and he would screen each POW for background facts looking for SS and war criminals). I asked him "innocently" if Taufkirchen had been destroyed or showed the scars of war? *"No! Nothing. Well, come to think of it, there were two bullet holes in the window of the main office."* I smiled and offered my hand. He roared. Small world, isn't it?

Finally, there was to be rest. Men would still die for the next days or weeks, but in general, we were done. Rest? What next? Please - one day at a time.

Some irony: Hank was also Jim White's high school German instructor. Jim is the fellow who convinced me to put my memories into this book and worked on it to completion.

CHAPTER 8

POST WAR – GERMANY, FRANCE & HOME

The first couple of days after the war ended were spent in motorized patrols. We would drive around and through the myriad of small towns in the area of Taufkirchen. One platoon sergeant used a novel approach to insure success on his patrols. He/ we knew the respect that the Germans had for any authority figure and he used this respect to make his actions work. They did! I hope the one "show" I saw was the only one as such a waste of quality. (Where the average German would respect authority, the average American would resent.) He would stop in a small town and find the mayor, burgermeister. (We all had someone who could speak and understand German to a fair degree.) So, the sergeant would parade the mayor out to a public square, put a 45 to his head, and give everyone thirty minutes to bring anything and everything that shoots to the square. It really worked! In thirty minutes there was a pile of assorted weapons in the square. Some were beautiful civilian rifles and shotguns. Some were triple drillings - two shotgun and one rifle barrel on the same piece. Of course, some military, M98's and a few MP40's. A couple of gallons of gasoline and away they went. Walnut burns like any wood but what a shame. Even some beryl wood went up in flames. Whether the fire was hot enough to destroy the temper of the actions and bolts, I don't know. But, gone they were.

On one of the first days after hostilities ended an incident occurred that may or may not have helped to dispel some of the propaganda that the Hitler regime had "floated" about the American serviceman. (Actually, how many of what percentage of the service during WWII were Americans or German nationality? I'll bet that this generic grouping would be the largest in the total makeup of servicemen in WWII.)

How many of the German populace brought the BS, I don't know. Some did because sometimes you could see the fear in their eyes when captured. We were rapists, pillagers, ate raw meat, robbed, sex fiends (maybe), just out-and-out bastards.

One GI was with me that day – late morning or early afternoon. A nice sunny day. Why we were out in the country alone, I can't remember. But, here comes a funeral procession, in silence, with a slow cadence.

Now, death was nothing new to us. Death to any and all types, ages, and sex, but, it always brings grief and sorrow. Closure and acceptance comes with and after the funeral session. A session is for the living, not the dead. A session not foreign to us, in most cases, prior to the war, because death is the common denominator for all.

There must have been 15-20 or a couple dozen in the procession. Most were elderly. Who the deceased was, we have no idea. We had rounded a curve in the woods and there they were – and also us. They showed no affect on sighting us.

Whether or not we were in a benevolent mood, I don't remember. I think both of us saw the "light" immediately. Here was a chance to prove that we were as human as any army. We stopped, did a left face and stood quietly as the group walked by.

(Helmets on or off, I don't remember.) I believe I carried the Thompson down at my side.

As they passed, you could see and measure the recognition of our respect and courtesy. We noticed heads turning and glances, and heard soft chatter after they passed.

What was accomplished? I believe a great deal. Soldiers are nothing more than trained citizenry in uniform. We won, we had a job to do, help us, let us do our job and we'll all benefit. I felt good that day.

The first night we set up in a small town named Oberbierbach. I picked a house that was away from the core of the town. We were isolated, yes, but also had a field of fire and view in 360 degrees. There were two men living in the house. One over sixty and his son, a bit dysfunctional. I called them Joe and Joe, Jr. Neither gave us any problem. Upstairs was a locked door. Joe (senior) explained that the rooms belonged to a frau, no name. She was buying groceries in some town and would be back at 11:00 p.m.. He asked that I please not break the door down. So I waited and gained a helpful friend.

Die frau came home about 1100. She had two sons with her, ages 5 and 7. Her husband had been killed in the war in 1942. She was a very attractive woman but not my type. My type, I thought, as I've always been partial to blondes and blue eyes. She was a striking brunette with big brown eyes. From Hitler's elite super men standards a second class German. A Bavarian farm type! Only blonde and blue really counted and the true Arians lived in northern Germany in Prussia or Saxony. (Like anywhere in the world Germany had "selective" genes.) In the army, for example, the Bavarian soldier was good enough to die for the Fatherland but not good enough to be a top leader.

Two of my new replacements immediately put the make on her. One was wearing a white sweater - pullover type - the other was a big, gangling kid with a guitar. About 0100 - (1:00 a.m.), I got tired of hearing the strumming and went upstairs. From her eyes, pleading as I walked in, she was scared shitless. Now, the American Army insignia was often missing and especially the infantry one often died before he could get the new chevrons on. She knew I must outrank them as I had visited with them when I left at 0110. I suggested strongly that they give the poor woman some rest - there would be nothing forthcoming that night.

The next morning I went up to check on her about 08:00 or so. She was in the kitchen. On seeing me, she immediately showed fear. Between the two of us with words and arm and hand signals, I finally convinced her to settle down. I meant no harm. She was exhausted as she had not slept all night. I convinced her to take a nap and she did until about noon. I got her to take a nap by convincing her that in America if a woman says "No!" it's "No for the man." After she awakened, I remembered I/we had some ground coffee in a cardboard container in the half-track. It had been opened and was so stale you couldn't smell any coffee odor. I brought it up and said coffee. I doubt if a million dollars would have elected such a look. I also got a lesson in frugality. (We, Americans, have never gone too long without anything.) She took the

coffee, measured out a specific amount, ran it through a small grinder, and then held the fresh ground coffee to her nose. For minutes she just held and smiled. Finally, she had hot water and the first cup of coffee in many years. Such a luxury!

Women are complex creatures. Their choices of men are sometimes hard to fathom. Especially, since all men consider themselves God's gift to women. What triggers an interest in the two "combatants" can be legion. An incident happened after she had her coffee.

She had me follow her to another room and pointed out a sewing machine. A Singer? Now, all I knew and know about a sewing machine is that one sews with one. I believe she used the KAPUT (broken) machine. Whatever! Her eyes were asking, "Could I fix?" Of course, all American soldiers were omnipotent. Of course!

I remember some open areas in the casing on the needle end of the machine. I was probing with my finger and touched a large screw. For what and why, I have no idea. It wobbled. There was a screw driver in the machine's drawer. I used it to tighten the screw.

She tried the machine – it worked. The look she gave me and her demeanor changed in seconds from fear and caution to one of gratitude and acceptance. (I had no idea of what I fixed!)

We went back to Taufkerchen in a day or so. Entire units were coming west to give up to us rather than the Russians on the Oder River up near Berlin and who knows east of us. Sandwiched between the allies on the west and Russians on the east were several hundred thousand German troops - panzer, infantry, artillery, etc. They preferred to surrender to us rather than the Russians. This was understandable. Entire units would come in with all their equipment and weapons. We had one or two soldiers directing the traffic and parking. I don't remember any real trouble - everyone was glad to be alive. Why screw up now?

Another story of our CO. Do you wonder why we respected and loved him? An entire staff of an armored division had come in to give up. The general, his aide, Chief of Staff, and one more, were all in their best dress and all had black full-length leather coats. Our highest officer was Capt. DeWitt, the CO. The general, a quite young, stuffy, overbearing SOB in the few minutes I'd seen him, was raising all kinds of hell about giving up to an equal rank. It was getting to be a touch and go so I backed off a few feet. Capt. DeWitt took out his 45 and through the interpreter said, "You are now prisoners of war. You will submit your weapons, you will follow directions, etc. from now on." The speech was with emphasis' the 45 - or else. Then bless him, to further add salt to their arrogant wounds, he made them stand while he himself took some pictures. There was fuming and flushed faces, but all requests were accomplished. (There is an axiom of learning here for any officer in any army and that is don't insist on Geneva protocol when there is still death around. Your demanded obligations might be fatal.)

I can still see as if it was yesterday; the full-length black leather coats, the gold-laces caps, perfect boots, and ram-rod statues. (Look at one uniform today – German

designs.)

All or most of these type actions occurred in a railroad depot about a quarter of a mile from the main town. A MI (Military Intelligence) unit now showed up to screen, evaluate, question the thousands of POW's coming to the area. They would look for war criminals, SS. (After 1943 the SS were drafted and all received a rectangular octagon tattoo under the left arm.) All we had to do was strip and look. Some of the SS were still surly and difficult. Some pushed too much.

About this time I received a Sergeant Fritz Kuhn for assistance. He spoke good English, French and Italian and was too, too polite. He became more interested in the exact meaning of our slang than his assigned tasks. "Was ist?," (what's this), shove off, get lost, up yours, etc.

About this time some dim-witted GI or two broke open a 2000 gallon cask of raw, green beer. No good and the most they would have gotten for their work was a good case of stomach cramps or diarrhea. The owner complained to the CO and he ordered me to town to keep the peace. (Come to think of it, I never did see the brewery.) I had a Jeep, a driver and an interpreter for German, English and Polish. There were several hundred of Polish DP's in town from slave labor areas (I never saw the underground factories either - no time.) These women had not supposedly seen or had a man for 5-6 years - yet there were some kids running around. Kind of like the enigma (Ha!) of the Africa Corps POW's at Fort Carson who came down with cases of gonorrhea while working with American women at the QM laundry.) I set up my daytime office in the mayor's office and got to see the back side of my two 9mm holes in the plate glass. (At the depot I also got to see the results of our safe cracking we tried the first day in town. Got it open but only papers and a few coins. I just didn't make a good criminal. A lover, not a crook. Ha!)

I was taxed daily with decisions of justice between the German civilians and the Polish DP's. Stolen bicycles, radios, fights, etc. With a bicycle, I would hopefully point out that it is a basic source of transportation. This was true even in America. We did not all drive cars (like today). And basics must be returned to the true owner. (In 1939, my senior year in high school, there were nine cars permitted to be driven to school. They were parked in an assigned slot and were not moved until school was out. Look today! Nuts! One, I remember, was a brand new 1939 Desoto convertible. All the cars were driven by students of wealthy parents.) With a stolen radio - and this transition was hard to make from English to German - you get careless, you lose. Radios are a luxury even in America. I then applied the old adage of finders keepers - losers weepers. It was fun and interesting to be the reincarnation of the biblical King Solomon. And with a Thompson on the desk, all decisions were final.

One day when business was slow, I bumped into some young Polish kids - maybe German. Who knows. They were hungry and I finally got them to understand I could get them some fish for some meals - do you understand - yes - you'll have to help - yes. Outside of town was a large estate-like area with excellent buildings, etc. Running by this area was a clear, cold, mountain stream. There were fish similar to our

trout in the stream. I believe someone said that they were more like carp and related to goldfish. (Big ponds on the estate - I don't remember going there). The stream had steep banks and quite a few small bridges to cross over. I would wait quietly with the Thompson and try to stun the fish. If I got one, one of the kids would jump in and get it. I wasn't doing too well so I went back to town to the track and got a partial case of hand grenades that had rusted a bit due to a faulty top. I took my pants off and waded in. I had tried throwing from the bank but the splash would scare the fish. The water was cold and about 4-5 knots. I would stand quietly until the fish approached, pull the pin and let the handle snap - count to two and let the grenade roll off my hand. The water was about 2-3 feet deep and letting the grenade roll caused little water disturbance. Immediately after the grenade left my hand I would take a step away and turn my back. Boom! Water will stop a bullet in 24 inches and grenade fragments in less. Up would go a geyser of water - in would come the kids and retrieve. We "caught" a lot of good fish. Of course, I also poisoned the water (I heard later that the owner of the estate complained to ??? that a GI had killed his fish. Screw him!)

A couple of days before the main rush of POW's, I was assigned to Taufkerchen to guard the vehicles already parked. I got the guard roster out and settled down for a rest. I had no corporal of the guard and took my turn like the rest. I believe I had seven men then, plus me, equals eight. One of the squad members spoke Polish and soon after it was dark, here he comes with half a dozen women. All 25-30 and all without a man for years. Time after time he would come down and ask for me to come up to the attic. Finally, I did. It was quite interesting and not at all bad but try making love with an interpreter with a woman who hasn't seen a man in years. (I asked her to take her clothes off - she put them on.)

The number of POW's became a problem as to room. We assigned them to the open fields and had latrines dug on one side of the tracks. The SS, about a thousand or more were in a separate area. Water was nearby and we fed them the same rations we had. All-in-all a job of logistics and someone should take some credit. I remember one evening we had a bit of a problem. All accidental, but stupid. The guy that had driven me nuts and now was in company headquarters was standing, talking to me. Many German POW's were sitting on the poles over the latrine having bowel movements. We both saw this one POW run from the same side to the latrine area. He poked his head out several times and then made a run for the other side of the tracks. This was forbidden as after each interview each POW was assigned to a specific area. This action caused the former squad member GI no limit of concern. He was really pissed off. So he waited - and waited. Sure enough, here comes the same guy back. He mingled on the other side and then made his move. The GI was waiting. Bang-bang goes his carbine. Shouts, noise and confusion. Cries for medic! The guy running was missed but two sitting on the logs got it. One in the left thigh and the other through both cheeks of his ass. The German officers were pissed off. Understandably. But, since no one was injured seriously, all quieted down quickly. I felt sorry for the one guy with two clean holes through the glutinous maximus.

I struck up a conversation one day with a German pilot - a major. He still wore his flight suit. Spoke English like a text book. We agreed on the futility of war and neither offered any apologies for the deaths we caused. He had been cleared by the MI unit and was leaving that day for home as he lived within sixty kilometers (37.6 miles). I got him a bicycle and a sandwich for his trip home and wished him luck.

Back a couple of days. I was still Sheriff when one morning the old man (CO) came in with a woman in black, Frau, no name. Find out what she wants, but get her out of here. She had ridden her bicycle several miles to get to town. What she told the CO or whoever before I saw her, I don't know. But, we had visiting strange brass around that day and the CO was nervous. Fraternizing was forbidden. Ha! The CO was death on this until one day he had gone back to division headquarters and there were women coming out of every window. Being a true soldier, he turned his head at infractions from then on. He told me later after the war (1957-58) that he saw red with the hypocrisy of the order. The line soldier is held to a false purity and the rear echelon dances in unison. How true! God only made two kinds of people, male and female, man tacked on the nationality and color restriction. It was real quick that morning but we fraternized. At least that's what I thought she came for. I saw her that night.

About an hour before dusk one night a frightened, disheveled looking, pretty woman came running down the tracks from town. She explained in halting English that there were two American soldiers in her house with behavior that indicated sexual implications. She did not say rape. The MI Colonel, as usual, turned to me and said, Check it out!. I walked back up the track with her and found no one. There were two more women of the same age and they didn't know where the two had gone. About 2130 (930 p.m.) the same story. This time I went by Jeep. No one. This was getting tiresome. Were there two or what did the three women actually want? About midnight here comes another. The colonel: "Don't come back without them!" In we go; Jeep, driver and me. I am thinking that they can't go far when I come as they show up immediately after I have left. They must stay somewhere in the same house. I found them in the basement. Two of my squad members - new men from the pilot training group from England. Outside was the Jeep running with black-out lights on. The two were ahead of me so I could see their silhouettes clearly. One turns to me and says, I've got a carbine here, Sergeant. I answered, "Lift the barrel!" (I was carrying an army Thompson without a stock) He turned and got in the back of the Jeep.

The MI colonel took over on return and placed them under arrest. We'll make an example of the drunken SOB's. He charged them with drunk and disorderly pending full investigation. The charge stuck but prior to the special court day, I would hear snide comments on how they were going to be hung for rape. Finally, I went to the CO and told him in no way were they going to be stuck for rape. Over my dead body! The CO was a good actor. He never let on that he/they were "pulling my leg."

The day came and I was called. I was wearing new khakis. I was at my best. I sat at attention and really emphasized the "SIR." Guilty of drunk and disorderly and to spend two hours each night at hard labor after the duty day. The two thanked me for

saving their asses. After the trial was over, the company officers told me of their "subversive" attempts at a rape charge. What a sense of humor!

Another memory! It was in early afternoon when I heard a shot. It had to be a pistol sound as low and quick retort. A commotion started at the headquarters house and soon the CO had the company fall in. German officers were also present. A man had been shot in the back near a window and fallen outside to the ground. Who and why? I know who, but it'll stay here. Since I was sergeant of the special guard in Taufkerchen, I didn't have to fall in for such formations. I was standing to the side with platoon lieutenants, Lt. Robert Lingle (2nd) and Lt. Alvin Sweitzer (assault gun). Another company officer came along side. The XO. His uniform was spotless - like new - and he was wearing a leather holster - open air force type - with a 45 at full cock and the leather strap between the hammer and the receiver. It was quite obviously a showroom move. One of the officers asked what the hell was that all about and pointed to the 45. This lieutenant answered, "For Chris's sake, can't you see that we've got to be careful - be ready - we have thousands of Germans all around us. One can't be too careful." Lt. Sweitzer paused and then said, "You yellow S.O.B., now you're ready to fight and be a soldier - where were you all these past months when you could have shot anytime you wanted?" The man blushed, stammered, turned and left. I had noticed before that he was usually alone - now always. But, I'll bet he got a CIB (Combat Infantry Badge) and probably a Bronze Star. (Citations - what an insult.) For what?

About this time we moved the entire POW camp to a new facility at Erding, NE of Munich. This had been a German air field and had the room and basic facilities - water, etc. Our engineers had built a large fenced compound. The SS were still isolated but now there was a hospital area - their doctors, etc.

Two quick stories here while fresh in my mind. The full-time sergeant in charge of the hospital and SS area was a Sgt. Buno. What outfit - where from - ?? One day he asked if I would help him have some fun. Would I be the inspecting officer of the hospital area. Okay. I put on my class A, got all cleaned up and reported to the area. Like any inspection, he reported to me, explained the area, and then fall in behind. Here were guys wounded and sick. How wounded or sick I didn't know. But, as I would come along they would try and stand. Remember this was outside with only pup tents - no beds. I couldn't take it. I would motion for the poor guy to remain down and give Buno a dirty look. Finally, I broke from the sequence and left. Today I still live by one cardinal rule and have since the war. With any practical joke - if it hurts or costs money - it's not funny.

Buno had another problem one day that we solved quickly. Some of the SS's had come to him with a story of how another prisoner had stated he would kill that Sgt. SOB. They pointed him out. We called him out and asked him if - no answer. Surly, surly! Through an interpreter we told him to make his move. No action. What does it take to get you to back up your big mouth? No answer. So, we put him to work filling two buckets with rocks, carrying them 75-100 feet or so, dumping and then refilling. Back and forth on a hot, sunny day. In an hour or so he collapsed. He was conscious

but couldn't get up. I would take my boot and pivot on the heel and slam it against his head. Lumps and abrasions. Finally, he passed out. We called the aid man (theirs) and left. He recovered but with most of the SS group watching, we got no more threats and much better cooperation.

Another time one of the new, young replacements who arrived just before the war ended got a good lesson in understanding the female animal. We had a separate cage for about 25-50 Wehrmacht women. They wore the same uniform and with some you had to look twice to guess the sex. With the war over they began to wash and brush their hair and practice being a woman again. The young GI was on guard duty one day about six feet from the wire fence separating him from the ladies. It was a warm day and most tunics were quite "loose." A lot of skin was showing. This cool cat had the kid's number. She knew he was watching - staring so she opened her tunic slowly and began inspecting her breasts. This was done very professionally so the young GI didn't get a clear look. Probably without realizing, he edged closer. When he got to the wire, she turned and spit right in his face. Then laughed. Nothing he could do - he'd been had and he knew it. Oh, how tantalizing the ivory skin or any color of the skin in the area of the breasts can be. The Good Lord certainly knew what he was doing with the numerous methods of attraction. I am a boob man! HOOTERS! Love em!

One evening shortly after the court martial of my two men - now on a wood pile chopping - I was coming back to the camp after 2100 (9:00 p.m.). I heard a Jeep approaching, stepped back into the woods and recognized that it was the officer with the open 45. I stepped out and he stopped. I saluted and asked for a ride to camp. His retort was, it's after 2100 and you've violated curfew. I received a summary court and ended up on the wood pile the next night to supervise the other two men. Mark Twain had an excellent understanding of human behavior when he wrote Tom Sawyer and the fence white-washing episode. True now on a woodpile. I had watched so long and I needed exercise so I took off my shirt (with chevrons) and started chopping. Up comes the pretty-boy lieutenant. "What the hell are you doing?" "Chopping wood, Sir!" "I can see that. You're a non com and are not supposed to work - only supervise. If another officer were to come and reported to him, I suppose you'd tell him I ordered you to chop." My answer, with respect, "we're not all pricks, Sir!" His face changed colors but he left.

Along with all the varieties of equipment parked around Taufkinchen there were also German army motorcycles. Now, as a kid I had ridden as a passenger on a Harley, Indian, and Henderson. I had never driven one. Why not? They were big and heavy - one cylinder and four speeds forward. For about a week I learned to putt-putt along and save time in my visits. A motorcycle at night sounds like a B-1 taking off so any visit was heard by all in the community. The first visit prompted a visit by the mayor to see Die Frau. (She told me all this.) She was scared shitless. When the mayor came to the door, Joe, Sr. answered. The mayor explained why he was there and who he wanted to see. Joe, Sr. listened and then said, (he was a German WWI veteran) Get

off our steps and get out. This visitor is none of your concern. This Frau is a woman and the American soldier a man and what they chose to do in the privacy of their lives is none of your business (the mayor left.) I was so pleased with Joe Sr.'s actions that on the next visit I brought all the pipe tobacco and chewing plugs left from the rations. (No one used) Talk about a happy man.

The last time I used the cycle the MP's took after me. I was doing 35-40 or so and came to a bend in the road. I didn't know or remember that you leaned a cycle around a curve. I turned the handle bars - nothing happened. I missed a telephone pole and big tree by inches, lost my steel pot, and got away by driving between a house and barn and up a hill. I get thinking - this is nuts - you live through a war and get scraped off a pole or tree. Quit! I left the cycle up in the woods where I dropped it.

One day walking through the woods I found a German air compressor in the middle of nowhere. This was odd. Was it booby-trapped? It was painted desert brown so was probably from the African campaign. I took my time checking and finally opened the side plates. On the bottom, held by a brace, was a piece of wood. Piece, hell, there were two wooden shoulder holsters with a Mauser machine pistol inside each stock. These were 7.62 bottle-necked type used by the South African ambassador in one of the Die Hard movies. (I hope someone found them who appreciates quality.)

The CO approached me the last week in May to have me handle all the details in a ceremony to dedicate the camp and name it Camp Osborne in honor of the lieutenant who died during our attack on Paulushofen. I got some field manuals and started work. The next day my name and others were drawn for a trip to Paris. Away we go!

I remember we went from Erding, by truck, to Luxembourg. A long ride! At least 250-300 miles. Then by train to Paris - another 175-200 miles. Much easier and faster. Of course, we didn't get first class. I struck up a liaison or friendship with another sergeant - different platoon. Remember that as a replacement in war you never get to see or meet everyone in the unit. Your little world is related to the squad and platoon.

We got to Paris about noon on 29 May 45. We were billeted in the Rainbow Hotel. (Army rename, I'm sure.) I left my gear there and ate there once but never slept there in the three days, including our Memorial Day. We were warned and ordered not to further destroy the economy of Paris by eating at civilian cafes, etc. but to eat all meals at the Rainbow.

The hotel was at least ten stories high. Across the street was another hotel. As we dropped our gear and decided what and where, a very lovely lady appeared in the open window across the street. Since we were the conquering heroes and the saviors of virtues, we struck up a conversation. Dinner, dance, manger (eat) la vin rouge or blanc, red or white wine. In perfect English and with a big smile she answered. It certainly sounds good, gentlemen, but I doubt if my husband would approve. From behind the drapes steps a man, smiling, with his comment, "Sorry, boys, but good luck."

Now the way to learn and meet the real world of any country is to go where the natives eat. We left the hotel with this thought in mind and found two women in the

street. No talk of love or flesh. Where do you eat? Luckily one - maybe both - spoke some English. If you will take us to where you eat we'll buy you dinner. Down alleys, etc. for a few blocks and here was a nice small cafe. For \$12.00 - \$6.00 for me and my lady and \$6.00 for him and his (the other sergeant) we had red wine, rabbit, fresh salad, new potatoes, and a dessert (?). Not bad for time and price!

I had brought about 3-4 cartons of cigarettes to sell - we were told this before the trip - on the black market. Also, I had a German flight suit, all in leather - a Sauer 25 calibre pistol with ammo. Also, I had \$35.00 American dollars. (Where did I get it?) We were approached on leaving the train station. Paris was a nightmare - a melting pot. Intelligence agents of many countries abounded the city - both uniformed and civilian. You could trust no one. I was immediately offered \$20.00 for each carton. Already the "natives" knew the difference between Class A and B quality. \$10.00 maximum for Class B. Chelsea, Wings, Twenty grand, Domino, etc. I held firm with the Class A price but wanted an even trade for 5 star Hennessy (sp.), a fine cognac. Oh, no! Impossible. Can't find. I answered someone can and will. He had me wait and was back in twenty minutes with three bottles. No demand for the Sauer. Got \$100.00 for the flight suit and \$135.00 for the \$35.00 American. And we didn't get caught.

A very pretty lady - claimed she was Polish - was my first conquest. This cleared the glaze from my eyes so we could examine the many wares available. In one case we walked up to a bureau (office) in a hotel and here was a gal on a table naked with about six black GI's pawing her body. My reflexes were good then and as soon as I felt the pressure of my right rear pocket, I grabbed a wrist. My buddy came from the south and couldn't accept this scene. He had tried to get the 25 and use. We left quickly.

We ate one meal at the Rainbow Hotel. She was a cute, cute, built, blue-eyed brunette. And since no one could resist the charms of the conquering heroes, I started a conversation. It was strained and furtive on her part but she agreed to meet me at 1900 (7:00 p.m.) outside the hotel. I found out later that women employed in any service occupation, waitresses, bartenders, clerks, etc., could not use any time on the job to establish a liaison or date with a customer. The French are far more astute in the relationship of man and woman and the laws govern most public liaisons. Either you get a health card and get checked once a week as a "lady of the street" or you run the risk of arrest. (I didn't make the time - date and I've often wondered what if?)

We saw the Eiffel Tower from a distance many times during the next two and a half days, but scenery was not a priority. Oh, if only we could have been cloned so that more love could have been shared in this war-torn country. But, even with the restorative, regenerative, recuperative powers of youth, we were fast becoming wasted shells of our former selves. It was time to leave Paris for reality.

I must comment on the underground transportation of Paris. It makes the New York system look like a hodge-podge of gopher tunnels. Directions were in English and French and so easy to follow. Get on one - look for a number - get off to transfer - get a new number - get off - you were there. Excellent system and this was 1945. Oh, yes, one more comment on the public bathrooms - wash rooms - on many corners one level

below the street. All facilities for any personal problem was available. Tiled and clean and a lady attendant. The first time I used one I was standing at a urinal when slap - over my shoulder comes a hand towel. I turn and here was the female attendant. You could see that she was about as interested in my actions as anyone with a rabid skunk. At the lavatory she handed me some soap. It then dawned on me that she made her living on tips. Case closed.

Back on the train to Luxembourg. We used up the ammo for the Sauer 7.65 shooting out of the train window. The trucks were waiting in Luxembourg and away we went. A long ride but all with such a sweet odor of spring and summer. One bottle of cognac had broken soon after we started on the steel floor of the 6 by 6 and we had the aroma all the way home. Such a loss!

I got back to Erding and died that night. The next evening I went to see die Frau. Where have you been? To Paris! Oh, now you'll be sick. No, I went with my captain with my machine pistol. She was still doubtful so like any woman who understands the workings of the male animal, she tested my mettle.

It was now early June and things were happening. Rumors were flying on who, what, where. Remember, the war in the Pacific was still at its peak. The tide had changed to our favor but there was a long way to go. Who would go? Out comes the point system and like current policies of the army and the VA, all soldiers and veterans were grouped under one title. Why should the greatest demanding sport of all, war and combat, make no distinction for the roles of the participants? Show me any other "sport" where intentions or presence gives one equal pay or a letter or a citation. Oh, some will say that the above comments are not true. There were allowances. Let's see! If total service in years and deeds equaled 100 points, one went home. (The Air Force sent pilots and crew home after 25 missions. Twenty-five missions of 6-8 hours each equals 150-200 hours equals 8.3 days. We had infantry - a few - who lived from Africa to Berlin and now they could go home. Our unit had a total of 105 days of credited combat. Now, one point for each month of service, two points for each month overseas, 5 points for citations - Purple Heart, bronze star, etc. How many veterans went home with 100 points in the early part of the system who spent several years in Alaska, Iceland, or England for example? Some airmen had been in England for years, married and had a family. But the points added up and they went home.

Another argument I heard - both in 45 and 50 - was that those with less than 100 points but who had been in infantry units were trained and ready. They had the mind-set for combat. They had experienced death and could handle the long road ahead. And...and...Anyway, I received orders to report to G Company of the 157th Infantry 45th Division up near Regensburg. I don't remember the exact date but away I went. I don't know what happened to the others in the battalion but the 14th Armored Division was retired. In the battalion were men I knew whose names I see credited with help on the history. Granted they had been with the unit since its conception in 42-43 and were qualified to assist, but did they miss a reassignment to a combat unit because of this help? (Since the war ended before any of us ever left the ETO for Japan

and we went home instead, we'll never know. Where did the junior officers go? They were infantry commissioned. I'm sure an investigation of individual placements would reinforce my general complaints. But, as usual, the average citizen dies while the politics reign.

I was nearly twenty-four years old at this time. My destiny was mine to control, I owed no one any explanation for living. Anyone, men or women, are entitled to this same right. As a single child of God, where you've been, what you've seen or done is history. That's where it stays. So, you owe no one any explanation for your yesterdays. Too often confessions of the heart can destroy a relationship even if professed in sincerity. Along with the above bit of philosophy I firmly believe all of us have a real or imagined stereotype of our ideal woman or for the ladies, a prince charming. As young adults probably the only criteria necessary would be that the object of affection was of the opposite sex. With age would come more refinement of this hypothetical image. I had such a composite at that time and Die Frau was lacking in two of the most critical attributes: hair and eyes. How adolescent! I did find such a composite woman who I have been married to for over fifty years. Hopefully, she understands that some beautiful memories of yesterday have never been a threat to her status and our relationship. I use the term composite because everyone is lacking in true perfection - male and female alike - that an ideal mate never could exist. Maybe that's why some marriages don't last and the participants go on, marriage after marriage, looking for an ideal. (How can you ask for perfection when you cannot offer it?)

We knew this day was coming and that our relationship was like a terminal disease. As a soldier I had another war to go. As a man I had no way to consider the responsibility of a wife. I had no job, unfinished education, in a foreign land, and violating the laws of the army by being here. She knew the pain and hurt of separation. She had lost a husband some years before. My absence was the same as a death. Yet, for a month in our lives we had shared a basic, beautiful relationship. I say relationship, not love, because I was afraid of any commitments with the specter of death always nearby. I have never forgotten these special days in my life.

The town of Mering sticks in my mind. I must have been stationed there with the new outfit - 157th Infantry. I remember this because I had a pleasant but temporary surprise there during a physical. The Snellen results were greatly improved in my eyes without glasses. Right eye 20/60; left eye 20/20. Yet the prescription was made for measurements I had before and after this brief change. Why? Diet, water, incorrect measurement, (I did read the chart). Before was right 20/150, left 20/60 with some astigmatism. If only I had had normal vision.

Near Mering one day, I saw and heard my only USO show of either war - II or Korea. It was green apple time and the breweries were back in business so 3-4-5,000 GI's had one hell of a time enjoying dancing, jitterbugging, (while the German civilians looked aghast at soldiers with such behavior) the music of Hal McIntyre's band. His arrangement of Sentimental Journey brought a silence to all there as we each, in our own way, envisioned our some day trip home.

From Mering to Reims, France was the next move. (While in Germany I remember nothing. The army in its infinite wisdom knew better than to have us doing close order drill and manual of arms but we had to be kept busy?) The war was going our way in the east but going so Reims was a logical move. Consolidate, refit, and to Marseilles we would go. The bomb changed all this and I'm sure that the Good Lord has a special place for President Harry Truman. One of the few presidents in my lifetime that had the guts to follow his own personal convictions. No politics - just a basic concern for the lives of his wards.

I got to Paris once more from Reims for a day. Older, wiser, and calmer now, although only a couple of months older. I was going home. I made it. I went alone and was sitting in a nice cafe - moved to the table of a single lady and we ate and visited. As I write, I'm looking at a slip of paper she gave me. It reads Mlle Jeannette Houdain, Hotel de Russie, L2 Gould Rochechouart, Paris. While we were visiting, a man approached and introduced himself, bought us a drink. He spoke excellent English and French and claimed to be an agent or salesman for some corporation. With the war over in Europe, he had resumed travel to the U.S. and claimed to be just back from New York. I could care less but we accepted his drink. Prior to his appearance we had been watching a show or parade of many GI's of all ranks by a table to our right flank near a window. Probably the most beautiful woman I've ever see was sitting there with a companion - also a bundle of pulchritude. No one stayed long at her table. She would smile and answer briefly their comments but she was in complete control. One could sense the coolness. Our salesman as he visited also watched this procession of suitors. He excused himself and went to the lady's table. He stood and talked. His voice raised and her expression turned a bit evil. His voice went higher and she countered. All of a sudden he slapped her across the face - hard - and walked back to our table. (With all the GI's in the cafe, this slap could have gotten him floored. Women are to be loved, not slapped.) What the hell was that all about: He answered, "For the last 3-4 years she had been the mistress of an SS Colonel. A real bastard. He's gone and I hope dead. I just told her that the war is over, your colonel is gone or dead, so get off your ass and start dating the Americans. They won the war." (For the rest of the time we sat in the cafe, she did not invite any GI to sit.)

Things moved fast after Japan capitulated and we soon were on our way to LeHarve and home. LeHarve was quite different from the fall of '44. The harbor was all cleared and we did stop at Camp Lucky Strike briefly. All roads now were black-topped, etc. I still have the Thompson and full magazines and had considered bringing it home, but we were warned and had surprise inspections several times so one day I wrapped it in canvas and the maps and when the first sergeant was out of his tent I dropped it on his desk. (I could have gotten it home.) I had a Luger, P38, Walther and rounds of 9mm. These I carefully packed so there was no rattle in the bottom of a 50 caliber ammo box and put a fitting cover of leather over the ammo. The weight anchored the box with the lid open for display and no one ever tried to pick it up.

Home on a General Ship. They're about 25,000 tons and quite a luxury. Also, the

cooks were Merchant Marine so food was enjoyable. Also, good weather and good time. Eight or nine days sound right? We landed in Boston. No delay here as I think buses waiting and to a troop train we went. Our destination was Camp (now Fort) McCoy in Wisconsin. The Boston rail or switching yards are immense. Also, I believe all the three kinds of engines were present. At that time steam and electric were common, but diesel was coming into existence. Each whistle was different in decibels and tone and pitch. But all are loud. (Why does the term Klaxton (?) Horn stick in my mind. The name for a electric engine whistle? Anyway, as we started slowly out and through the yards every engine of all types laid on their whistles - arms waved and some had flags. We were being welcomed home in style. Such a cacophony of sound! For a short few minutes we were truly HEROES FOR A DAY.

We took the NYC tracks through to Canada. The railroad most likely in Canada was the Canadian National. I have always hoped to fly to Vancouver and take the Canadian National east to Washington, DC and then home on the AmTrac. Into Detroit, around Chicago and reached Camp McCoy. For once the army was ready. Like a clock all the paperwork was waiting - completed and we were on our way home on extended furlough prior to return for discharge. This was what we all wanted but the army really was not truly empathetic in this area. Most of us had many days of leave accrued and by sending us home to use it up, they saved and saved on food, lodging and pay-outs.

One story at Camp McCoy. The first night was steak and ice cream - all you could eat. I skipped the steak and ate several pints of ice cream. Then to the show. What is the capacity of the WWII theaters? Near 1000, I'm sure. During the show you could hear the lightning and heavy rain as a storm passed through. After the show we emptied and started back to the barracks for sleep. We were all dressed in new or clean pressed khaki. Smoking, B-Sing, walking in groups on the wet street and clean air. The water was still running at the curb sides. All of a sudden lightning hits a light pole with in yards of the street. Quiet - it was quiet. Then the profanity. Cursing with some new words. We were pissed. Here was example of a conditioned reflex. For months and years any incoming brought an immediate dive to the ground and cover. But the war was over and this concussion was from lightning. Habit didn't separate. Now we were all wet, muddy, a mess. Dirty, rotten fricken frack!

The next day the army was ready for us. Get us processed and out. Wherever we went, there were the personnel, tables and room, etc. to get the work done. I remember two incidents clearly. We were standing - at ease - in formation in a slight drizzle when a sergeant hollered that anyone who had been wounded report to building so and so. I did. A doctor looked at the scar and asked a few questions and I was on my way. Shortly after that, another sergeant hollered out that anyone interested in Joining the army reserves go to building so and so. He got a few takers. If I had known and gone my retirement check today would be \$28.00 larger. At about 200 points at 50 per year times \$.14 per point. And nothing was done or expected for several years.

We cleared Camp McCoy that p.m. early and headed for Minneapolis. Whether we paid for our own bus, I can't remember, but I don't think we were dropped at Fort Snelling. The railroad station? (We had received some pay and had a 30 day furlough before reporting back to McCoy for discharge. (Use up our own leave time). I had struck up a conversation with another staff sergeant (from Winona). I got a room at the Andrews Hotel on Hennipen Avenue, dropped my gear, and out we went. Train home left at 1100 the next day.

We ate, hit the bars, and about 1030 went into a bar at 6th and Hennepin? Seated at a booth were two lovelies. Probably about 25-30 and really not bad. We had sat and ordered drinks and twenty minutes or so had gone by when one of the ladies said, "Hey, guys, if you're going to buy us a drink and have a dance, you'd better hurry. The place closes at 12:00." Over we went. Our preference for "types" did not conflict so we both ended up with the lady of our choice. The bar closed and we suggested a cafe. Remember we both had been paid. Filthy rich! The ladies suggested a White Castle. Remember? All they wanted - so hamburgers it was. Then to their apartment. When and how the ladies decided amiably on who got the bed in the one bedroom apartment I don't know but we lost. No problem. I found out in the morning that all the buddy got was a fitful sleep. We were lost in the ecstasy of coitus. She was good!

Back to hotel. I said good-bye to the buddy. His train left earlier. I was shaving in the bathroom when I heard the door to the room open. Footsteps, quiet, a gasp. Then rapid exit of foot prints. It was probably the maid and the gasp was due to the fact that I had some war souvenirs on the bedspread. The Luger, Walther, Dress knife, etc. I didn't hear from hotel security, but I did dress a bit faster and checked out. At the railroad station the MP's must have been ex-infantry. My uniform was not the best and after checking on my destination, they just said to get on the train and get the hell out of town. Good luck!

My folks and fiancée were waiting at the depot. Of course, mother had her cry. (I was probably 35 or so before I realized that I would never understand my mother - actually any woman. So, join 'em - don't fight with them) The fiancée and I had a couple of dates but the years had changed us both. It wasn't there! So, with no acrimony we said good-bye. She married in '47-'48 - had a son and was divorced years later. I saw her once in '48 or so. We had coffee and a good chat. In the last five years I heard from her when she mailed some old pictures she had found in an album.

Looking back to 1945-1950, I must have had a residual effect of shell shock, battle fatigue or as the new inclusive syndrome PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). What a Pandora's box! I say this because I really tried everything - or so it seems before I gained some sort of stability. Marriage and children usually assist the mental set of a nebulous thinker. At least in my case - I grew up slowly.

I went back to school for a couple of quarters in the winter and spring of '46. My grades were better than pre-war - no F's - but minimal. I never cracked a book. Also, here I saw the first proof of the government's appreciation of a line soldier's efforts. The GI Bill was in force and I quickly decided I had had the shaft. There were two bills that

covered all GI's. Both paid the tuition and all costs of equipment and supplies - if approved. Of course, some con men got away with typewriters free and drafting sets - gold plated. This stopped quickly. The two bills were PL385 and PL16. PL385 was for all GI's not wounded or disabled: PL16 was for the other classification. PL385 paid the veteran \$85.00 a month in addition to tuition and book payment; PL16 paid \$115.00 with the same tuition and book coverage. How generous! Our combat efforts were worth \$30.00 a month, or \$1.00 a day. One dollar a day extra to die. I thought that if I ever went back to the service I would be assigned to finance. I could count the money. Later bills have done away with the tuition and books and pay substantially more, but costs eat this up quickly. Federal housing for the married became an area on every campus. I guess this program worked quite well.

I joined the Fargo Police Department in the summer of 1946. I had taken a civil service exam for the Post Office and needed a job. Pay was \$175.00 a month. The Chief was a former serviceman, U.S. Navy, and we got along fine. I had three raises in the eleven months I was on the force.

Then the Post Office. I could see early in the work that this was not what I wanted for life. It was like the repetitious work that leads to carpal tunnel syndrome only the mind took a set. Also, one supervisor was a bastard. A non vet who made Elsa Koch look like Hedy Lamar. His only concern was the work getting done so he looked good. Never a thank you or accolade for an extra mile. I'll bet as a clerk in his early years he washed the brown off his nose nightly.

I met my wife in October 1945, dated through 1946, gave her a diamond on 1 January 47 and we were married 28 May 1947. Three children and six grandchildren. Only one girl, so I'll spoil her - she's also the youngest. I bought her a Sig Sauer P230 after her birth. I hope she likes weapons and likes to shoot.

A body shop partnership for half a year or so and then back to school. I received my Bachelor's Degree in Education in 1949. Taught until June '49 to help a friend's bride to be out of her contract. Then to work for a wholesale plumbing company at \$1.00 per hour. About this time a change in requirements or a new commission offer became available. I investigated and with assistance decided to make a change.

In the summer of 1949 the army offered a second lieutenant's commission to all former top three grades of non commissioned officers from WWII. This base requirement plus a B.S. or B.A. degree from an accredited school. I met the criteria, applied, was accepted and sworn in as a ORC officer in October 1949. A Colonel Hanson (sen) was a great deal of help in all phases of the application. He was a fine gentleman. His rank did not blind him to the less ranked. He was reassigned shortly after the 20 June 50 (Korean War) and went down in the Sea of Japan in the fall of 1950. Never found!

Little did I realize the impact this decision would have on my life and marriage. For the second time in ten years I would be going to war. (And a married man does not make the soldier a young single fool does.) I will never live to see this possibility, hopefully, of a ground war in the United States. but, if this were ever to happen, you'd

find that the married soldiers would become the coldest-blooded killer that the Good Lord could perfect. He would be defending his own - for once. Why do the Israelis have the finest little services in the world? For two reasons: they have the highest mean IQ of any service; and they are defending their own.

CHAPTER 9

ORC - USA - USAR

A preface before I begin the active duty part of this era. Era is the term. Here again, the government lumps everyone under one heading where credits and bonuses are equal. My point: Units were called to active duty in 1950, reserve and guard. The 40th Infantry Division went to Korea. The 47th Viking Division of Minnesota was federalized but then broken up and all the personnel used as fillers for other units. Why? Was the 40th a better unit? I doubt it! Some units went to Alaska. Here in South Dakota one unit was recalled and went - with their families - to Germany. Yet there is no differentiation on the place of the service. I know of a case and there are thousands more in the National Cemetery, where the deceased marker reads Korea. He never left the states. Please give the line soldier the designation he has earned.

At the outbreak of the Korean Conflict - Police Action - Our Democratic Obligation - and all the other euphemisms of the day, I fully expected to be called immediately. A brand new second lieutenant with war experience. Such was not the case. The powers that be were in quite a dilemma - what criteria do we use? I understand they settled on any company grade officer who had less than two years active duty prior to September 46. So! The reserve office (ORC) was only a couple of blocks from our apartment and I could check daily on what was "cooking."

The job I had at the time was going nowhere. My wages were \$1.10 an hour and weekly check of \$44.00 less---. This was not the understanding I had when hired and several attempts at clarification proved fruitless. We had our first child, a son, in January 50 and I had had to sell the Walther (\$55.00) to help pay off the hospital bill of \$75.00. Yes, \$75.00. I hated to quit a job again as the work record these last four years since discharge in November 45 made me look like a psycho. Who knows? Anyway, I knew one thing for sure, I could soldier with the best. And on adding up the factors with the base pay, I would receive \$315.00 a month as a second lieutenant. I went to the reserve office, I remember a red-haired major was in charge - a nice guy - and asked him to forward my name as a volunteer. He did and I received orders and reported to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri on that date - 6 October 50. Fort Leonard Wood had been closed several years with only a caretaker status and the heat and humidity in Missouri had taken their toll. We actually came too early as the QM (Quarter Master) was not quite ready. Remember, I had no clothing and was due a clothing allowance on reporting. Normally this would be no problem, but here - YES!

We were divided into groups and assigned to several mess halls for chow and for several days there was a variety of dress. After a couple of days, the CO, a BG Butler, decreed that the evening meal would be in Class A Uniform, tie, etc. How did I do that? I didn't. (One comment on General Butler: A tall man and I'm sure in excellent condition. He really got around. You would see him everywhere after the draftees came and training started. One day I had to stretch a bit to keep up with him

on a walk.)

I'm eating and over comes a major, engineer type, with a bit of excess stomach, whose first comment was "Don't you understand orders - Class A?" I explained that I was waiting for my first clothing allowance. His second comment was, "Don't you civilians make any money in civilian life?" I saw no reason to tell him I had volunteered and answered, the government ordered me here so the government can get me my allowance, SIR. What a slob! He had me report to him the next morning and we went over to QM Clothing to no avail. They weren't ready. For about another week I was the only officer at evening mess in civilian clothes. Thank you, Mr. Major. What a dud!

Some of the highlights of my stay at Fort Leonard Wood - not necessarily in order - that I remember clearly - you should find quite humorous or a common touch to your experiences.

In addition to my assignments as platoon leader (on paper), weapons committee instructor, disbursement officer, I was hit with mess officer. I knew you eat in a mess hall and that if the morning coffee gets too close to the hotter sections of the range during the day, the coffee gets a bit "tarry." A M/Sgt. Gifford was the mess steward. He had been recalled as a reservist and had just invested his life savings in a trucking company. He resented the recall but ran a top rate mess hall. He would bring me all the myriad of forms to sign each day. I signed. One day I told him to just bring the forms and I'll sign without all the explanations and if anything backfired, we'll split the time in Leavenworth. (We had the top mess hall for the next five months or so.) I also remember one suggestion he accepted and practiced which I will suggest to all mess stewards. Giff would make his ice tea with lemon and sugar added. I hate any tea with anything added. I suggested that you put the plain tea on the table with lemon slices and sugar to be added as wanted. Once you add we all have to drink sweetened, lemon flavored tea. At first he would offer me a steak, etc. other than what the menu called for that day. I made it clear that I ate what the men ate on my one meal per day at the mess hall.

I got to personally meet the CO of the regiment early in the training cycle. Thank God he was a soldier and not one of the SP- (potential) type officers. It was a cold drizzling day and the men were standing in line for the mess hall to open. I noticed and watched two E-7's walk up and get in front of the line. I didn't know them and had never seen them before. I walked up to them - they saluted - I returned - and asked them who they were. They were from regimental headquarters and had been attached to the company for chow. I had not seen or heard or read anything to this effect. I told them okay but you'll take your place in line. These kids need every break they can get. They answered that they were in a hurry and always had to eat first. Not in my mess hall. We'll see about that, Sir, and away they stormed.

In a few minutes our first sergeant hollered at me to report to the orderly room. As soon as I entered, the first soldier left. I thought it odd. No one - no company officers - then a voice, Lt. Christensen. Into the CO's office I went. Seated in the chair was the CO of the regiment - a full colonel. I saluted and reported - his return was a

brief wave-like movement. Standing at attention and scared shitless were the field first sergeant and Sgt. Gifford. I answered the questions and when the Colonel would ask one of the sergeants a question and they would pause, I spoke up. He put me at ease. I could see, however, that his face was softening, if that is the correct term. My explanation for my actions was basically for the comfort of my men. He explained the necessity for the attachment and dismissed us. I was to see him several times after this episode, but all were positive and complimentary.

How much would a one-way ticket to Chicago cost from Fort Leonard Wood? What was the charge per mile on TR's in those days? TR (Transportation Request). I ask because I should get a 10% commission for my role and savings as a troop train commander in 1951.

We were just finishing a training cycle of ten weeks. The basic soldiers got ten weeks - eight in garrison, two in the field, and the had a ten day delay on route home before reporting to their next assignment. (Most went directly overseas.) Some LTC had gotten the idea (not bad, but against human nature) that the army could help expedite the time out of camp for the ten days by furnishing the transportation to major cities - St. Louis and Chicago. Each GI would get off at whichever city made home connections easier for him. So, the men were screened as to which route or train benefited them the most, then assigned. I also received orders as train commander, and all to report at a time-place in camp. The train was made up (cars) at Newburg, the railhead about 15 miles from camp and brought in by TC (Transportation Corps) engines, made up and then pulled back to Newburg and the over-the-road carrier would hook up their engines. All this free transportation was due to the fact that there were no cars on post of any of the basics. (The way it should be!) However, I/we were soon to find that those GI's that lived locally near the camp would have their wives and girlfriends ready at Newburg.

I reported on the date - got my orders - and if I remember correctly, about 900 or so TR's to cover any and all who had been assigned to the train. If the 900 averaged \$50.00 each that would be \$45,000, if \$100 each, \$90,000. Away we went in late p.m. It was dusk in Newburg. Windows, doors opened - against orders, and about two dozen ran to their women, cussing and away they rolled. I saluted and hollered. Good Luck! In St. Louis about a third got off. Good Luck and God Bless! On to Chicago. I still had yet to see or report to anyone on the train. Where was the conductor? I was getting tired so the hell with the conductor and about 1:30 or so I went to bed. He awakened me at 2:00 a.m. or so. You the train commander? Yes, Sir! How many have you got on the train? How many did you count? I counted 471. About right - sounds right. He counted off 471 TR's and left. Not too bright. I returned with at least half the TR's I left camp with and the TR LTC was flabbergasted. My, God, man you've saved us thousands of dollars. I'm going to assign you to all our troop trains. Over my dead body, Sir, no way. (I went to the CO - mine - and asked that he disapprove any such requests if they were forthcoming. He must have - I never went again.

The army still handles its issue of the individual weapon to a soldier the same

way it has since its inception. The early militia furnished and carried their own, but to be effective, we have to have and demand uniformity. A hodge-podge of calibers would be a death trap. Some countries, such as Switzerland and Israel, issue a weapon to each individual and for as long as the individual remains on active or reserve status. He is held responsible for the care and maintenance of this weapon. And the penalty for misuse is severe - as it should be. The U.S. Army issues the weapon only when the individual is physically on the post of assignment. It is kept locked in a storage rack until needed in training and/or range or other type of firing. And, the individual is warned, cajoled, threatened, etc., etc., on the misuse. You are guilty of stupidity and mobility before any misuse or infraction. I write these actions because the past and present procedures of issuing a weapon, firing for familiarization or record on the KD (know distance) range, finding the true zero of the weapon for your eye and body is a waste of time and money. Why? Because as long as you remain in the same unit on the same post, this weapon is assigned to you. If you are transferred, you turn in the weapon to your losing unit and at your next station you start the procedure all over. In combat the same was true as far as the issuing but there are no KD ranges to refine your zero. How many enemy soldiers are alive and GI's KIA because the weapon was incapable of hitting the barn door from the inside? Of course, the powers that be don't have to use their pretty side arms so there is no problem here.

Until the justice system in this great country makes the penalty for a crime severe enough to deter 99% of the lawless, we will have no justice. Perjury, for example, even in criminal court where men have died because of the prevarication receives a slap on the wrist. A restraining order isn't any more effective than the paper it's written on.

With this bitch in my craw, I got permission one day during range firing to take twenty minutes during the noon break to put on a demonstration to actually show the men (basics) what was meant by the Geneva Convention, dumdums, penetration, full jacketed, penetration versus shock, etc. (Little did I know that the Regimental CO would watch the entire demonstration.)

I brought with me that day grocery sacks filled with damp sand, one gallon cans filled with water to the brim and locked by a screw cap top, a 3/4 inch manhole cover of cast iron, my 30/06, a 45 Colt, bow and arrow, and various bullets; M2 Ball, 125 jacketed soft point, armor piercing, and doctored M2 ball to hollow point. I went through the demonstration. The bag of sand would stop the 45-230 JRN Colt bullet. The AP went straight through. The doctored HP blew up the bag in a mild way, and the 125 JSP exploded the bag. Another GI shot the arrow - it went completely through. On the cans of water, only the 125 JSP had complete destruction. The 45 and AP only holes, the doctored M2 a minor effect. On the cover, the AP?, M2 and 125JSP went through. How can a JSP go through 3/4 inch of cast iron? On the same principle of physics that makes an anti-tank round work. Energy of velocity is changed to heat and the projectile burns itself through. Some questions and answers and back to the range and firing. As I was cleaning up, a voice (I recognized) said, Lt. Christensen, that demonstration was GD good. Excellent! The best I've ever seen. I'm sure the men are better for it. Good work!

Who? The Regimental CO.

I have stated in various ways the eternal battle of the sexes. But once again I state that war taught me that one would never die for lack of sex, but many men and women have died because of sex. Maybe, with both sexes, we get a glazed look, a zombie look, and a tremor of anticipation. Something that forewarns the "enemy." Ask yourself, "Haven't I enjoyed more sex accidentally – no planning, no premonition – then charging into the social arena charged for "beaver?"

Not long after Christmas in 1951, I had taken my wife and son to visit with her parents in Dallas, Texas. The trips down and back were both made while on a VOCO (Verbal Orders Commanding Officer). VOCO's were actually for a distance of fifty miles maximum from the post. This was before the days of interstate highways and this trip was at least 500 miles each way. All this in a 1951 Ford 2d Custom V8. A good little car, but it could get stuck on a banana peel.

I had noticed the carnival setting up outside the main gate while commuting to duty several weeks after I took they family to Dallas. It looked like the typical small carnival with rides and sideshows. Some of the officers had been over and all commented it was OK, but the owner, a ORC reserve major, had questioned all that were in uniform about the procedure used and experienced on their recall. He had just sunk \$60,000 into the carnival and was worried. He wanted to talk to any and all and, if you were in your uniform, you could get it free. So, I went!

One show I'll never forget. All carnivals have their girlie shows and this was no exception. The girl, woman, about twenty-five or so, cute, quite small in stature, had a trailer for her act. There was a sliding door in the middle and inside the door was a V-shaped corral. The point of which extended just past the right side of the trailer door opening. The lady would perform her act in the left section of the trailer and the customers stood outside the "V." I was standing where the base of the "V" touched the trailer wall – within two feet of the "flesh." She sold and collected her own tickets for that performance.

There were the usual slobs and drunks with the standard comments of "Take it off," "Come on baby," "More, more." Etc. She handled these dregs of manhood like a pro - she was – XXXX the slobs. She was down to her bra and g-string and had a very nice body and breasts – no stretch marks – no babies. Her breasts were supported by a mesh bra with maybe one-inch holy squares. Without thinking, I said aloud, softly, "32 B's?" She smiled and answered, "32 C's." I nodded. After her show, she came over immediately. We visited. Where are you from? Married – kids? Job, etc. She then said, " I have one more show at 1000, but I'm through at 1100. Please stick around." I answered, "I just can't win. I'm leaving at daybreak for Dallas to get my wife and son." I threw her a kiss. She answered, "You can't win them all!"

I had two sequences of ten-week basic training before time caught up with me. I can remember several incidents that happened in the two-week field phase of the training. More examples of the lack of backbone in the commissioned ranks.

We had fallen in the company one day in the field for an inspection of arms. The

weather was cold - it had been down to +16 above but with a 90+ humidity, the cold soaked through layers of wool. This type of weather also causes quick rusting of metal. I had taken a rifle from one man to inspect and I glanced at his face several times and thought I saw movement. Finally, I asked him, "What is wrong with your eyes, Soldier?" "One of them is glass, Sir." I kept his rifle - out of ranks he went - I never saw him again.

We had used some TNT and primer cord in the field training. I had about 15# left and did not want it around. What would 15# sound like and/or do? In the area were the foundation and open walls (concrete) of a house. There was a slight grade up behind the house. I put the 15# in a satchel, detonator in place, had my platoon sergeant go up the hill with the hand generator and hands off until I waved at him. I ran up to the house, threw the satchel into the basement area, and, after about 10-15 feet by the foundation, gave him the wave. Wham, bam, boom, what a roar. The ground shook and, although the concussion was restrained by the walls and most went up and out, it knocked me down. I know what 15# sounds like and does.

When you are working with explosives, you draw a demolition chest. This is as big as a cedar chest. Pliers, wire, equipment, etc. are included. I signed for the chest so I and I alone was responsible for the entire contents. When I went to turn it in, a wire cutter was missing. I can still remember the brand, Diamond, made in Duluth, Minnesota. Cost \$1.65. I offered to pay for it but the S4 (Service and Supply) said "No, Chris, I'll drop it on the quarterly loss sheet." This he tried to do but it was rejected. "I'll pay for it!" "No, we'll run it through and it'll be deducted from your base pay." The last time I saw the paper trail it was several inches high and to this day I owe the U.S. Army \$1.65.

An example of authority out of control was the kid with the glass eye. How many other young men were shanghaied into the draft by subversive political barons in small town communities. Was there or will there be any recognizing? Doubtful! Moreover, how many of these "quota" bodies died on the line?

We had a close one one night in the field. We had a six-man general service tent to sleep in with cots. The men in mummy bags and their shelter halves. Sixteen above is cold. In the center of the tent was a small stove with a chimney up and out the roof through a flap. We had been issued coal as a fuel, which held longer. Someone stoked up the stove after we had gone to bed and forgot to open the draft. Now, when we had gone to bed it was a clear night. Not a cloud - but cold. For some reason, I woke up - I usually could sleep the sleep of the dead even at 29, but this night? My eyes were burning and my throat was raspy. What's wrong? Also, it was black - pitch black inside. Earlier the moon had little rays of light. I got up and opened the door flap. Behind me was a churning acrid mass of greenish black smoke. I opened the flap fully - awakened all the other officers and opened the draft so the coal could burn. By morning, we took inventory and no one was really sick. How close were we to CO poisoning and death? Was this another sign on this tour of war? I'll take it!

On army paper and cash I went home for ten days before overseas in May 51. I

had a tooth act up while home. Now the only government facilities in Fargo, North Dakota then and now for help medically is the VA. Out I go - they fixed the tooth immediately and I signed some papers as since I was on EAD the dental help was not authorized and the army must pay for the time and labor. Now here is a \$6.00 bill and payment would be made by transfer of funds (credit) from the USA to the VA. How much did the dental work actually cost? Would computers today expedite this problem if it arose?

I had reported for EAD on 6 October 50 to Fort Leonard Wood. In late November, I was finally able to get my family down to the area. Housing was tight but luckily someone steered me to Pippins Resort, a few miles out of Waynesville. Board and room was \$45.00 per week for my wife and son and I paid for whatever meals I ate. It was about 14 miles to the fort. Wonderful memories and camaraderie still remain. The cook, John, was a huge, lovable black man who was an artist in the kitchen. He cooked me a woodchuck once - delicious - while all the rest watched in horror. Why shouldn't any animal that is a complete vegetarian be good to eat? There were a lot of woodchucks in the area and after I returned from a spring leave in March - took us five days to get from Kansas City to Fargo due to a SOB blizzard, I brought my own 30/06 back and reloading equipment. Of course, I couldn't understand how, but loose rounds of M2 sometimes came home in my pockets for use on the snapping and soft-shelled turtles.

During these last few days at Fort Leonard Wood I was OD (Officer of the Day). One night when a new list of FECOM orders came out, I was in the regimental day room when the old man appeared, the CO, a full colonel. Good evening, Chris! I see you finally made it. Oh, I haven't heard, SIR. Yes, you and, and, and, get one month refresher at Benning and then over. Chris, you and I have met several times. I'll never forget you. You stand up for what you believe in. Good luck! He shook my hand, saluted and turned away.

I could put the following under potpourri but it's fresh in my mind. Here is another example of the P & P Syndrome prevalent even today. Potential versus Performance. One second lieutenant whose father was a retired BG in the SDANG stated quite plainly - I'm not going! He got on the phone - got daddy - and before we left was on orders for Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. After that I don't know but I'll bet he never left the states. Now he has credit for Korean Service not era. Individual reserve officers all went to Korea - company grade as the army promoted their captains to major (you live longer) while guard units were stationed stateside and stayed (not the CA 40th), some to Alaska and one of our SD units to Germany with their dependents. Maybe now with all the computers a record of duty could be kept to recognize combat time for all like missions in the Air Force??

The writing on the wall emerged. FECOM orders started arriving for those of us that had reported in the late fall of 50. I can remember how sad it was for one widow - the lieutenant left on a Tuesday - was flown to Korea - and she received notice of his KIA the following Tuesday.

About this time another lieutenant got a break. I wonder about the men in his command later? He had been assigned a pay officer for his unit but he had a drinking problem. He reported to finance on pay day, picked up about \$115,000 new dollars and never showed back at his company area. He was located that night drunk - blind drunk - at a night club outside Waynesville. The canvas sack with \$115,000 was on the table - untouched. He received a general courts martial and choice of Korea or Leavenworth. He chose Korea but I never heard where or what?

Drew Pippin was a fine older gentleman. He had been Vice President of the Missouri Game Commission. He always had a brandy before the evening meal. Sometimes he offered! I'll never forget his advice on alcohol. Have your one or two drinks before your meal. Enjoy the warmth and relaxation and then eat. But no more of anything after the meal. I think he's right.

I could go on with other homey, factual stories but there was a war coming for me.

Just remembered! I want to comment on the physicals the recalled officers experienced. Of course, we all compared notes on why, where and how after reporting for EAD. I have no bitch. I believe I received the fairest exam - and all others recalled in Fargo at that time - as anyone - anywhere. I was drawing 30% compensation at the time. The doctor probed and questioned and pronounced me fit. I can hurt on EAD as well as at home from the same wound. All officers drawing 50% or more were ordered over, questioned, and sent home there and then. This was not the case in other areas of examination. Once again ye olde politics. One lieutenant in the BOQ - where I stayed prior to my wife and son arriving - and whenever I couldn't get out to Pippins - had a 80% disability. His arm had been shattered by machine gun bullets in the FEC (Far East Command) of WWII. He did not have enough strength in his fingers to hold a cigarette. He was ordered to duty.

Regulations of both the Army and the VA prohibit one from drawing a salary from EAD and a compensation for a disability. You are either capable of doing everything demanded on EAD or you're not. To insure non-duplication of payment, one must sign a waiver to discontinue the VA compensation. This I did and always did during all my years of USAR status. I'll explore this mess later.

I had a ten day delay in route before reporting to Fort Benning for the refresher course. I loaded up the family and all gear and home we went. I had purchased a new 1951 Ford two-door custom in the fall of '50 at Springfield, Missouri for \$2006.00. I traded in a 1940 Lincoln Zephyr. Got \$250.00 trade in. Today, the car would be worth \$35,000. Oh well, story of my life - buy high and sell low. Hardly! I am a wealthy man. A wife of fifty plus years, three children all educated and gainfully employed. All in reasonable health, six grandchildren - only one girl - I'll spoil her, none ever arrested, etc. Of course, I never made president or a million dollars, but I'm 76 years old, have lived through two wars, and still kicking after a quad by-pass in '88. I cannot complain.

The ten days went fast and to Fort Benning I went. My first assignment at Benning, but not my last. I enjoyed one thing at the fort - it was and still is a bastion of

the old army as far as military courtesy, pride and soldering goes. (At least, up until 1974). It was hot that June 1951. We had indoor and outdoor classes. There were restricted lectures and films. One offering was top secret. Today the school kids know about the material. Times do change! We slept outside the core of the fort and the old quadrangle billets in tar-paper one-story huts. There was no air conditioning or air movement at any time. We sweat and we stunk. The uniforms would last until the first movement and then the starch would be gone and the salt rings show. Not once was there any concern about heat stroke or prostration. Storms, with lightning, did not cancel any training. You made it or you didn't. All involved, cadre, instructors, students lived the same exposure - at least during the day. This is as it should be. War does not offer a choice or whether or not the weather, temperature or any and all conditions suit you. We even had some night problems in the swamps. Damn snakes!

I remember one incident like yesterday. And, the command level knew this was the case. We were in an area where the PX was a small, supplemental type one evening. A first lieutenant, recalled type, with a date of rank of 1944 or so, and one tough old boy, went up to get a couple of beers for the table. He bumped or the captain did, shoulders while approaching the bar. Truly accidental. The captain waited a second or so and asked, "Your going to comment on that?" The lieutenant said, "Comment on what?" The captain, "bumping into me." "F--k you!" "Who do you think you're talking to, Lieutenant?" "You know damn well who, Captain." Why, I'm not sure, but the captain pulled out his ID and had been flashing his academy ring. Here's my date of rank, etc. The lieutenant takes out his ID DOR 1944. Look, Sonny, just take your beer and go sit down. The captain left.

I did get to see one demonstration that was the best I've ever seen and I understand was canceled soon after due to cost. The demo was called, the Mad Minute. Every weapon in an infantry regiment would fire continuously for 60 seconds. It was loud. All this fire power converged in a second on land before the stands. I can remember newspaper or canvas simulating troops dancing with shrapnel as the timed fire of the 105's exploded overhead. There is one thing wrong with such demos. They give you a false sense of security. Nothing could live through this hell. Oh? Many times in war after a concentration lifted, the enemy was waiting. And, the enemy has the capability of returning the favor.

The time went fast - the time went slow. Time always is without meaning when you are not in control of your time or destiny. Let's say time is artificial. Anyway, the course ended and we had another ten days in delay enroute before reporting to Fort Lawton, Washington, a POE (Port of Embarkation).

Two other officers wanted to ride home with me. Help drive and pay for gas, etc. Three grown men with their army issue filled up the 1951 Ford two-door, but shortly after noon on a Thursday we headed for Chicago. We drove continuously only stopping for relief, etc. We reached Chicago the next day about noon and one officer departed. His name? Blank. The second officer lived in mid-Wisconsin. In three or four hours we were there. Remember there were no Interstates in 1951 and traffic was

heavy in places. We saluted, parted, good luck, and on my way. All of us had been able to nap but even a young body needs rest. I reached Minneapolis before dusk and headed out on old federal #10 highway. Somehow I turned wrong at Anoka and found myself heading back to Minneapolis. Corrected but an hour or so was lost. Now dark and now fatigue begins to hint that I'm a damn fool to try. About the time I reached Little Falls, I was seeing horses, sheep, people, you name it, ahead of me. I pulled over off the road and "died" until daybreak. The sun woke me and I rolled into Fargo and home easily.

Time flew and the flight to Seattle was now. I had a ticket on the Strato Cruiser of the NW Airlines. I remember I departed early in the morning. (Before dawn?) Flight was uneventful.

CHAPTER 10

KOREA

We had transportation from the airport to Fort Lawton in NW Seattle. A quiet isolated little post which was mainly a holding area for 0001 officers. (Casual status - unassigned.) Easy living - the calm before the storm. Good food, no formations, nothing! I did get into Seattle the first and only weekend and had a nice supper and visit with my wife's uncle and family. I didn't call home - one didn't call long distance in "ye olde days" except to report a death or something equally important. Ha! Now the kids use the Internet.

Within a week we were on our way. No night time cloak and dagger departure this time; down to the sea in buses. Once again, we loaded on a general ship. Once again, run and contracted by the merchant marines to transport troops. I had a stateroom in the bow (no rough weather thankfully - a ship is like a teeter-totter - the bow and stern rise and fall the most distance in rough weather. An assigned room mate never showed up. Why? I never heard or was offered an explanation. AWOL or death or help out? We left in the daytime. Out through the Strait of Juan de Fuca. (Never forgot the name) and into the open Pacific. With no war on as far as naval action, we took the great circle route to Japan. Weather was good and while on the deck a few times we saw we had company. I heard - was told - that both U.S. and Russian subs were playing hide and seek with the ship for practice. We would have been a sitting duck if the subs had been on the other side of the fence. We docked at Yokohama and were bused to Camp Lucky Strike just outside of Tokyo. A former military camp. I went into Tokyo once - we were only there about a week - but once was enough. Like the French taxis, the Japanese like to save their brake lining. So full speed ahead but use the horn and mouth to travel. Life is too short to get smashed in Tokyo. I stayed in camp.

We were being processed, checked and assigned. Here again the old hurry up and wait but a bit more courtesy. After all, this time I was a 2LT not an E1. Still this cold, indifferent, non-apologetic behavior by the screening personnel. None had seen combat, I'll bet. But oh, such efficient heroes. Here again my main weapon complaint. I drew-was issued an M-1 carbine. Picked from a stack on the floor. Issued, I believe, five rounds and off to a small range to zero. It was dark and raining. The paper was hanging from the target frame. I got to fire three rounds and the mark indicated a hit at 2 or 3 ring at 2:00 o'clock. Good enough. Others hadn't even had a bullet strike. To combat we go with a piece of junk which doesn't even have a zero. Thank you, oh great leaders.

I believe we crossed on a Japanese small ship. All Japanese ships end their name in MARU. Does that mean ship? We crossed the Sea of Japan and landed at the port of Pusan. Off the boat and to a two or three story former warehouse. No windows and one could see the damage done during the initial part of the war and the Pusan

Perimeter. While looking out a window my eye caught a movement. It was high noon and this is important to the story. Looking down to the ground I saw a rat as big as a cat, then some more. Now when rats are running around in the daytime, at noon, you've got rats. No one gave a damn. We were not here long. That p.m. we loaded into trucks and to the railhead we went. A series of old coaches with one of our switch engines awaited us. We loaded and on our way. Some joker, train commander or just a TC (transportation corps) type got our attention and ordered all windows shut and covered. We would be going through guerrilla country and didn't want to show any light. Great! Sitting ducks the first day of war. Just like Hollywood, the train rambles along, a mine blows up the track, and the troops are machine gunned into annihilation. (I have a very dramatic, picturesque mind) Now on the floor of our car were three ammunition boxes. One was 30/06, one carbine and one 45. All were sealed. I asked "What's with the ammo?" The answer, "If we get fired on, open and get some." I thought I was hearing a joke. Here I am with a piece of worn out junk with no ammo, we're going through enemy country and I'm to wait until I'm shot at before I get any ammo. I thought, "You're full of shit, friend." I opened the carbine box and loaded my two magazines. I had at least 60 rounds to defend myself. The rest of the officers followed suit.

We unloaded at Yon-Dong-Po (sp.). Stayed overnight and the next day a truck took three of us to our assignment. I was assigned to the 1st platoon of G Company - 24 Infantry Regiment (this was the only black non-integrated unit in the U.S. Army.) We reported to the headquarters. Either the S1 (administration) or S3 (plans and training). He was in his bunker with little light. The place reeked of beer. Beer cans were scattered all over. He appeared to be in no pain. Great! Now a god-damned regular army drunk is going to determine the status of my life for most of a year.

The CO of the company had a Spanish surname and, I believe, was a graduate of VMI (Virginia Military Institute). (My grandson will graduate from there this year.) Like all academy grads, he apparently had been programmed for greatness and promotion. He did not impress me positively. I only knew him from mid-August to 1 October and many times thought how here I am a 2LT with more combat time than he has and he's an O3. Fate happens! Shit also happens!

I had some damn good men in the platoon. Of course, they looked me over and waited and ditto. One man, a Corporal Ford - from Chicago - had lost two close buddies on outpost the night before I got to the company. He wanted to get even. Any time I stood up and he was around he wanted to know where I was going. His choice of weapon - the old and proven BAR. The platoon sergeant was a Sergeant Hill. He was getting a bit flaky - too much time on the line - but still a soldier. One man was the biggest con man I ever met. But since this was combat and his actions were pure selfish he could get someone killed. He had red hair and stood out like a sore thumb. He also had the ability and knack of smelling or finding a woman - camp followers were always back a couple of miles from the line - and I understand he had two doses of clapp (gonorrhoea) the past month.

I hadn't been in the unit long and I was assigned my first combat patrol. We were dug in along railroad tracks (built by the Japanese - also remnants of high line, high voltage towers also Japanese. The area was north of the 38th parallel in about the middle of the country. The NKF and CF (North Korean and Chinese Forces) were dug in on hill 1062 to our front. It was called Papa San and was the highest hill (mountain) in Korea. To our left front was a long valley leading to Pyongyang. On clear days one could see the smoke from the city. To the right of the valley near the foothills of 1062 was a volcano shaped hill that contained a NK flak outfit. 20mm's and 51's! (Hill 1062 was 1062 meters high.)

I checked the men - made sure they were ready and ordered formation and movement at dawn. I didn't sleep that night. What the hell was I doing here? Hadn't I thought of the possibility of seeing more combat? And here were thousands at home that had never and would probably never fire a round in war. But, I was here so let's get on with it. Up at 0500 - and off we go. We crossed through our MLR (Main Line of Resistance) now or was called the FEBA (Forward Edge of the Battle Area). The only way to the higher ground was along a dike between rice paddies. Either side could have mined this dike but then that would deny access to all. Our mission that day was to reach a little village at the base of 1062 called Yondae. We never made it.

I understand that the top brass had invited company to watch through the BX glass. I saw one once. A binocular of 50 x 150 power. Actually, anyone could see better in perfect safety than sending a patrol out on the flats. As most of you know Korea is a peninsula about 135 x 600 miles in size. With water on both sides, the climate is greatly affected by the temperature and humidity. This saved our ass this day. When the sun rose and we had reached a jumping off spot across from our MLR, the humidity also increased. You could feel it. This was late August 51.

Here we were about thirty strong, spread out - deployed - in a staggered column - headed for an objective several miles away. The NKF's were on our right flank on hill #652 (?) looking down on our helmeted pates. A dumb, no-win situation but the "heroes" wanted a patrol. We got started. Cough goes a mortar. I look up and several hundred yards up and to my right flank is a perfect smoke ring. Cough! Another ring. Our FO (Forward Observer) also spotted this. He's the artillery representative attached or assigned to all patrols to control our backup artillery. Within a minute the 105's had registered and fired for effect. Now it was quiet. What kind of hole, cave, or cover the NKF had I don't know. But, as soon as our artillery would quit, cough. would go the mortar. Then from a different location and I never saw any smoke here, a 51 heavy machine gun opened up. It was firing practically straight down without tracers to correct and was hitting quite a way off. But we were pinned down. Why go forward into more of their area and get trapped or go backward without any information or permission.

During the initial fire for effect of the mortar, I had men hit by shrapnel. I believe six altogether. A couple came limping back to report they had been hit. I didn't know them or they me and I didn't trust their stories so, show me where you're hit. Most in

the backside or buttocks. Down would come the pants and look see. Now remember, these were black men. Now a black hole on a black skin is not easy to see or find. Most were bleeding, so no problem. Can you get back yourself? Need a medic now? If "No," I let them go alone.

We would try and go, cough and 51. I don't think our artillery ever hit exactly on the cave or hole or what. Now the objective became too far to reach and return by dark gave no protection of our rear, if we went ahead. I was told to pull back to the knob where we initially started and take men to burn all the huts we could. This would deny the NKF shelter at night - if they did come down and stay? We had a few WP (White Phosphorous) grenades, but one man in the weapons squad had a 57 recoilless rifle with about 30 rounds between the members. All were WP not HE rounds. I had the soldier try and take out a house. He missed. The men were all nervous because it was easy to see where we were. I kept a couple to help and had the platoon sergeant take the other down and set up a perimeter defense and stay still. We had received some ineffective small arms fire. (Never saw from where.) I started on foot with Corporal Ford and one more man and ignited one hut on fire with a WP grenade. The NKF got pissed and although wild, were cracking over our heads. I guess they figured out what we were up to. Rather than risk our necks when I could do the same burning with the 57, back to the hill we went. Talk about good shooting. My first round was aimed at the straw roof of a hut a couple hundred yards away. A no-no. The round didn't explode until it had pierced the straw and most blew up and burned on the back side of the hut. Okay! My next 27 rounds were aimed at the junction of the clay wall and the roof. The twenty-seven burning huts lit up the night for hours. We came "home" without a problem.

I had another patrol somewhat later - a couple of weeks - which was uneventful. It was a recon patrol and I didn't have the number of men necessary. I don't like combat patrols, as they're too big and unmanageable at night. We went to the same area. Cirled over to the former outpost that had been hit the day before I arrived. Got back about dawn. Corporal Ford was along. He's the type of soldier that I'd take anyplace - good!

I watched another patrol about this time that really got clobbered. They were heading for Yondae like us, but stayed several hundred yards further away from the "mountain." A big mistake. By being further away from the "mountain," it allowed the NKF artillery to get at them. It did. There were a lot lying down after one barrage - some still. The L-5 (Liaison Plane) spotter was flying over at ground level to check and look. Actually, now I don't remember how they got out. We didn't get them. The patrol was from another unit and had fed through our unit to start the patrol. What was sad was that the L-5 pilot had a twin brother in the area and had flown over his body without knowing the brother was there. Any death is sad and unfortunate, but a deal like this gets quite personal.

I was in Korea in a quiet sector. For this, I am thankful. Men died but we didn't have the two-way slaughter of Port Chop, etc. Being in defense and holding - why

would anyone come off a 1062 meter mountain to gain ground in a valley. Days were most of the time routine. We would be assigned as a unit to two weeks up on the MLR and one week in reserve. (A couple of miles back where we furnished our own security and had tents. There was a shower point behind the MLR (water source) where supposedly we could use once a week. This was easy in reserve but took an "Okay" and approval while on the line. One would undress on one end of a series of tents - take your shower at a 20 point (shower heads) shower area. Then dry off and pick up your size clothes in the last tent. I had fairly decent fatigues since I bought them in October 50. Now it August and September 51, so when I went through the first time and left fairly new dirty and got clothes that were all stitches. I just walked around to the first tent and started over. I got better stuff.

I also got a chance to finally see for myself all the rumors, innuendoes, repetition, God's genital gift, etc. of the black man. So, one day I took part of my platoon to the shower. Granted there were quite a variety of "love stems" but nothing truly sensational like Johnnie Wad or Long John Silver. Enough said!

I lost a lot of respect for army justice these weeks before the assimilation of the unit into integrated units on 1 October. The red-haired lover boy walked clean and clear on charges that any white soldier would be spending a good share of his life in Leavenworth. On the first patrol - combat - where I had six men wounded, he wasn't present for the patrol. I talked with him - with Sergeant Hill - he had misunderstood. I told him I'd be sure he understood the next time. On the recon I informed him of the patrol, time, place, etc. with Sergeant Hill present. That p.m. - missing. I could have shot him myself, but Sergeant Hill wanted the pleasure. Corporal Ford offered to "visit" with him. I went to the pretty boy CO (VMI grad) and tried to file general charges. He stalled and stalled and then argued that since the integration rumors were true - let's leave the mess alone. Bull shit! He was never touched.

On the 1 October 51, the big day arrived. The regiment - the 24th - was to be assimilated into other units and dropped from the active army. No more segregation of troops by color. About time! I had been ordered to report to the 27th Infantry, the Wolf Hounds, for assignment. Once again there were three of us; the same three that reported originally in August. Once again the SI of this unit smelled of beer. He apologized that he didn't have a beer apiece. He told us of three openings: A, B & D Company. Now, A, B, C Companies in the old days were pure rifle companies. And rifle companies do all the patrolling. The jackpot would be D Company. None of us backed or pushed, but all would prefer the D assignment. The SI turned to me and asked about the indirect laying of a Browning Heavy MG. (Now I don't like crew served weapons and actually had only fired the MG briefly, but I remembered that in indirecting laying one used an alâdate. The instrument looks like a triangle (metal) with degrees marked on the edge and a bubble line to insure the correct angle of fire desired. I got the job! Thank you, Lord.

The CO was a Nicholas Duva. Where from? I can't remember. Nick was a good soldier, officer and CO. He was a lot like the WWII CO - give a man room to get the job

done but be available if he needs you. Only a fool would violate such a deal but there is always one who doesn't know when he's well off. We had many pleasant conversations.

Another officer I remember clearly was Major Willard E. Stambaugh, S2. He was a guest at our Christmas '51 feed and commented on the menu. Yes, menu - entrees of shrimp - roast tom turkey with all the trimmings, etc. Food had improved since WWII. I wonder how long he stayed on EAD, what rank he attained - when retired and where now? A fine soldier - and an academy graduate.

I was assigned the first platoon of D Company - the heavy machine gun platoon. My platoon sergeant was Mike Shoen from Hastings, Minnesota. In civilian life he was in the Civil Service employed on one of the L and D's on the Mississippi River (Lock and Dams). He had been a member of the Minnesota Viking Division - (47th) MNANG - but after that unit had been federalized, all the units were broken and the individuals assigned out. Mike came to the 27th - was there before me and after I left. I have not corresponded with him for years - since the '50's. I saw him in 1956-1957.

One section of the machine guns was set up on the railroad tracks on the MLR and one up on hill 352 near hill 400. Hill 400 is the hill that Colonel David Hackworth wrote about in his book, *ABOUT FACE*. The Chinese had it when I came to the unit. I guess the former 24th Infantry (black, now integrated) had had it earlier. A worthless piece of real estate that had cost many lives. Both armies! I always considered it a battle of pride between the top brass.

I received my CMH on hill 352 on 31 October 51. I say CMH because the comments I received from a medic that night meant that much to me. We were scheduled - 27th - French, Turkish, and other supporting units for a big push at 0600 on 1 November 51. Even corps artillery was assigned. A battery of 8 inch "long toms" were in place for support with 300 rounds allocated. How do I know this? I met the battalion CO next day on 352.

I had gone up late in the day to be at this section on the attack the next a.m. They would be displacing forward first as the units moved out. I found that all the bunkers were filled. Absolutely no place for me and this medic. (Where did he come from?) So, I asked the medic if he had a shelter half, anything? No, Sir! Well, let's hunker down in one of these partially furnished positions. Okay, Sir! Can I ask you a question, Sir? Sure. Why are you up here? I beg your pardon. Why are you up here? I'm the platoon leader, Corporal, where should I be? Sir, Lt. So-and-So (the one I replaced) never came up here in the daytime, much less now. Corporal, I'm Lt. Christensen, I'll command my way. This exchange was the most indirect compliment I ever received for soldiering. I knew then I was right in my philosophy of leadership.

Let's stay with this time frame. The push was called off. Why? A change in the peace talks at Panmunjom. The battalion CO of the 8" rifles came up on the hill. He introduced himself and asked for some targets of opportunity. I suggest hill 400. He had been allocated 300 rounds for the 8" - the most he had had available for months - and he was going to shoot it all. Not give it back. He called in the fire order. We

received an "On the Way." The 8" were so far away we didn't hear the initial firing - 8" will fire about 30,000 yards with a 6 foot - yes, 6 foot dispersion. This means that if you fired ten rounds with no change in setting of the gun or ammo, and the wind and weather factors were reasonable, all the shells of hundred of pounds each would land within 6 feet of each other. That's accuracy. A 155 round weighs 195 pounds, if I remember correctly. I've never seen an 8" fired except on film.

On the way!" It hit about 70-80 yards down the hill to our left. The concussion moved us but the "fan" of shrapnel went high. Back goes an adjustment. Next round was nearly true. The next blew on impact. I suggest a fuse delay to kill all deep inside by concussion. Good idea, Lieutenant! Five seconds delay! The big shells would scream over. Sounded like a box car with the doors open at 90 MPH, impact on the hill, one could see the dust - then in five seconds the entire hill would vibrate. (How many pounds of TNT are in an 8" shell?)

Earlier in the month I watched another "show" from the MLR. To the right of the valley that we were supposed to attack, actually on the flank of 1062, was a flak hill. I know there were 20mm cannon there, maybe 40mm, all manned by NKF. They would harass our fighters going north - mainly the F-80's and the WWII Crusaders. Someone must have figured it was worth a "take out." So, one day here comes the fighters. Down, strafing, up and around. But one gets hit. (One had gone down earlier - I saw the parachute - I heard he made it to our lines.) The one that went down's buddy really got pissed. He changed his tactics. Instead of angling down to strafe and bomb, he climbed up another thousand feet or so directly overhead. Pointed the nose down and perpendicular to the gun emplacements down he came. Off went the two 250# bombs and the top of the hill disappeared. We win! (Of course the damage and dead were cleared and in days the hill was active again.)

Rats - Chi - became a problem. They were everywhere. Now rats to my houseboy, Grompo, were part of life and the real estate. They did carry fleas and cause disease so a crash program was ordered to kill them. It was so bad you saw them in the daytime and that's rare. We received the poisoned grain - put it out that night as directed and waited. The sun came up and here in the throes of death were rats, rats, and more rats. We took the carcasses and piled, then poured gasoline on the mess and burned. I had to get on Grompo to be careful with his bare hands and wash and wash. One day Grompo stamped his foot quickly and smiled. I asked him what was up? He pointed to his boot and I could see a tail sticking out. He carefully grabbed the tail and held up the rat - baby-san. I took my 45 and poof. We never did get rid of the bastards. (Some were so big they could have killed most cats.)

Back in the 24th days, my dog, Lady, had showed up from where? We had mated her with a German Shepard from the 35th Infantry. Her pups were born about the middle of November. Six babies! As they grew, so did their personalities change. One male, Elmer, was a number one clown. Every soldier should have a dog!

I remember one soldier quite clearly. I never met him but saw him quite often as the platoon would run and train during the day. They were all part of a special platoon

- nto TO&E (Table of Organization and Equipment) authorized in unit make up, but okay by the regimental CO, a Colonel Sloan, and called themselves the Raiders. Generally, they would go out at night on hit-and-run raids. This sergeant, David Hackworth, is now a retired Colonel who lives and writes out of Whitefish, Montana. Our local paper carries his editorials every Friday. I have met and visited with other regular army retired - mostly academy graduates, who consider him a maverick or a renegade. I enjoy his comments. It's still a free country and the truth is still avoided in some service circles. Another prime example of what I call the P & P Syndrome. Performance versus Potential and both titles start with P - politics. Colonel Hackworth calls them the "Perfumed Princes." A coincidence that we both use P & P?

One of the officers on ship had been assigned to D Company. He nearly got his butt busted for violating security prior to the 1 November push. One could go through the various units and call Japan by a phone in the general tent only a couple of miles from the "war." Not bad. He had called a gal in Japan - met her on the boat -- and during the conversation said something like, I'll be busy starting next Friday - 1 November (day) so I won't be able to write. Bam! A voice cut in and said, "That's enough, Lieutenant, you're done." Still true - Loose lips sink ships!

For your interest: Each company had four platoons, each battalion had four companies, each regiment had three battalions. Each unit had a call name or number. At the platoon level we had numbers at the battalion, colors, at the regiment, animal names. For example: platoons were D1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6. Each number meant the CO of one of the platoons or the XO (Executive Officer). Captain Duva was D6. Then the other companies would be A,B,C. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. The battalions were 1-Red, 2-White, 3-Blue. All regiments, 19-Leopard, 27-Lion, 35-Lynx. So as the lieutenant called Japan, he would ring from D Company to battalion, red would answer, he would say - get me lion. I don't know what the 25 Division Code name was but lion would get him division and then by radio to Japan. Off radio to phone and the phone is answered after a ring. Today, I'm sure, communication has greatly improved over this. Probably can go company to division or company to radio.

In June '72 we had a devastating flood in Rapid City, South Dakota which killed over 200 people. For several days nothing moved, including phone calls in and out. Friends couldn't get through to check on our status. One friend met an EAD officer, USAF, stationed at Grand Forks AFB. She brought up her concern. He found or learned I was active reserve. So, no sweat. He picked up AUTOVON at Grand Forks, ND, called Ellsworth AFB on AUTOVON - Ellsworth transferred to local trunk line - NW Bell - our phone rings - brief questions such as, you OK? - Damage? Kids? Good-bye. Good public relations!

One thing I learned in the months in Korea - August 51 to February 52, was that one does not die from lack of sex. And, I've always enjoyed my sex. In fact, after a short period of mental imaging without any visual reinforcement, the mind seems to give up and accepts this barren world of no ladies. Not all soldiers accepted this barren world. Once again the fertile mind of the American GI prevailed. A captain in the

battalion enjoyed the companionship of a lady so he employed a novel method of securing the flesh. He went back to the camp followers, picked out a lady of his choice and brought her to the battalion surgeon. (A battalion is the smallest unit to have a medical doctor.) The doctor took blood sample, X-Rays, vaginal smears, etc. and if the lady was clear of any and all contagious diseases, he pronounced them husband and wife. She would remain in the reserve area and the captain could see every third week. Whether or not he went back when the unit was on line, I don't know. The gal got food, clothing, and warmth - he got his flesh.

To mention the rotation process again: units were on the line two weeks, back to reserve one. Reserve was usually behind the second hill (mountain) line. Still within the range of big artillery.

This type of situation was practiced at all levels. However, the EM took their chances on venereal problems. Not the field grade officers, however. They had access to the few visiting American ladies who came to visit - USO and news correspondents. It is alleged that one top level "soldier" went underground (bunker) for five days with a correspondent. During that time men died. But, lover boy had his fling. He also played his cards correctly and is an excellent example of my P & P Syndrome. He was promoted to O7, BG, shortly after her visit.

The CO of the 27th was a soldier. I even believe he was branch infantry. In the 24th, one CO was armor not infantry. I could find his first name, I'm sure, but Colonel Sloan is good enough. One of the few field grade I've met in two wars that actually put the welfare of his men on an equal par with the mission. If any of you have read, *About Face*, by Colonel David Hackworth, you'll understand what I mean. The night the Raiders were cut to ribbons on Hill 400, Colonel Sloan came up to assist in the withdrawal of the wounded and the dead. Read the book! You'll see why I'm constantly referring to the P & P Syndrome. Col. Hackworth retired as a O6. No way was he going to make O7 or better. He rankled too many potential types - the pretty boys of the service. I read recently that our former Chief of Staff, while a CO of an artillery battalion in Nam, was granted a CIB (Combat Infantryman Badge). Now if you'll read the minimum requirements for the award, please tell me how a CO artillery ever earned the award. And, I would ask, was he the only one in the battalion? Strange! More on citations later, but when politicians can water down and destroy an award for their personal benefit, the award is negated for the true heroes.

The one platoon on the line - MLR - railroad tracks - all had good prepared bunkers. It would take a direct hit by a 120 mortar to be effective. As the weather turned colder in the fall of '51, snow and wind (I guess the '51-52 winter was one of the worst for years - same as Europe in '44-'45. Guess I'm a GD jinx!), the units were issued little drip stoves. The fuel source stayed outside and the #1 or #2 oil flowed by gravity. There was a valve to control the flow but one started with a drip, drip, drip. After full heat was established, one would adjust the valve. If too much fuel, the little stoves would turn cherry red and could explode. When working, they emitted a low grade roar. One could hear them on a cold quiet night. Warm is good!

The company officers would come and go as their time in Korea was up. Most were Category 3 and had to serve 24 months. I was category 4 and had 17 in all. For this reason I don't remember many of the junior officers. Captain Duva was CO when I arrived and when I left. Another good line officer. I remember the CO of, I believe, A Company. He was a category 3. I believe he was a lawyer by training (age 46-50). Probably had some college before the commission or all and went ROTC. Anyway, one day a patrol of his got caught out in no-mans-land. They were wearing snow, camouflage outfits that worked fine in some areas but as they got out in bare areas they stood out like jackrabbits in black plowing. He took his radioman and went out and directed artillery, movement, etc. and, I believe, got all of them back. Some were wounded.

For this action he was called back and criticized for placing himself as CO in danger. He was the CO. His answer was that as CO, I'll go anywhere, anytime I feel. My men need me. No more comments. I remember in visiting with him that his one act while on EAD this time was to stay (hopefully) long enough to make major - O4. Then he would never have a command or patrol, etc. again. I'll bet he made it.

I tried to build a 1000 yard range once in reserve. Never finished. Even in war one had to consider the safety of nearby units on impact area. We did rig up a series of barrels that we whitewashed and used as targets for the heavies and mortars. One barrel stood out clearly at 700-800 yards on a shale hill across the valley. I took my 45 and, watching the dust of impact, held Kentucky and hit the barrel consistently. You could hear the bang of the old 230 grain JRN bullet.

I about caught a mess one day. I can't remember even why I was there. I was out of our regular sector and watched a battery of 105's come from the rear to set up. Most of their activity was masked by a hill to their front. Their left gun, however, could be and was seen by FO's on 1062. About the time the unit was ready for fire orders, here comes the Chinese artillery - 76mm. It hit short - on me! It then corrected and fired for effect. They had the range exactly. One guy running toward a gun disappeared in a cloud of smoke. Not good. Then the battery returned the fire. How effective? I have no idea.

Another time we went back up a draw behind the MLR to set up some blocking positions in case we had to bug out. I had the men digging a position near some small saplings. Outstanding field of fire. I wondered, however, the ease of digging even through good black dirt. A smell began to permeate through the air. A sweet, sickening smell. All of a sudden the pick goes smuck, into the area. Up comes a skull with hair still on the bone. A grave. Enough of this. We back filled and left. The thing that threw us here was that we thought that all Koreans are buried on hills with some of the earthly goods and covered with a mound of dirt. Buried sitting upright. Who was this person then? I figure a KIA soldier killed months before as the armies came down or returned in the ebb and flow prior to the lines becoming stabilized. We meant no disrespect.

Lady had her pups sometime in here. We knew nothing about the later move to

Koji-Do - not even rumors, so mother and pups received perfect care. Dogs are considered a delicacy in many parts of Asia and Korea was no exception. There was little danger here as long as we had the family under our protection. I wonder if some would understand when I say that even today I could kill a man before I could kill a dog. Now a rabid or attack dog is another story.

One day on the MLR I heard a vehicle coming. Now, this is a no-no. Any vehicle meant instant shelling. Here comes an ambulance. The big red cross quite plain on the side of the vehicle, but no guarantee that the emblem would be respected. In the cab were two black soldiers. They stopped as I stepped out on the road. One asked, "Where are we, Sir?" as he saluted. Another no-no. I don't want salutes on the line - it identified the recipient. I answered, "you're on the MLR men." "What's an MLR, Sir?" I pointed to Hill 1062. "There are the Chinese, here we are, you're in the middle." One of them said, "I told you we took the wrong turn. Get the hell out of here." They jockeyed the ambulance around and roared off back down the road. We were lucky - nothing incoming.

Another time on the MLR someone decided that an old WWII weapon, the half-track with quad 50's could be used in a defense posture. The weapon was originally designed and used as AA defense. The track was backed up to a point on the railroad tracks so only the guns were showing. The problem was that the only place you could find this elevation in the trackage was on our right flank. Too far right to be very effective, the guns pointed at a small mountain directly to the front. Now the Chinese are not going to attack off a mountain. Also, that day with all the noise and movement, the Chinese got mad enough to fire some 82's at us. Quite ineffective, but they get our attention. If the Chinese had had or used a good sniper rifle, they could have killed all of us.

Another day we got careless and paid for it. In addition to the bunkers on the MLR, we had built bunkers behind the line. A bit more freedom. The area was still under direct observation from the Chinese, but a finger of land provided some protection from the right flank. This day, the kitchen had decided to feed forward with a hot meal. They set up back in a draw behind another hill. All went well until just after feeding was finished. I'm sure the Chinese had watched patiently. In came a barrage of 77mm. Right in the draw. Very, very accurate. My platoon sergeant, Mike Schoen, had just left the bunker when the barrage started. For 30 seconds or so we all got some good jolts - then quiet. Out I went expecting to find Mike and a mess. What a surprise! Nobody anywhere. The men had all been able to find protection. There was one ROK soldier killed. He had dived into a bunker covered by a canvas and instead of turning right out of the doorway, he sat. Shrapnel got him. You could see where the pieces went through the canvas. One man was wounded quite severely in the neck. We called for assistance and an O type chopper (MASH) came immediately. Loaded and left.

As primitive as the country was with the electrical system and roads due to the Japanese occupation, the Koreans were years ahead of us in heating. I saw my first

radiant heating of a house. Crude but effective! Complex if you didn't know what you were doing and we didn't. Each house was about two feet off the ground. Clay or mud walls with a rice straw roof. To the side of the entrance at ground level was a blackened opening that had been used for fire. Rice straw was placed in the opening, ignited, and the heat and smoke would follow a back and forth exit under the floor to the chimney on the opposite side of the house. Our attempt at comfort (it was cold) was a complete failure. We didn't know how much straw to burn or how long. So the floor got warm to the touch, then warmer and warmer and then, if we hadn't gotten the hell out, toasted jollies. Live and learn.

I'm probably forgetting some interesting comments, but about this time we received news, etc. on the withdrawal from Kumkwa and trip to Koji-Do for relief of units of the 2nd Division. I believe elements of the 3rd Division showed and the exchange was made without a hitch. (Things are looking up - looks like I might make it through another war - oops - sorry - Police Action).

CHAPTER 11

KOJI-DO

Some years ago I saved a page-sized map of Korea that I found in a VFW magazine. It showed the various stages of the war as to ground occupation. It was quite a large scale map: 9/16 of an inch = 50 miles, but it did show and name Koji-Do.

From the map I offer some general measurements from the peninsula. Koji-Do lies about 35-40 miles SW of Pusan in the Sea of Japan. Rough measurements as to its location would be 127° East longitude and 34° North latitude. This latitude would be very close to Little Rock, Arkansas. However, with the influence of the water, I doubt if the mean temps and climate have much in common. It is quite an irregularly shaped island. Roughly, 35-40 miles at its longest and 20-25 at its widest. This would give it, at a minimum, about 700 square miles of area. At one point there can't be over a mile or two of water separating the island from the mainland. I don't know where we landed or how many deep water harbors are available or any extreme elevations. I don't remember much sun or rain days either. Just general overcast and a high humidity, but above freezing temperatures. We left the Kumhwa area to come to Koji-Do, which is about 450 air miles north. It was cold in this area.

I have wondered if I'm a jinx in regard to weather. The winter of '44-45 in the ETO was the worst in 50 years. I read or heard that the winter of '51-52 in Korea was one of the coldest in years.

Here again was an example of the Pentagon leadership. I recently read that Koji-Do was the island where all confirmed Hansen disease (leprosy) patients were interned. I'll admit that since leprosy is not communicable and that we did not share any areas, food, or lodging with the indigenous personnel, there wasn't any danger of infection. But, here again, just the chosen few manipulated my life.

Our move south started like all news in the service...by rumor. First, information was we're pulling off the line and going somewhere. (The tactical sequence at that time was two weeks on the line, one week in reserve. This was a rotation action within the regiment.) After a while we heard we were going to relieve a battalion of the Second Infantry Division presently stationed at the camp. As to where this camp was located and how we were to get there...no news...no nothing.

Any change in the service is always received with a degree of apprehension. Will I be better off or worse? Maybe some of the volunteering done is the result of this mind set. Anyway, I had at least three immediate concerns on hearing the rumor. One was a cautious projection and the other two were personal problems based on my unit area and assignment.

First, if I was pulling off the line and going south, was I leaving the combat area? If so, it looked as if I was going to make it through another war. I would write home to my wife and mother to this effect. Maybe? Maybe? At 30 years of age, married with one child, a son, my volunteering days were long gone. The Col. (S/SGT) David

Hackworth's need for excitement was long gone. No more nonsense patrols and snoop missions. A nice feeling to hope that you were once again going home...in one piece.

Secondly, what can I and should I do with Lady? Lady, one German Shepherd dog and her six pups; the pups nearly ready to wean and start on regular army scraps. Where Lady came from and how she came to my unit I don't remember. I do remember finding a "husband" for her with the CO of the 35th Regiment and the "honeymoon" was successful. I don't remember the sex ratio but one pup...biggest, noisiest, feistiest, etc., I named Elmer. He was a con man and could and would steal your heart. The decision I made after the rumor became reality and our move began is quite a story.

Thirdly, what and where for Grumpo? Grumpo was my house boy. About 15 years old and I inherited him from the lieutenant I relieved. He stayed with the company trains area so I only saw him every three weeks sometimes. Other times I was on the line. At least near the line. He was always on the lookout for ROK soldiers. If he had been spotted he would have been drafted on the spot and assigned to the ROK (Republic of Korea) army. I paid him \$7.00 a month which was more than an ROK private received for his pay and he got his food and clothing from us. The CO had a "house boy," Jack, I didn't trust! He claimed he was 17 but he always struck me as being too snoopy and aloof. I just didn't trust him. They did our laundry, etc., rolled up the sack each day, aired it out when possible. Jack also spoke fairly decent English?!?!?

I could include this story under the general chapter of Korea but will tell it now as I thought of it. The American troops in Korea were exposed to some rare and exotic diseases not common to the U.S. One of these was first called Manchurian Fever. I understand it was later renamed Hemorrhagic Fever. In animals it is called Hemorrhagic Septicemia. About 150-200 GI's contacted the disease. Some died. Here again we have some more of the Pentagon reporting. It reported by euphemizing only a few died, only a few have permanent damage, etc. Like so often in World War II - quiet sectors, only local patrolling, etc., only 7 KIA-40 WIA. If you are one of the "few" it's a final for you.

Since the Japanese had been in China for years prior to World War II, their medical records were examined and their medical assistance was requested. The popular series, M*A*S*H, had an episode on the disease. This was after the fact so they discovered the Catch 22 of the treatment and saved the life of the GI. As with any fever, treatment to cool the body and infusion of fluids are/were SOP. With this disease, however, the addition of fluids raised the systolic pressure to dangerous highs which then started the destruction of the kidneys and the liver.

The army moved quickly on this problem. It discovered that the disease was spread and carried by fleas on host animals...the host animals in Korea being rats. Probably true anywhere in the world. Kill the rats, burn the carcass, to kill the fleas. (If any of you have ever put a deer or coyote carcass in the trunk of your car, let the body heat dissipate, you remember the thousands of fleas. At least with a coyote or fox.)

If I remember correctly, my knowledge of the Korean language, "chee" or "chi"

means rat and chee-chee means breasts. Quite a language.

The rumor was gone. The move was now a fact. The unit would leave immediately after Christmas. Elements of the 3rd Division had been up to the line and all particulars for the phase out and take over were in place. Looking back, I remember it went like clockwork, no hitches, no problems. It is doubtful that we fooled the Chinese. There was no unusual activity or excessive troop movements, but with the observation available from old 1062, they could see everything. Also, since they held the high ground, they would be damn fools to come off their advantage.

Grumpo found a new home with the exchange company. He knew that his chance on making a transfer was nil. I hadn't even considered it. Especially since none of us knew where in the hell we were going. I don't think the camp even had a name as yet. I had decided to take Lady and the pups. I never cleared this with the CO but I was sure that as long as I (we) didn't interfere or complicate the move that he wouldn't care. He was a good officer...a recalled reservist who just wanted to serve his tour and get home.

I started to get ready...plan for the move. Everything I did I would have to do three times. I had my own personal gear and equipment, Lady, and the pups. Somewhere I got another mummy bag...sleeping bag...fart sack to carry the pups. They were weaned by now and ate "off the table" and probably weighed 6-7 pounds each. So, $6 \times 6 = 36$ or $6 \times 7 = 42$. Lady probably weighed 65-75 pounds. She was a lady, so attentive and loving and she minded. The pups, and especially Elmer, were hopeless. I swear I'd see Lady shake her head with embarrassment from time to time.

We pulled out early in the morning by 6 X 6 truck. We were out of reach of the Chink artillery even if they were aware of the move. I've been lucky in this respect that in both WW II and Korea I didn't get to the theater of operations until we had air superiority. This makes one hell of a difference in what you can or cannot do in daytime. Now with the choppers and close support jets with all the night-time infra red equipment, etc., one better be on his toes 24 hours a day.

We had over 100 miles to go from Kumhwa to Inchon so took several breaks (piss call). I let Lady off the truck and she was wild. Maybe hurting like all of us to go? Anyway around and around she went from truck to truck. I let the pups play at the side of the road. When ordered to mount up there was no problem. Scooped the pups up and in the sack and back in the truck. With Lady...nothing. Hollered and looked until we started to roll, but no Lady. Luckily all the troops knew her and someone had put her on a truck ahead. She was frantic looking for her pups, but trusting of anyone in OD33.

We made Inchon in good time. I'm sure that the S3 planning the move had some time factors in mind. Some were critical. I believe the tide was out when we hit Inchon. What a mess! A big harbor with surrounding hills and mud, stinking, stinking mud as far as the eye could see. Looking back I'm sure the loading procedure hinged on the tide and timing. There was nothing in sight that would float and carry us to whatever.

As the tide came in, so did the LSI's (Landing Ship Infantry) and other shallow

draft ships. The ship, I remember the name, USS Henrico was anchored out of sight. When one looks at this area and realizes the timing and planning for the Inchon landing, it's scary. If anything had slowed down that time schedule, we would have lost thousands. General MacArthur is to be commended, along with the logistics, etc., that made the landing such a success. One time when the Good Lord had to be on our side.

We started loading around noon, I think. The USS Henrico was a troop transport of about 25,000 tons. It was probably 500-600 feet long and had an 80 foot beam. Draft must have been at least 25 feet. It was quite a climb from the LSI to the deck. Standing right beside the entrance were the three CO's of the units, Army and Navy. I climbed up with my personal gear and weapon, etc., received my bunk assignment and hustled down to dump it. Not much of a problem since all traffic was down. But, I had two more loads to get; Lady and the pups. Up to the deck again and going against traffic, down to the LSI. I grabbed Lady and up I went. This time I noticed a grimmer set on the jaw of the ship's CO. My old man gave me a look which said plenty and the first mate (XO) smiled. Down I go and dump Lady...back up against the traffic and down to the LSI. I tried to adjust the pups in the bag so they wouldn't be crushing each other by putting all in the top half of the sack. A mistake with Elmer. Everything is going fine, I'm nearly back on deck, the three top brass are still standing and, within three feet of the group, Elmer sticks his head out of the sack and cuts loose with an "Arf-Arf." The Navy CO blanches, my CO scowls and the XO smiles. I don't stop...down to my assigned area and plop.

A few minutes later the intercom comes on with "Lt. Christensen, report to stateroom." Here it comes. I double it up, knock on the door and a voice says, "Enter." I walk in, stand at attention, salute, hold the salute and report, "Lt. Christensen reporting as ordered, sir." The CO is pissed. There is no smile on his face. And he didn't offer me at ease. He was pissed!. The conversation went something like this: "Why have you got those GD dogs, Christensen?" "I couldn't leave them, sir." "Why didn't you clear with your CO?" "Didn't figure I had to, sir." Why didn't you attempt to clear with me?" "Sir, if I had tried and your answer had been no, I wouldn't have them on board." First hint of a smile and leadership! "Get out of here! Dismissed." A salute, an about face, and I'm gone.

Some character comments on the battalion CO. Remember he was a ROTC graduate from SDSU. Probably an honor graduate, so offered a regular commission. Don't know how many years or where he had been but he was fair with me this day and I never heard any derogatory comments about him.

Back to my quarters and my dogs. I started getting my gear in place and put the sack I had carried the pups in on the floor for their bed. Lady was taking all this moving and commotion in stride. (I honestly believe that animals and kids can sense fear, anger, or tenseness in people and act accordingly.) I heard a voice asking for Lt. Christensen...the GI with the dogs. Into the room comes the XO. He puts me at ease, pats Lady, grabs a pup and lets me know the reason for his visit. "I love dogs! The old

man (CO) hates them. Since we're this far along and now underway, the dogs can stay. Any mess you will clean up and clean up fast. OK? Understood?" "Yes, sir!" I saw him several times in the next 2-3 days.

A couple hours later I heard a voice asking for the dogs. Here was a chief petty officer with a fresh baked meat loaf of 3-4 pounds and a quart of some type of artificial cream for the pups. The dogs had a very delightful and filling meal their first night at sea.

I would guess that the mileage from Inchon to Koji-Do was 600-700 nautical miles. No one seemed to be in a hurry and I don't know the cruising speed of the Henrico but would guess 15-18 knots. So, we were at sea three nights and two full days. It was a pleasant trip and a big change from the snow and cold of the Kumhwa area.

This was the fourth sea trip I had taken, courtesy of the U.S. Army. What a difference it makes when the trip is taken during a war, away from a war, as a private, a staff sergeant, and an officer. The freedom you have as a commissioned officer is a pleasure. Treated as a person instead of cattle. We, the officers, did, however, get a taste of traditional BS so prevalent in the services.

Since a commissioned officer is a true gentleman, he cannot accept charity or considerations which would or could possibly obligate him/her to the donor. So, you are paid a base salary for your rank and time in service (longevity), money for your food, and money for your quarters. The entire amount was called P & A (Pay and Allowances). The food allowance, I believe, at that time was \$42.00 a month. Each meal had a value and if in garrison and you ate at a mess hall, that amount was paid for and your signature received.

I'm finally getting to the point of the traditional BS. Whenever an officer is assigned to a war zone, he no longer receives his food or chow pay. Therefore, since he has paid the amount in full each month he can eat anywhere without paying or signing. But the navy has its traditions, also. At our first meal it was announced that there was and would be for the duration of the trip a \$2.00 per day surcharge for the ship mess fund. We complained for two reasons. First, we had already paid our \$42.00 (never actually saw it) and two, we didn't have any money. Since everything is furnished in combat, you don't need money. We lost our complaint in a hurry. Either pay or don't eat. I believe our company CO worked out a blanket payment because we had no money. Love that navy! Like all pleasant trips, this one ended too quickly.

We reached Koji-Do on the morning of the third day. I figured it was a deep water port as the ship anchored near land and there was lots of civilization showing. This entire operation was far bigger than I had imagined. Jeeps, trucks, activity was everywhere. Based on later knowledge, I would guess there were port units, quartermaster, engineers, MP's, logistics and intelligence units.

Whoever, they were ready for us. It was far easier to unload my three step cargo than load. Lady seemed excited to be back on land. The pups...play, pet, and feed and they were happy. Our assigned area was not too far from the port area. Tents were

pitched and waiting and as we drove in and unloaded. One could see the compound after compound all surrounded with barbed wire, etc. We got a lot of stoic stares.

D Company was assigned to compound 66. This compound was the heart of the POW control. It was the officer compound and held all the field grade officers, 04-10, Major to MG, the brains for all the POW's on the island. We heard later that the ranking officer, a major general, had let himself be caught as a line-crosser and then funneled south to the island to assume command.

One thing I never gave much thought to was how many compounds were there? Number 66 was the highest count, but did numbers go in sequence from one? Each compound was at least 100 yards X 100 yards, or approximately a football field square. Each was divided into four parts, with barbed wire restricting movement within the parts, as well as reinforced wire in the perimeter. We could see and guard what was in sight, but found out later that the ground was honeycombed with access tunnels, etc. To what extent I never knew, but the North Koreans like to dig. Look at later history around Panmunjom and along the 38th.

Prior to our relieving the previous units, a battalion from the Second Division, with approximately 1500-1600 men, if full strength, the battalion had had its share of problems. Basically not enough men! We came down with a regiment, or 4500 men, and we had our hands full. A rule of thumb in the old days was after getting established you test the enemy. They beat us to it, but the timing was all in our favor after the incident. The POW's found that we meant to do the job...regardless. And, the North Koreans and Chinese respect strength. So do I!

We had been on the job only a few days when 66 decided to test our worth. We had towers around each compound and in one corner a flak wagon. This was a carryover from WWII. The armament consisted of four 50 caliber machine guns mounted on a pedestal which was controlled electrically. Cyclic rate was stepped up to probably 750 rounds per minute X four, or 3000 a minute...when they were working. Always delicate to use!

An MP (not ours and what he was doing there I never learned) was inside the compound alone. Not bright! You didn't intimidate the North Koreans and CCF by your size. Somehow he got too close to the wire, was seized, beaten senseless and dropped to the ground. I happened to be near the CO when the call came. "Let's go, Chris!" Capt. D, radio man, myself entered the compound. The delegation was waiting for us. We went into the quarter section that had the flak wagon on the corner. What happened? Who did this? What the hell? Etc., etc. No expression...no acknowledgment. Their rank was unknown to us but I'm sure all were top level. They spoke and understood English...par excellence!

We had been there only a short time when I realized I had my .45. Oh, oh! What's wrong, Chris? Didn't check my .45, sir. I drew the .45, cocked it and let the slide bang home and then backed up against the fence with my back against the wire. If they rush us, Nick, there'll be seven that will never see their wife or mother again! Capt. D took the PR21 (radio) and probably talked to the XO (executive officer). His

conversation went something like this: "If any shots are fired before we leave, I want you to open up with everything we have. Kill everyone in the compound...everyone. Then, I want you to enter and insure that everyone is dead. If not, kill them." (Some clarification, I'm sure with the CO listening). Then, "no, we messed up and if we lose, we lose."

When he handed the radio back to the radio man, you could see and sense the change in the delegation. They had a far more sincere look and the tone of their voices was subdued. Captain D made it clear what he expected and we left guardedly. I was there about a month before I left for the States. We never had a similar incident. Isn't strength always respected?

Later in '52, or maybe early '53, an incident did occur in this compound with probably the same members in the delegation. It did not end in our favor. It made us look like oafs. The names and date of the participants aren't really important. What happened and the results are. These results always occur when you have arrogant, ignorant, pompous assholes trying to flaunt or impress by their rank. Maybe you remember when two BG's (Brigadier Generals) were captured and held prisoners in compound 66. After days of BS and Lord knows what concessions and promises, they were released. They were later court-martialed and reduced a rank to colonel and retired. I wonder if the United States Government and the U.S. Army in its empathy and concern for the welfare of its personnel, would have done as much for a captain and a first lieutenant and an enlisted man? Here again, I believe the two generals were West Point graduates.

English as a second language is quite common. I doubt if many Americans realize the extent of languages in non-Americans. And its use is usually quite fluent. They learned by the book, not the street. Looking back in both wars, WWII and Korea, how many times did I or U.S. soldier compromise a mission or action by careless talk in a mixed area? There is the old recommendation on learning a new language quickly...go to bed with a woman who speaks it. Was ist das?

I have not used full names to any extent throughout the book. I have used only an initial or title. Don't know if I legally need to get permission to use...good or bad...and so many years have gone by. However, there is one name I must use in full. I have some comments on the Christmas menu...dinner we enjoyed just before we pulled out for our trip to Koji-Do. The comments followed by his full signature and title. Colonel David Hackworth, in his book, *About Face*, comments positively on this same man. I think you'll agree when you read the several incidents I was involved in with him. I'm also sure that he probably never made any higher than Colonel...06...during his career. He had too much common sense, empathy, and consideration for the men to ever made or be considered "Pentagon" material. Name: Willard E. Stambaugh, Major, S2 of the 27th Inf. (Wolfhounds). 1951.

February 1999: I met Colonel David Hackworth last fall (1998) when he spoke here for a local organization. In his book, *About Face*, he alludes to Major Stambaugh. The Colonel knew and worked with him both as a S/SGT and a newly commissioned

lieutenant. In visiting with the Colonel after his presentation, I asked about the Major. He had to think a minute and expressed surprise that I would remember his name. (I didn't tell him I had Major Stambaugh's signature on the Xmas '51 menu, which the Major attended as our guest. He retired as a Colonel and lives in or near Denver, CO. I'm not surprised that he only made O6, Colonel. He was too good to soldier to make the "heroes" rank. I'll get to Denver some day and look him up. I'll bring the menu card too.

We were quartered in GP (general purpose) tents not far from our assignment compound 66. The company kitchens were set up in this area and were the source of the line in Verse E, line 4; poured coffee grounds on their finds.

The first incident occurred only a few days after we had landed and set up "house." Lady and dogs, of necessity, had to use the GP tents as their home. I had no way to keep them corralled. So, I would keep the flaps down and tied and the herd ran loose. They left their messes scattered throughout the tent floor. Luckily, the floor was wood and above ground. I had the same deal with the other officers using the tent that I had on board ship. I cleaned up the messes. No problem and in later life, the same in my yard. This practice also helped me develop into one of the fastest and best diaper changers west of the Mississippi.

I had burst into the tent before chow for some reason and after the anvil chorus quieted down, I noticed Major Stambaugh sitting on a bunk. I'm sure he had been playing with the pups and Lady. It was fairly dark in the tent but as he turned to me, I could see his face was set. "This place is a mess, Christensen. A GD mess!" "I know, sir. I'll get it cleaned up." "You aren't listening, Christensen. This place is a GD mess." This second comment pissed me off. "It's the only home they have, Sir." "I don't give a GD, Christensen, it's still a GD mess." "It's the only home they and I have, Sir. And, if you don't like it, you can leave."

You could read a paper by his face. He was red and pissed. I should also mention he was a West Point graduate. He stood up, stared at me for a second...I thought I caught the hint of a smile...and he left. That was it. A First Lieutenant just doesn't tell a Major to get the hell out of his quarters. Major Stambaugh also knew that this was my home. And Koreans looked at dogs as a delicacy. I didn't want to have the pups end up on a table or floor and have the stew stirred...the puppies are on the bottom.

A couple of days after the episode with Major Stambaugh, I got my orders for my return to the states and separation. I was in a CAT 4 category. Eighteen months and release if I had two years or more on active duty prior to September, 1946. Most of the reserve officers were in this category. This category was established after the initial recall in 1950 to recognize prior service and combat time. I remember one lieutenant who just hadn't lived right or else his middle name was Unlucky. He had less than two years of active duty prior to September, 1946...missed the time element by less than two weeks. Then, when the 27th pulled out of Koji-Do in March or April of '52, he went back on the line and lost a foot due to a mine...less than two weeks before he was due to

go home. A nice guy! I can still remember his name. He was from Nebraska or Kansas.

I met Major Stambaugh on the way to mess this day. He was quite cordial and pleasant. "See you got your orders for home, Chris." "Yes, Sir!" "Like to make you a deal, Chris." "Oh?" "Yes. How about signing up for CAT 3 (another 6 months)." "No way, Sir!" "I'll get you a captaincy in 30 days if you'll sign." "Thanks, but no thanks, Sir. It ain't the same with a wife and son at home." (I wonder what part, if any, that Capt. D had in this?)

We did have a real problem with the repatriotization program being conducted on Koji-Do and all other POW camps. I understand that a board of peers...South or North Korean...separate or mixed...would meet with each prisoner. The benefits of democracy, I'm sure, were stressed and exploited. Couldn't have mixed the board could they? Anyway, there had to be a leak somewhere because all or some of the POW's expressing an interest or more clarification in a change...North to South...ended up dead. The leak could have been the board or just the local intelligence. They were good. They were hard, cruel and unforgiving.

This is all hearsay to me because we never lost a man in 66. The enlisted was a different story. Each morning there would be a formation and head count. Many mornings the count would be minus one. At first our troops would find the body in the latrine. Later it was as if the body had evaporated. We heard that they would kill, cut up in pieces and disperse by dawn. This was February so one could figure the daylight-night ratio. The value of life varies throughout the world, believe me.

I didn't give this problem too much thought at the time. Every day was busy and most of us weren't trained to be homicide detectives. Now as I look at this mess, I see one hundred and more years of top level ignorance. I suspect that our State Department was involved in this repatriotization theme, along with elements of the U.S. Army. Will our politicians and top brass ever learn that when you divide, you lose. Either you're a "North" or a "South." Look at the world since 1860. This great country became divided with the largest casualties ever experienced in any war prior and since. We allowed Palestine to be divided in 1948. Blood has flowed ever since. Germany after WWII, Korea after WWII, to appease Russia, Viet-Nam, and, and, and. Just thought...Spain in '35. We, America, cannot be the world's politician, minister, or priest or rabbi, cadres for war training, or nuclear or petroleum baron.

I did go into another compound a couple of times. The word got around that many of the POW's were quite artistic. Many could copy photographs for a couple of cigarettes. I checked on this and did get a drawing of my wife and son from a photograph. A very good likeness. There was no intimidation or threat here...strictly volunteer, so I can't see that their work was incorrect policy

I got down to the port a couple of times and one couldn't help notice the number of women everywhere. Heard that what I saw was an estimated 2000 prostitutes on the island. The most popular book on the island was either a Sears or Wards catalog. Instead of money, the gals that were shacking with a GI got clothing each month. There were also a lot of kids. I don't know if all had mothers. Some dressed and looking quite

pitiful. GI's are known for their love of kids and dogs. I guess some armies in the world wonder how we can win anything. After all, playing with children and animals is pure weakness. I guess a matter of opinion. Anyway, I heard of a Shangrila on the other side of the island. Clothes and candy and an open air market. So....

I had a little scrip and got five or ten dollars more from the unit. I had no way of knowing what to expect. Just follow the road. So, away we went. My driver and I. A lot of humanity on the way. Mostly women and kids. Huts, smoke, noise! It was a sunny day and after about 30 minutes or more we reached the area. I don't believe it was a natural port, but water as far as one could see. The market was busy. Hundreds milling around. All Asiatics. Nothing in English and no GI uniforms or equipment. I didn't like the looks of the place. No one appeared to notice us, but they were watching. I told my driver to sit tight, stay by the Jeep and don't fall asleep. I wouldn't be long. I found the candy booths quickly and, if I remember correctly, the prices were marked in yen. The ratio then??? Sticks in my mind about 360:1. Whatever! A merchant spoke English, recognized my rank and asked if he could help. Yes, help me with the pricing. I spent about \$6.00 scrip and had just put the candy in a big bag when I felt a hand on my shoulder and a voice asked, "What the hell are you doing here, lieutenant? I turned to see a guy dressed like all the rest, but he looked Italian. I'm sure he had been watching me and actually, I had not been in any form of clandestine action, so I answer him, "Buying some candy for the kids near the compounds. "Okay, okay, you got it; now, get the hell out of here." "Yes, Sir!" To the Jeep I went, in I got, and away we went. On the way back the kids would line the road and I would stop and be the Pied Piper. Then I noticed that the mothers would slip forward and take it all away from the kids. So I quit and saved what I had for our own area.

Looking back on that open air market with how many nationalities??? Was it a front page espionage? Were drugs the key to the market? The guy that stopped me was not Asiatic and spoke English like an American. And, he was not happy at my presence. I hope my short candy spree didn't compromise some intricate plan or operation for that day. Just another ground-pounder screwing up again. Ha!

Actually, I only spent about a month in Koji-Do. Apparently, one incident left a lasting impression on me. As I've said before, the American GI loved kids and dogs. So, whenever we were exposed to children, this love surfaced. One of the verses in Chapter One came from this short stay. I'm referring to Verse E and especially the last line: "Poured coffee grounds on their finds." The entire verse comes from this exposure.

Our kitchen and mess area was set up near compound 66. I'm kind of blank on exactly where and how we ate but would guess we had a GP (General Purpose) tent with tables similar to the mess tents you see in M*A*S*H. We were probably served under the tent and then washed our gear outside in a wash and garbage line. I'm sure you've all seen the garbage cans with the mission heaters to heat the water.

This is where the "humanity" would congregate and wait for their scraps. Some of the women would have a baby strapped to their back and some had both a baby on

the back and one or two on the ground. I can remember their pitiful looks and the continuous jabber. They were pests, but it was their island and we weren't even guests.

One day I happened to watch a couple of GI's in the line. They were waving their gear with the leftovers under the noses of the women. The women acted as if this was a promise of that particular food. They would hold out their various pots or pans and smile. Then the GI's would pour their leftover coffee on the food and dump it all in pure garbage. Funny. Funny. This pissed me off and, right or wrong, I told both of them to either dump their GD garbage or save it for the women. They didn't owe the women a thing, but we've got enough problems without cruelty. I think it worked.

What to do with the dogs? Lady and the pups made seven. I worried about their future for none would last long on their own. Where the answer came from or who can take credit, I don't know. What I did made sense and I like to think that the dogs made it back to the mainland and up to the line when the unit pulled out of Koji-Do in March or April.

What I did was give one pup to each of the three company CO's. I believe D Company kept Lady and Elmer. One pup went to battalion headquarters. Yes, to the CO who was so upset about the pups on the way down. The seventh...can't remember. Maybe one company took two. They were getting good sized and tough, so hope they made it.

I left Koji-Do around 1 February 52. Got a ride with my gear down to the harbor and I suppose boarded a Japanese MARU. All Japanese ships were something MARU. To Sasebo, Japan for processing and home. Going Home! Going Home! Two words that at times mean more than thank you.

CHAPTER 12

HOME AGAIN - ORC - USAR

How I got from Koji-Do to Sasebo, Japan is a blank. I suppose I-we (there were others that had met CAT IV requirements) went on a smaller MARU ship. I don't remember docking or how we got to the barracks. Sasebo was a Japanese submarine base during WWII. I'm sorry that I didn't get a chance to see the base but the quarters were quite adequate. Whether for enlisted men or officers, I don't know, but adequate. (I find out years later that Hiroshima and Nagasaki were both within 20-25 miles. Thank you U S Army for your courtesy and concern.) We were at Sasebo for less than a week. Several incidents stand out like yesterday.

Remember the natural rubber "boob" mats so popular around 1950 or so? Natural looking firm "boobs" out of latex rubber. One could buy in pairs, quads, etc., even a bath mat. I swore that if I lived through the Korea mess I'd buy an acre and walk bare footed on the mat the rest of my life. A dear friend had given me a pair. These had been left in my personal gear, stored at division, until I received orders to go to the States. (You do not need Class A clothes on the line.) In repacking my duffel bag, I discovered the latex pair of "boobs." Wrinkled, soiled, etc. from storage. I was going to shave so tucked the pair into my shaving kit. The lavatories were in the middle of the barracks. There were 30-40 beds on each side of the lavatories and toilets. Now remember we were all strangers. Some going home - some coming to Korea. (I imagine I came this way in August 51 from Camp Lucky Strike, but all is a blank.) I shaved and then took out the pair. Prior to this there was talk and chatter - typical latrine activity. As I started to wash the pair, I noticed a quick silence. Most of the men were leaving with looks of pensive amazement. Some even stole a last furtive glance as they turned the corner. Oh! Oh! I finished cleaning the pair, packed up my shaving kit, and entered the barracks parts. Lots of eyes followed my movements. I reached my bunk and the captain sitting there who I had visited with was watching me. I took out the pair and threw them at him with the comment, "This will hold you until you get home." The ice broke. I explained the source and reason behind the pair - a line formed to cop a feel. Back to normal. I was not some deviate.

The powers that be ran more surprise inspections on this group than we received in LeHarve as an EM. Daily warnings on possessing certain items. especially full auto souvenirs. I was concerned. I always regretted turning in the army model Thompson in Le Harve. I could have gotten it home with ease. Now I had a brand new navy model Thompson, a 1927A-1 - pistol grips with ribbed barrel. The best. A Valentine's Day bang-bang. I got it in Koji-Do but don't remember where. Common sense prevailed, however, and I gave it to a captain going to Korea. I hope it helped him.

Two junior officers got caught with Chinese burp guns. They were fined \$150.00 each. The guns were junk. I don't know why they would want one. Remember the stink following the Granada or Panama invasion. Personnel were bringing home AK-

47's. The EM's caught were court court-martialed and discharged. One admiral was reprimanded and allowed to stay in the service. His statement, I didn't know! B.S.!

There was a big PX on the post. Run by our post exchange system with mostly Japanese employees. I bought a MICKI MOTA string of pearls, set of 12 Noretaki dishes, a lot of little souvenirs, a 20 x 50 pair of binoculars. All prices were supposedly controlled by the USPX to insure quality buying. The dishes were shipped by sea. I was home and separated when the set in two big boxes arrived in Fargo. The cost by freight from San Francisco to Fargo was twice or more the cost of the sea shipment from Sasebo to San Francisco. The big platter was broken so I wrote to this effect to the manager of Sasebo PX. I received a very apologetic letter and some weeks later the platter with NC.

I don't remember loading at Sasebo for the trip home. It was a general ship so the food was excellent. However, I did not get a stateroom on the return home. We had bunks - quite wide but, I believe, stacked two high. Once again all of us were strangers so conversations were quite subdued. I imagine most of us were looking ahead to home.

Landing in San Francisco is a blank. Nothing! I imagine we went through customs but this must have been quite superficial for I vaguely remember it was fast and my thinking that here I go again - I could have brought the 1927A-1 home. I'm glad I didn't! A secret only to one's self is of no interest to anyone. I did, however, make a decision that day that I regret today. I considered taking a day and driving up to Sacramento to see Gene and Janet. Not as easy to do in 52 as today. I decided not to and I never saw either of them again. One reason I decided against such a move was that the army had TR's ready and processed us that same day. Were we at the port of entry for all this processing or at the Presidio? I'm blank!

To the airport and loaded on a Strato Cruiser (Boeing). Remember that servicemen were entitled to 66 pounds of baggage and civilians 42. I guess I made it. I had purchased an aluminum suitcase (Japanese made) and had all the souvenirs packed in the suitcase. We took off for Portland, Oregon - our first stop. Remember that the planes in those day flew slower and landed and took off more often. Also, the navigational assists were a far cry from today. Landing required a minimum ceiling of 300 feet. It was overcast and raining in Portland. A stay there and then probably to Spokane, Billings, Bismarck, Jamestown. Ceilings were minimal. On landing in Jamestown, less than 100 air miles to Fargo, we were informed that the ceiling there was less than 300 feet. Get a bus and ride in or fly over to Minneapolis if still socked in. I thought - I've come thousands of miles and it will be up to 300. It was!

My wife disagrees with my interpretation of my arrival. She's more correct, but I'm entitled to some fun and a sense of humor. Waiting at the airport was my wife and son, now over a year old, my mother, and a dear friend. He was the officer, Signal Corps, who wore pinks in Paris in May 1945. As I tell it, my aged mother ran to me with open arms, my friend saluted, and my wife walked slowly forward, put out her hand, and said, "Glad to have you home." (You can see why she doesn't like this

description of the returning hero. Ha.) In five years there were no "Heroes For a Day." The public tolerated the uniform as a necessity. Ten years later the uniform was a stigma. Sad!

Home. Parties, adjustments, then back to Camp McCoy for separation. I started looking for a job but stupidly required Fargo as the only place of vocation. Nearly had a teaching contract in Fargo but ---. Did draw one pay check for unemployment. From Korean rights now \$50.00 a week. Found part-time work and canceled.

That fall I took a job teaching in the little town of Gladstone, North Dakota in Western North Dakota. Was there two years and have many enjoyable memories. The people there are mostly of Hungarian-German ancestry and a pleasure to know. For a small town we were busy, busy with school functions, dances, etc. I was not too popular with the young wives, however. I had my 06 and reloading equipment and when the guys my age saw this cheaper method of hunting and shooting, all of them joined the group. The local American Legion Club had a dozen or so 06's - functional - for club activities - funerals, etc. and all disappeared to be changed and scoped for personal use. Also, the fall of '52-'53 was an excellent year for pheasants and that winter the jackrabbits were at the top of their cycle.

I mention this civilian information because it led to a change in my military status. I had enough EAD for '52 but wanted to maintain the 50 points necessary to remain in the ORC reserve.

North Dakota has a well established National Guard System. In Dickinson, North Dakota, 12 miles west, was an armory and large unit. I contacted them and found that they could use me starting in 53 as an attached officer. Form 1380! My wife was also pregnant and the baby due in March, 53, so this worked out well. I sent her home to have the baby, Nancy Grace, and I completed the year at Gladstone.

That fall I taught and assisted on a regular basis at the Dickinson ANG. It was a pleasure to get back in some military unit. I continued this attachment till the spring of 54. The students knew of these activities and expressed an interest in the ways of the Army. I promised them - if I could - I would let them all "see for themselves." Now try this today. I "acquired" 10 pounds of TNT in half pound blocks. I believe it's called MR'd (military reassignment) an M-1 and a 1919 A4 light machine gun plus ammo, primer cord, electric detonators, and was ready for their fun day in the park. Discipline was not a problem in the 50's. (Children were always boxed between the home and the school, not leading the charge like today.) To the park we went. Anyone who wanted could fire the weapons. Safety was no problem. They minded. I then showed the kids how to blow stumps, etc. Most were ranch kids and the lesson proved to be invaluable. (I had fathers call and thank me.) Anyway, all went well with not even a close call. I cleaned and returned the weapons. I had hoped for but had not asked that I be attached for two weeks at their annual summer camp at Camp Grafton, North Dakota. No orders - no nothing. I heard later that the CO really chumped some buttocks when he found out too late that orders had not been cut. Like he said, the man helped all year without pay - it was the least we could do. Oh, well!

I decided to get my masters degree so back to Fargo and the NDSU. I had picked up 12 hours in the summer of 53 but needed full-time status for the thesis. Also, I needed money in addition to the Korean Bill. I found a small MI (military intelligence) unit and got myself assigned. There were three officers, including myself, and one sergeant. We were assigned a total study of the general area, transportation, communication, education, finance, etc. A lot of this was done during the year and then in the summer of 55 we had two weeks in Chicago at Fort Sheridan`. Actually never there - or were we, quarters and mess, ?? to consolidate our "home" work. Long before we reached Chicago we all saw a very disturbing fact - so obvious that how could one miss it - that between Chicago and Seattle on the NW railroad route of the Northern Pacific and the Great Northern that there were only two railroad bridges across the Missouri River. Two "booms" and we would be in trouble. This is still true today and today we have many more "booms" to contend with. We worked a great deal at the University of Chicago's library. Many mornings we would ride the "L" to work. Here again one day one realizes how small this world actually is. Riding one day I looked around and then a double look. Here riding to work was the brother of one of my best friends on the way to his job. What are these odds? A very pleasant two weeks and home. The ORC and USAR cash saved our necks. And I always brought it home and put it in the middle of the table.

The MI unit - I believe - 455th designation, phased out that summer. I received my MS in Science in June 55. Now a job! I didn't want to go back to teaching so I tried some Civil Service exams. Hurry up and wait. In the meantime I worked construction and carpentry. I still retain today some of the short-cuts a young foreman taught me.

In the spring of 56 I received notice that I was being considered for the position of a G7-Federal Investigator. I was interviewed, investigated, cleared, and reported for work in St. Paul, Minnesota in April. Two weeks training in Washington, D.C. and to work. After meeting some of the agents and supervisors I began to have misgivings. Shades of the Army! A quick story to prove my point. During an early screening interview I reported to a large room in the Fargo Post Office. Luxury! Three men about 35-40 or so in business suits sat at a large table facing me. After the introductions and niceties one asked me this question. He said, "You are now on the job and have established quite a reputation as a public speaker. You have been ordered to St. Louis to give a talk on a given day at a set time. No one meets you at the airport. You take a cab to the hotel. No one meets you there. You receive directions to the lecture room and enter. You see various size groups scattered around all visiting quietly. What do you do?" I answered, "I'd look around and then go to a group and introduce myself." He asked, "What group and what caused you to pick the group - nearness, size, composition - what?" I answered, "One that appealed to me." He sat upright - "Appealed to you?" I caught and resented his implication - homosexuality. I looked at him for a second and answered, "As with women, we all have a type that appeals to us personally - size, looks, voice, etc. If we all walked into a room full of naked women, I don't think we'd all select the same woman." Silence - fini!

I lost the year of 1956 as far as the 50 points toward retirement. There was no way I could attend any meetings, anywhere. They, the Civil Service Commission, ran my butt off. Since I had never moved my family from Fargo to St. Paul, thank God!, I received every rotten, lengthy tour. (Today this cannot be - finally some protection.) A quick story here. We reported our data in the first person. The FBI reports their data in the third person. I received a case that required a recheck. Part of the information available was from an FBI early check. In the neighborhood phase the agent alluded to the testimony of three neighbors - all positive - nothing derogatory. This neighborhood was a small town in a farm area. There were no neighbors and those that were in the area were of different surnames. Guess the agent was in trouble on his time quota. Yes, all cases had a time formula. The applicant was a qualified person in all areas of the investigation but I was shocked to find that FBI agents are human, are fallible, can and do embellish, and do take questionable shortcuts. Is the old breed of Melvin Purvis gone? I know Thompsons are out and H & K's in. Change, change! In the 50's, the ORC was changed to USAR and remains so today.

In the fall of 1957 I began teaching at Breckenridge, Minnesota. A small town of about 4,000 across the river from Wahpeton, North Dakota. Wahpeton had a guard unit stationed there so a reserve unit assignment was impossible. A break came in the local paper - an advertisement for a reserve officer. The officer who placed the ad was on the school board. I joined. The unit headquarters and one platoon was stationed in Fergus Falls, Minnesota about 25 miles away. The unit was hurting for any officer with range firing experience. Ha! I invented it! The CO could relax - a range officer would take care of the summer's firing at Camp McCoy.

I could mention many names of officers assigned to the regiment - the 409th - of the 103rd Division, but I mention only one. The regimental CO, Colonel Arnold T. Barber. Here was a real infantry soldier. He had commanded a battalion in WWII and truly understood the idiosyncrasies of the infantry mind. I will mention him more than once in relating the next four years - 1957-1961.

The first summer camp went well. It got over 100° one day and I thought to myself, what the hell are you doing here? You are 36 years old, only a first lieutenant, and crawling around these boonies (we killed two snakes one day.) I survived and actually lost some pounds. I came home a bronzed hero - to my kids - and cash for the boss.

Events I remember the early years. A sad event happened the day summer camp opened. A young second lieutenant was killed on his way to reporting in. Apparently he had had a flat tire some miles down the road. He put on the spare and took off - fast. He lost control and died in the crash. Why? He had put on a new set of the first radial tires on the market just days before and when the flat occurred he put on the spare - a biased ply. No go! We all know now that is deadly, but not in 1957.

Another time an artillery unit had set up and laid in. The first round went on the way. What had happened exactly I never heard but this first round landed outside the camp perimeters in a farmers field. He was a veteran of WWII so recognized the

explosion. He called camp headquarters immediately. Also, back at the guns the FO knew something was wrong in that no round in or near the impact area. Someone misread the aiming circle or ?? I heard that the top brass considered hanging the poor second lieutenant but have no way of knowing whether this happened or not.

Our range work went like a text book story. As usual, however, one was graded on when the firing started - ready or not. So, since the advisors wanted the first round off at whatever time they had scheduled, I would put one round into the dirt and then soon afterwards, the actual firing would start. The camp training was a week in garrison and then a week in the field. Some years that was good. Some years the weather was a mess.

Each year after the week in the field the old man, Col. Barber, would throw a party for all the officers. Booze and food. We always saved our last starched khakis for this party. I was new that year so only a face above a name tag. Col. Barker came up and commented on our excellent and a couple superior ratings. Thank you, Sir! In later years this happened again. By now I knew the man for what he was - an excellent infantry officer. I can't remember exactly what he said but his answer and actions to my comments were strictly excellent protocol and control. I had said, "Sir, I'd follow you to hell and back but I can't say the same for some of your staff." (He smiled and left).

The four year program in the BOAC schooling started in 1959. This was a school type offering of classes at the home armory. One attended 24 hours of classes and then went on active duty for two weeks in the summer at the post of your branch. In our case, Fort Benning, Georgia. Excellent instruction both at home and at Fort Benning. Benning is too stiff and mechanical for me and I had trouble as an instructor the years I taught there. I'm from the old school as an educator. My classroom is my kingdom. The summer of 1960 or 61 I really threw finance for a loop. Finally someone used some common sense and we all relaxed - and I got paid. I had orders for two weeks classes at Benning and two weeks camp with the unit. There were two sets of orders but, in essence, I was on active duty from 1 July-31 July. Now the problem was that the orders read: Benning 1-15 July, Camp 15-31 July. I can't get paid twice for the 15th on each set of orders. Corrected, but boy did I have to go to get to Camp McCoy after class at Benning. Interstates were often incomplete!

The summer camp of 1960 was the best planned and executed field training I ever experienced in the USAR. Who should receive credit? I don't know, maybe the G3 and S3's worked in unison, but it was varying and demanding. What they did was set up fourteen platoon-level problems. (Training in the USAR was always progressive - squad, section, platoon, company, etc.) Each platoon in the regiment was assigned the same platoon situation such as platoon in offense, defense, outpost, patrol, etc. Such an excellent way to measure and test the competency of a unit, its commander, or both. It was this summer and under these conditions that I experienced the paramount example of what I call the P & P Syndrome.

I met the major while I was in a range tower on a 45 range. Firing was in progress. I saw the Jeep drive up and two men get out. My sergeant reported and they

walked to the tower. Now in the classroom or on the range, an inspecting officer does NOT interrupt or obstruct the current action. I finished a sequence and climbed down and saluted. The major had few ribbons and all were stateside. The officer with him was a captain with dark sunglasses. I found out during the conversation that the major was currently assigned to the ROTC department at the University of Wisconsin. The captain was a graduate of VMI. Both men expressed an interest in 45 range work and the major stated that the captain had a better than average proficiency with the weapon. I countered with a comment that we'd better have a little "shoulder to shoulder" during the noon break. I could see them both blanch. Why? They brought the subject up. This was the start of two weeks of harassment, without any cause or reason, by the major. I never saw the captain again. War had been declared!

Hardly a day passed that I did not see or sense this elusive major. Day after day his evaluations or ratings bordered on the derogatory. One problem, platoon in advance or similar, I received one of the two superiors given that day. The major's evaluation; average. On a night reconnaissance problem he showed up at 0200. Now most EM's are scared stiff of an officer, especially field grade because they do not see many O4-6's on a daily basis. The major quietly cornered a man and asked him, you have just captured a two-man machine gun, next: What are you going to do? Now the men knew that on a recon patrol one wanted to avoid contact. But here we have two POW's at 0200. What? The kid was scared shitless. He stammered and gasped and looked at me. I said, stick 'em and get going! You could have read a newspaper by the major's face. He lost it! You can't say that, Captain. That is not correct training. His voice at a high decibel. I had the GI leave and I asked the major, what do you tell him? What does he do? His answer, you are right, but you can't say that. Then major, how does one learn? I had hoped the army had learned from WWII and Korea but it's the same old Geneva Convention and protocol BS. He turned and left.

Another time the problem was platoon in night defense. Something told me he would be coming. I got the men in position, machine guns placed, etc. before dusk. Then, no one fires, regardless, until I do. We had blanks for the M-1's. And don't shoot straight out as the wads can be extremely dangerous. Shoot at 45 degrees. It got dark and we waited. Now the good major didn't know exactly where we had set up. He only knew the general location. I had picked a steep rise from the road of about 30 feet in elevation. We set up on forward slope. At midnight here comes the Jeep. Quietly and slowly, black-out lights on, they parked at the foot of the rise. Whispered conversation and then they started up. I must say with quite a bit of slipping and sliding. I waited until they (major and ?) were about 15 feet from the positions and then I fired. The entire rise cut loose. You could hear their exit, withdrawal, above the road of the blanks. To the Jeep and away they roared. I hope he shit his pants. All this within 5-10 seconds.

Another time on platoon in defense on a flat area in the daytime, here he comes. Once again, the GI was intimidated by his rank. And you've got to remember these GI's were coming and going from the unit so that at no time of year did I ever have 50% of

the assigned personnel with a year's time in the unit. The major asked the GI about laying in the machine gun. The GI stammered! I said, the limiting stakes are the tent stakes. The major: "At ease, captain!" He didn't get an answer so he turned and said, "Let's go to your company area." He took off, about 90 degrees plus in the wrong direction. I asked, "Where you going, SIR?" "To the company area!" (with a sneer). I answered, "Okay, Sir, you go that way, it's over this way." He paused and turned. We came over a rise and here was the company area. No comment from the major.

What happened next is purely hearsay. What precipitated the confrontation between the major and Colonel Barber, I don't know. I have a suspicion that the colonel demanded a showdown. How can one of his officer's receive a superior and a poor rating the same day(s)? I guess he got it. I was told that the major reported as ordered. However, Colonel Barber did NOT put him at ease. The confrontation and clarification lasted a full five minutes. Exactly what was said I have no idea. My source (I haven't heard from "my source" in years. I met him while assigned to the 409th those years of 1957-1961. His name was LTC Ken Bruner – staff officer.) told me, however, that Colonel Barber made it clear that a copy of this reprimand would go in the major's 201 file. I guess, in essence, what Colonel Barber said was that if you are unable to control your personal feelings in any association with a subordinate and allow these feelings to jade your evaluations and reports or out and out falsify your opinions and observations, you are not fit for the service. It is not your privilege or right to waste the government's time, a unit's time, or my time with personal vindication of your choosing. I also understand that Captain Christensen made a complete fool out of you several times and you apparently weren't intelligent enough to realize this. Quit your daily siege of this officer. Dismissed!

I must mention a Lt. Elliot. I met him at camp in '59 or '60. He was just out of EAD and a fine young officer. He had his own 45 and was better than average. However, when he challenged me one day on the 45 range I, with a borrowed pistol, had to resize his exploits. We became good friends and he was involved with the incident at camp with an assigned, but shouldn't be, reservist. I'll bet he has done very well in the world of work.

I never realized the extent of coverage the P & P feud the major and I had had that 1961 summer camp year. I assumed that most of the officers in the 409th regiment had some knowledge of the "friendly" dispute. I, however, found out the next year in '61 that apparently the entire division was aware in a general way.

I had just finished a critique of a platoon problem when the Jeep drove up. A LTC got out and my sergeant reported. I finished my comments and walked over and saluted. He had heard me comment on another of my pet peeves in the army - especially combat. When a man could be about to die on a new mission, he deserves a bit more explanation as to why, what, where, etc. he is going. Not the whole picture, just the little world he will be involved in. The LTC commented that he liked my words and theme. In fact, he repeated himself, "I like that!" Then, he took a close look at my name plate. "Christensen? Christensen? Were you here last year?" "Yes, Sir!" His

brow furrowed and he meditated! Then he turned, saluted, and left muttering something to the effect, "I don't see it - I don't see it!"

In 1966 I was requested by name and put on orders for summer camp. I believe the exact acronym was ANADUTRA. (Annual Active Duty Training Assembly.) Another was similar - ??? - but one meant training for two weeks following armory meetings and training during the year and the other was training of two weeks, plus or minus, for individuals who had not been assigned to a unit for the year.

The division and regiment were still in the platoon phase of training and the 409th wanted me to supervise all the mortar training. This time it was the 4.2 mortar. Our equivalent to the German, Russian, Chinese 120 mm. Actually, the 4.2 is slightly smaller than a 120 mm. There are 25.4 mm in an inch so a 4.2 inch mortar is actually 106.68 mm where a 120 mm is actually 4.72 inches. We are the only army with a 81 mm mortar - all others are 82 mm. They can use our ammo in an emergency while we cannot. Our 50 caliber machine gun is actually 12.7 mm while theirs is a 51 caliber. Only the 7.62 mm or 30 caliber are alike in the armies today. Pistol ammo is 9 mm - 9 x 19. Alike!

The year of 1966 the regiment trained at Camp Ripley, MN, a Minnesota National Guard Post. Some politics here as, although the federal government owned the land, the USAR appropriations were tapped to pay rent for the use of Camp Ripley. It was based on so much a head per day times the number of bodies reporting or assigned. Ripley is a long narrow camp. Probably 20 x 5 miles roughly, with the 20 in the north-south position. It is heavily wooded with a sandy loam type soil. The entire area is the result of an earlier glacier effect which left the entire area a general glacial moraine.

I was to supervise, etc., the laying of the 4.2 prior to actual firing. We had completed several units and the next unit had requested permission to fire. Something was wrong! The lay of the tube just didn't look right. What was wrong? The tube looked at least 90 degrees or 1600 mills off. (It was over 1600 off!). I backed off and took a compass for a check. We never did discover what the unit had done wrong or was the aiming circle at fault, or what? We corrected and the unit did a good job on firing. It was about noon and I received word that the allocated ammo was gone. There were 80 rounds up on the FDC (Fire Direction Control Center.) We broke for lunch.

At the FDC were 80 VT (variable time) fuses. These are mechanical fuses that can be set like a watch to fire after a set time interval. Artillery has the same or similar fuse. Now I had used this type of fuse once in my life, back in 1943-44. How did one set them? There was also a tool called a spanner wrench to set the fuse. With these fuses and this wrench one could turn the set mechanism only one way. (I don't remember if it was clockwise or counter clockwise). What was correct? Was there a danger if turned incorrectly? I didn't know! I called the personnel at the FDC together and asked if there was any former artillery man in the group.

One sergeant stepped forward. "Will you help me, sergeant?" "Yes, Sir!" We had the unit clear the area. One by one with the spanner wrench, we set all the fuses to

instantaneous, or point detonating. We ate lunch, armed the rounds and completed the afternoon's firing. There was one dud out of 80 and we had no way of knowing the age, storage history, location of the fuses. Not bad!

During the lunch period we had quite a "show." The weather changed to cloudy and more clouds with lightning. As I mentioned earlier, the ground was sandy loam and when damp or wet, became an excellent conductor. About half a mile to the front of the FDC was the FO for the guns. They have a sound power phone connected to the FDC for fire orders and corrections. The operator had just put the phone to his ear when the lightning hit the phone. On the FDC end it also was up to the arm of the FDC man. At 186,000 miles/second it was one big, blue flash. I had my back to the FDC, but the whole area lit up like a big arc welder. I saw a helmet flying through the air. The man holding the phone had dropped it and the phone was jumping and quivering on the ground. This was the only phone. I had to get some aid so I threw my poncho over the phone and picked it up. We got help and no one was really hurt. One man refused to come back to the area. No way, Jose!

I have many personal memories of the four years I spent with the 409th. The companies and platoons were farmed out in the small towns in Minnesota and this necessitated some driving from the CO's to maintain their units. I understand that in later years a couple were killed in auto accident coming and going. I hate to mention names but some stand out in my mind. Some I can't remember. All became good friends during the military days. One name that stands out is LTC Ken Bruner from St. Cloud, MN. I haven't heard from Ken in years. A good soldier! Another was 1LT Zimmer; he later took over the company. One platoon of B Company was stationed at Walker, MN. My association with the 409th ended in 1962. I took a job with the Rapid City, South Dakota school system, so had to leave the unit. Shortly after this, the CO of B Company, Captain Richard Hein, went back on EAD in Washington, DC, with the Selective Service. I heard he retired from there as a LTC.

As with the regular army in WWII, the reserves (inspectors) were sticklers on starting on time. If the schedule said 0800 – it meant 0800. At the same time, there were always safety factors to be considered and applied. One incident is undelivered in my mind for two reasons: the stupidity of the SOP's (what to do) and the stupidity of the inspectors.

I was assigned to assist on the 3.5 bazooka range. The range firing points (6) were of concrete with about five foot walls in front. Each partition had walls to separate each point from the next. One piece of equipment was missing – a safety hood. By regulations every operator was to wear a hood with a plexaglass opening for vision. This hood protected the face from unburned propellants which could come from flying back in one's face. (The reservists were also nervous, since this was probably the first time with the 3.5 for most. Due to apprehension they were careless in their circuit connections and misfires were common.

Now, there is a SOP for misfires. No problem here but I was the line officer in the points, so if I was assisting in number 2 and number 5 had a misfire, how did I get

there to assist? Easy! I had all cease fire and hold the tube horizontal and I then ducked under the tubes 3 and 4 and got to 5 to help.

The inspector or evaluator watched this from his position. I was unaware of this. At the end of that phase of firing, he called me back. He was livid. Where are your brains? What the hell, negative, negative! I asked how was I supposed to get from number 2 to number 5. His answer was to walk straight back from point 2 until clear of the back blast area, then take a 90° turn and go to number 5, then back up to the point. I was aghast. The man was nuts. Expose myself to all six tubes (nervous and scared men) rather than duck under three tubes with the blast behind me – overhead – if it did happen, please, please, please, let's apply the lessons of combat in our training. Stop lying to the trainees. Everything with all weapons is a varying ration of odds.

South Dakota is a heavy national guard state. The only reserve units of size were in Sioux Falls and Rapid City. In Rapid City the USAR unit shared the armory and facilities with the guard. There was also a non-pay, points-only unit that met at the local recruiter's office. It was designated a CA (Civil Affairs) unit and was composed of mostly company grade officers, some field grade, in medical corps, medical service, engineers, etc. A few were infantry.

I thought I'd never forget how the point system for attendance worked, but I can't get the total to come out to 50 anymore. Way back, one met two hours a meeting and received one point credit. You needed 50 to stay active in the reserve. Any less total was not counted toward retirement credit. You also received 15 points for membership in the reserve. So, you needed to make 35 points through attendance at reserve meetings, correspondence, or active duty for training. (Summer camp.) In the summer of '63 I was able to get a two-week tour of active duty at Fort Gordon, Georgia. The two-week school was a civil affairs presentation.

It was at Fort Gordon that I got my first exposure to the politics of the army reserve. How, who you were, who you knew, how you played the game got you favors and schools for promotion. (Very few of the officers attending these two weeks wore ribbons of a combat record - very few had CIB's [Combat Infantry Badge]).

The exposure happened quite innocently. We were all strangers to start, but with the school day lasting eight hours, one got a chance to meet and visit with many and share the typical army BS. I don't remember his name, but one day a man was told to call home. Bad news? He returned with a smile from ear to ear. His wife had informed him that he had been accepted for, I believe, the 90 day tour and assignment to the C & GS school at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas (Command and General Staff). The next and most prestigious school is the War College. My question to myself was why this elation over another school? All one has to do is request enrollment, don't they? How naive!

I'll bet most military men have seen the movie, *Green Berets*, with John Wayne. The movie centered around a unit in Nam that was assigned to reinforcing a Montgard (sp.) area. The assignment based on the current tactics and combat doctrine of the time - strategic hamlet - and promised protection and defense. I couldn't believe my ears or

eyes. Here was the army that broke the back of the greatest army in the world (helped) now dictating that you now put all your eggs in one basket, advertise the position of the basket, and wait for the fools to come so you could annihilate them. Afraid not! Our high command had nothing but disdain for the NVN and with their arrogance, we paid dearly. (The field soldier did - not the field-grade lovelies). Von Clausewitz may have been right back in the days of the trenches and heavy machine guns but with the three dimensional war of today, you are a sitting duck. Now with infrared you die twenty-four hours a day. All-in-all a very interesting and successful tour but it was later in my career that I learned the C & GS farce. Here again was a perfect example of the P&P Syndrome.

In 1964 I was able to secure a two weeks summer tour with the SDANG. It was an engineer unit and commanded by an engineer graduate of the SDSMT. A good soldier. Like any unit there were good soldiers and some duds. We were encamped in the False Bottom Creek area near Spearfish, South Dakota. If you're ever in the area as a tourist, you should visit and explore the creek. It would run on the surface for some distance and then disappear, leaving a dry rocky creek bed and then reappear with the same volume and velocity further down the stream bed. Quite different! The unit was assigned to various engineer projects and completed all on time and professionally done.

One incident sticks out in my mind. A salient incident. I imagine because it involved people and human behavior. One day early in the training a regular army inspector visited the camp area. I reported and saluted. He heard my name and read it on my fatigues. He looked at his clip board, flipped a page or two, and commented, "How come two captains as CO's in this unit and one of them infantry?" I laughed and explained that I was attached for the two weeks as a reserve officer only. He digested this for a moment and walked off muttering to himself, shaking his head. But, he was smiling! (An infantry officer with an engineer company!)

In the summer of 1965 I was approached by corps officers from Minneapolis in regard to accepting command of a chemical company stationed in Rapid City - the 247th. It was apparently in shambles with both training requirements and administration nil. I had over twenty years credited service at the time and thought, what the heck? My chance to command a company size unit before I retired. I had a fair knowledge of CWS but little did I know and dream of the extent of the problems of the unit. I guess the former CO had just put in his time.

The key to the unit's success was the AST (Army Specialized Technician) assigned full time to the unit as Civil Service and was also the first sergeant. Rank of E-8, however. The TO&E called for 31-32 EM's and two officers. My XO was a 1LT who was employed with the local power company. He was commissioned in engineers and a grad of the SDSMT. The men were all obligated reservists. Many bitter, sore and outright mad at being assigned. All had to attend 90% of the meetings or they would be ordered back to EAD for 45 days. Mostly young cowboys without their horses. It took a little time but my philosophy of leadership worked - I never asked anything of them

that I couldn't, wouldn't or hadn't done myself.

The first problem was morale. The men hadn't been paid going on three quarters. I got help from Bismarck, North Dakota regular army personnel in the form of two AST's and we went to work. We immediately found why there had been no pay. All the vouchers, unfinished and incorrect, were found in the bottom drawers of the RC AST - with no explanation. The work went fast and was given a priority label so when I could add up all the money due, I projected a percentage of the total, borrowed \$2000 from my credit union and paid all in cash. I had no worry about receiving my "loan" back as all the checks had to come through me. It worked!

A couple of inserts before I forget. If you're old enough you'll remember the turbulent 60's. Demonstrations, marches, arson, break-ins, etc., all anti-war and anti-military. Security memorandums came daily on how to secure the armory and weapons. Nothing we could do could change the fact that the weapons were locked within a wire cage of 6-8 inch gauge steel and this enclosed next to the hall-way wall made of cinder block. (Probably the same situation today). Luckily no break-ins.

In addition to the ever-pressing work just to keep even I would receive requests for postal matches between units. (The armory did have a fair indoor range). Since I didn't or couldn't find time to just keep unit going, I ignored. But in the supply room arms cage were the rifles for the matches. How long they had been there and where they came from I had no idea and I never learned. There were six rifles - the best made at that time for precision shooting. Three were M-52's Winchesters and three M-37 Remingtons. All heavy barreled with excellent iron sights and thousand of rounds of old 22LR ammo - target type.. Time and time again I asked corps to release them from the property book to no avail. Finally after one inspection from a Corps Colonel with some guts and common sense, I got some action. He agreed that the unit could never utilize the rifles and that Corps headquarters in Minneapolis had the time and interest so he got authorization to ship. We had to build a special crate (or two) and ship. I assume Corps received the rifles - I never heard. Amen!

Another incident, out of sequence, shows the blind adherence and stereotyping of too many of the regular army personnel - even today. (If it ain't in a reg. FM or SR, they won't do it). Maybe because they never had to make a decision in a second - under pressure - that could save or lose a life.

I had received notice that my majority would be granted on the anniversary of my commissioned date - 6 October 97 (October 49). Since the TOE called for a captain I was out and the XO would assume command. Earlier in the year I had received notice that the unit would fire for familiarization in the spring of '67. I had ordered the ammo for the firing and had the '06, carbine and 45 ammo in the supply cage. I asked (requested) if I could remain attached to the unit for a period of 90-120 days during the transition to help the CO. He would be alone. It was granted. The firing was scheduled for April '67. At that time there was a small 1000 inch range west of the armory at the bottom of some high rocky bluffs. Very safe. (Now there is a professionally built 300 meter range about 400-500 yards south. The little range is gone.

No firing is allowed due to the buildup of homes on the bluffs. We fired successfully and returned the expended brass to the cage. (Some of the men wanted some cases [06] for reloading and I granted). This year the army was death on accountability of the ammo cases only. Quite generous with "loss" of brass. Along comes an IG (Inspector General) inspection with the change over in command.

Now any time a unit changes commanders, you have an inventory of all property to protect yourself. You are going to accept the command as it is and if and when you sign the property book, all missing items - if any - are your "debt." I had assumed that the XO - now CO - had made the necessary changes to reflect the fired ammo. He had not! The IG found the brass (with some 200-300 cases missing), but all fired. Wham, Bam! Red lights blinking and sirens screaming. The code word for missing ammo surfaces noisily: BLUE BELL, BLUE BELL. (If they, the army, hasn't changed this code name since 1967, they will have to now).

No one would accept my explanation of this simple explanation. Their careers! Finally, I wrote an explanation-deposition to Corps that someone had the common sense to accept - case closed.

Finding three quarters of the pay vouchers in drawers caused some "red lights" in my mind in regard to my AST. He was a likable type - always dressed correctly - but somehow just too smooth. Since anything negative with the unit also reflected on me, I knew he needed watching. Many times I would call the office and no answer. His explanation was always plausible. The straw that broke the camel's back came when one of the cooks reported to me on the meat ration. We had started the new approach to training now as all units do today, the MUTA 4. (Multiple Unit Training Assemblies). The unit meets once a month on the weekend and trains eight hours on Saturday and Sunday. Each four hours is worth a point towards retirement. Each weekend is worth four pay days.

The armory had excellent facilities for a kitchen and food preparation. I believe there were three cooks assigned. All food for the meals came from the master menu and was procured by the AST. The cook's complaint was that there never was enough meat. Meat requests are based on one half pound per man. So the meat for a MUTA 4 meal should weigh at least 17 ½ pounds. It never did. Where did 5-8 pounds go? To the home of the AST.

There were other infractions involved so I finally contacted Corps and a CID (counter intelligence detachment) for help. I had called the local FBI for help to nail this "graphite" employee. They made their investigation, agreed with my findings, and started removal proceedings. Good! Away he goes! Hardly! I find that under Civil Service regulations all this action would take nearly a year. I couldn't believe my ears. Nearly a year! There won't be an armory left, much less a unit. So I sat down with him. I told him what I'd done and that within a year his ass would be mud. Why not do yourself and me a favor and resign - leave - whatever but get the hell out. He did. Army regulations are quite specific on rank and transfers. A reservist returning to EAD must lose one grade. Not my AST. He went back on EAD as an E-8. (He drove for

some general earlier in his career?) I heard he went to Nam within a year or so. I'll bet he returned a rich man, fat and sassy, and no wounds. He was smooth!

The summer camp with the 247th Chemical Company at Pine Bluff Arsenal was probably my most unique experience in the reserve. I had had a bird's eye view of the post and layout in March of that year (1966) when I went to the post on a pre-camp briefing. Quite a trip: Rapid City to Minneapolis, Minneapolis to Chicago, Chicago to Memphis, Memphis to Little Rock, Little Rock to Pine Bluff. Actually the puddle jumper may have landed on the post runway. I drove down to camp so we would have a car. The unit flew by way of Denver.

Pine Bluff Arsenal is a hush-hush post. Or used to be. Most of the "happenings" good or bad, are kept on a local plane. In fact, less than a week before our encampment two employees were killed on an assembly line making delay fuses for hand grenades. The only news or comments were local. This is the post where germ warfare experiments had been performed. The building was heavily camouflaged and you really couldn't see it unless your view was without the natural forest settling. Solid concrete! Also, along the roads were stacks of strategic materials. In one area were stacks of magnesium ingots about 24" x 4" x 4" stacked four feet high and wide and at least twenty feet long. (I would like to see how they powder these ingots for the magnesium dust for incendiary weapons. You do know - don't you - that the sparklers on the Fourth of July are coated with powdered magnesium?)

We, several of the top non-coms and the XO, did have fun at the only PX on the post. I-we (other GI's) have tried this at several PX's throughout the U.S. but it works best at smaller PX's and when a younger woman is at the check-out counter. We would all buy some prophylactics and sometimes skins. Then we would line up at the check-out counter - visiting. How many did you get? Think that's enough? I got some skins, too! I don't know. We'll be here two weeks. And, and, and. Of course, the girl could hear it all and sometimes a blush. Older women usually just gave us a dirty look. Adulterous SOB's!

Just remembered! Why did some of the summer-time soldiers always try to act like the "olde army?" Some as soon as they checked into the quarters would have a bottle of 100 proof on the dresser. Now I'm sure they didn't drink this at home or maybe didn't drink at all, but the army tradition of a straight shot at the end of the day must be preserved. Yuk! A scotch and water any day!

The unit received a superior for the two weeks training. Even the three who were involved in an Article 15 worked. I picked one "fence-rider" for Soldier of the Week and took him out for drinks and steaks the first weekend. He was another cowboy that hated the service and couldn't wait to get his obligation time in. We are dear friends today. He married, settle down, and has three grown-up children - all a credit! Due to the protocol, I reported to the CO of the Post at the end of the tour. We had chatted briefly on my initial reporting and he had questioned the "idiot sticks" (infantry insignia). I thanked him for the excellent rating of the unit training. His answer was that I never penalize a unit for the actions of a few. You did well and you

were busy. In fact, I want to thank you for cleaning up the potential mess the way you did and in such a short time. I remarked that (after a "Thank you, Sir!") the infantry never has much time. With a smile on his face he saluted and said, "Get the hell out of here and have a safe trip home!"

My majority came in October 66 so I was out as CO. The XO took over but the unit was under the gun and was phased out the next year. Back to non-pay inactive stakes. But not for long. I was approached by the parent school, 5043 USAR school, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota in regard to starting a satellite school with me as the instructor. I would be authorized one EM assistant. (I chose my former supply sergeant from the 247th). He was invaluable! Also, he stayed with the satellite until we phased out in 1974. Seven good years for both of us and he finished his time necessary in the local SDANG.

Time out to discuss just one example of the hypocrisy of the service. Just another example of how regulations, etc. can be bent, changed, ignored, modified, whatever, to assist the "leaders" accomplish their mission. And, when completed a similar request will be ignored or rejected using the same regulations. See if you agree.

I had had two years of the new BOAC (Branch Officer Advanced Course) in 1960-61 with two summer camps" Ft. Benning, '61 and Ft. Lewis, '62, when I was approached by the 5043rd to take over the Rapid City satellite. This was in 1967.

The BOAC courses had proven quite successful and became a requirement for promotion to major - 04. I asked at the time of assignment if the fact that I had never completed the series, had only a 40% completion, if this would prohibit me from accepting an instructor status. No problem!

The army has a big problem here, in my opinion. Every officer who completes a course (there were 5 phases) was now qualified to teach the phase. If graduation or completion makes one an automatic teacher of the subject area, we have a nation of frustrated teachers. Everyone has completed something. This might work for officers on EAD where once assigned the officer can prepare and practice and then, to use the school vernacular, PITCH, the subject interestingly and effectively. I sensed that most had memorized their assigned subject. I asked one captain at Ft. Benning once after we had left the bleachers due to lightning strikes and had returned to complete the class and he admitted, yes, at least I do. This is not teaching when no interruptions or questions can clarify a point of clarification.

Somewhere I remember that one qualification for selection to C & GS School was that the officer must have seven years left to serve after completion of the courses. Or, seven years including the five years of courses. This would give the service two years of service from the officer.

At the same time, a set time of retirement by age was established. Was it 55 for majors? I'm sure my majority was granted by years in grade as a captain not on completion of the BOAC classes. I was 46 at the time I accepted the assignment to the Rapid City satellite. At that time there was not C & GS offered in the state of South Dakota. Correspondence was the only approach and how do I consider that method

while earning a living, preparing for the BOAC classes and accomplish this? No way. I don't owe the army any more blood. And, in my mind I felt I could justify that lack by substituting two wars for classroom soldiering. Ha!

My first consideration for promotion was turned down. (Did not meet educational requirements). (This was to O5 or LTC). Two failures to meet and you're out. So, again, in '73 or so I failed again. I wrote a senator to the effect that two wars should be worth a classroom and he agreed. But, once again, the "heroes" hid behind their regulations. Locally there were guard officers who have never left the states that attended C & GS after it was offered in '69 or so. I had lieutenants in my BOAC phases from '67-'74. They, some, are now colonels. They got an A in effort and performance. I will say some are good officers. I won't deny that a record of soldiering on the line doesn't guarantee that the officers will also be excellent in logistics, etc., but I can't think of any better way to prove your worth as an officer, citizen and patriot to these great United States. Or in this day and age are words worth more than blood? If so, "the Fall of Rome has begun." (Words can start a war. . . .).

In 1968 I went to Fort Benning, Georgia as an instructor. I was assigned a four hour "pitch" on mines and mine warfare. A regular officer, a captain, was assigned to me to assist in securing materials, practice, etc. He was invaluable for most of the first week and then left for TDY off post. My four hour block was on the second Friday from 0800-1200. I put everything together and was as ready as I'd ever be. I can remember I went to see Dr. Zhivago in the evening on Thursday - the night before. I saw and remember very little of the show. In my mind I would go over and over and over my "pitch" in the morning. I slept very little that night. The next day I made it. A bit slow and jerky in parts but the four hours passed. I did go outside the lesson plan a few times with comments from my personal experiences but I felt these were well received. I did make it clear that I felt mine warfare was the actions of cowards. I'm scared to death of the "silent" death that awaits soldiers and children alike. Like so many actions of armies the engineers or any personnel laying the mines are supposed to make and keep an overlay (map) of their work. With the millions of mines still waiting today to maim and kill, I ask, where are the overlays?

I always enjoyed duty at Ft. Benning. It is probably the last bastion of true and pure military courtesy. (At least 25-30 years ago. I'll bet it still is). You received and gave a salute with meaning and sincerity. Your ribbons drew and received respect. I could see the second glances at my CIB-second award. Remember, I received my two - the first as a private - the second as a 2LT. The two most dangerous ranks in the U.S. Army. I probably aged ten years in those weeks due to the forced structuring of the teaching and I swore that I would never go back. But, the original pain is soon forgotten and the mind modifies all true painful experiences in time.

INSERTION

An incident that happened on my way home from Ft. Benning in 1968 warrants a story. As usual, the Army in its infinite wisdom had a role in the facts. We were

supposed to be paid in the AM on the morning of departure, but a missing training aid or something held up the entire process.

I finally got to leave Ft. Benning at about 1300 that day – Saturday? I was driving 1 1965 Chrysler 300 with a 440 engine and a 2.76 rear axle. It could move! I headed west on US 80 and picked up I-20 in Mississippi. I was headed for Wichita Falls, Texas to see my wife's parents on my way home.

It was about 2300 when I reached Shreveport, Louisiana and I was pooped. I pulled off the Interstate and parked in a small area of the eastern edge of the city. I was asleep in minutes. (In those days I could sleep.) I opened the windows for ventilation as it was warm and humid. My clothes were all hanging on a back-seat clothes rod. The Ft. Benning sticker was on the windshield.

I had hardly gotten to sleep, when I was awakened by a pounding of the driver's side window. It was a Louisiana State Trooper. He was polite and correct in his demeanor. He was very brief – apologetic – after I told him I was an Army officer on my way home. I believe his comments were: "Sorry, sir, for awakening you. I saw the South Dakota plates, the Ft. Benning sticker and your uniform."

I slept fitfully for about an hour. It was hot and humid. I did get the cobwebs out of my eyes, however. So, about 2400 I sat up and got out of the car. Now, I was the only car in the area. To my left was an all-night laundromat. As I was standing, stretching, a woman walked out of the laundromat.. She was at least fifty feet away, but her eyes opened to pure white. She stared at me and then practically ran back into the store. I got in the car, drove across the street for gas, and back on the Interstate.

I was running at the speed limit when all of a sudden all hell broke loose. Sirens, lights, coming up from behind me fast were several state troopers. I slowed and started to pull over as one pulled along side. It was the same officer who had checked me earlier. He raised his hand – smiled, turned off the lights and siren and drove off. A good cop – not prone to hysteria.

I could look up my vouchers for 1969 and 1970 as to where I went for the summer duties, but.....! I believe I spent one summer with the old unit (409th) by special request and one with the SDANG. In 1971, however, I was again scheduled for duty at Benning due to school regulations but I heard there was an opening at Ft. Huachuca, AZ for an instructor in an intelligence phase. I did have the year experience with the 455th in 1955. I requested and got approval and orders in that order.

Here again, I was exposed to the devious applications of regulations for personal gain. On reporting in I was assigned a BOQ in a WWII type 66 man barracks. All of these were being remodeled. The quarters were a large room which shared a bath, shower, etc. with an adjoining room. All new and quite adequate. It was surprising the condition of the old barracks - excellent. With the dry climate and heat the wood was like new. None of the dry rot, mildew, or water destruction I found at Ft. Leonard Wood in 1950 or I'll bet Camp White in the mid-60's. But, these quarters were not to be. Within a day or so I received my teaching schedule and was asked where I was bunking. An abysmal look resulted when I answered, the new barracks. No deal,

major, they are not adequate. I had been there two days and wondered why. Better than some by far. In 1950 when I slept for 30 days at Ft. Benning in tar paper shacks, no one complained or worried about our welfare. No fans, no air conditioning, and the temperature inside always matched the temperature outside. You will secure new quarters in town, Major. Yes, Sir! I did! But now the "light" broke through. Since the quarters had been declared inadequate, there was a per diem rate and mileage each day from Sierra Vista to Huachuca and return. Ahah! We, another officer and myself from the barracks moved in together and split the room cost. We made money!

I don't believe I'll compromise security by a few comments about Fort Huachuca. It's an old post, small but had recently been selected to be the intelligence center of the USA. Prior to this change, the base post was at Ft. Holybird, MO. A large, new, secured building was within the post area, the STRATCOM center for the USA. I never went there and had no reason to go. I have always used this approach to top secret areas, etc., even though at times I've been authorized to visit. What I don't see, I don't honestly know. I had nothing to gain by abusing any authority and could always get the information needed after hours.

I remember one humorous - at least to me - incident on the post. I gave and finished my assigned "pitch" the first week. So, about Wednesday of the second week I had my wife fly down to stay a couple of days. (I had driven down from Rapid City). Being a small post, I never dreamed the club rules would be so stringent as to reservations, etc. I did have my Class A uniform but we showed up without my calling ahead. The maitre d', very professional, directed us to the bar to wait. We had hardly sat down and our table was ready. This meant nothing to my wife, but I reveled in the attention. Typical old army! Here was an old major, a stranger to the post. Two CIB's, PH, BS, CM ribbons, etc. Why was he here? Who was he? Better not get him upset - get a table. They did.

We sat next to a table with a young lieutenant and I assumed his wife. He was the regular army. They were looking at the wine list prior to ordering. I couldn't help overhearing his comments and explanations on the essence, tartness, sweetness, dryness, etc. of the available wines. Who was he trying to impress? If the lady was his wife, a bit anticlimactic, yes? If she married him, I'm sure they had been down this road before. If not, she surely should have been observant of his social venue. He was not infantry!

I had one incident in the classroom during my "pitch." In the front row was a captain, he wore jump wings, PH, SS, BS and Nam ribbons. I visited with him later and he was a point graduate but had requested out of EAD to the USAR so he could attend law school. The USA had promised or implied that time would be allowed for this education but.....? One hour was on terrain analysis - a very basic course - actually one gets a touch of this in basic training as a private. I had injected some comments based on experience....something involving the forward slope of a hill when a hand came up. The hand belonged to the only LTC in the class. (I wondered why he was here). He quoted FM such and such as to the accuracy of my comments. I answered that when

my ass was about to join the KIA list, I did some controversial things. He shut up! At the break, the captain came up to me and said, "Don't worry about that pompous prick, he knit-picks in every class. In Nam we did exactly what you said." I answered, "And you're here today, Captain."

Huachuca was a refreshing two weeks. Also, quite unique. All class started and broke on time and when the different groups took ten to smoke, one could see the diversity of the students. No classes mixed, some all of Spanish nationality, some all within a narrow age range, some in civilian clothes etc. It takes all types to win a war. I'll still take the idiot sticks - infantry.

We drove home in two days from Huachuca. I remember that it was not a pleasant drive. The car just didn't handle right. A check at home revealed that a shock had broken and a torsion bar without a shock absorber is rough.

I went to Benning one more time - either 72 or 73. Here again I should have seen exactly the way the army plans, but I didn't until later. This year I was assigned as an assistant instructor. Only an illness or absence of the primary instructor would necessitate a "pitch" on my part. There were a lot of extra officers. Quite a few majors. I learned that many of them had 15-16 years of EAD but were now to be riffed due to cutbacks. You can imagine their attitude. Whether or not they had been good deserving officers, I don't know. The primary instructor was in this group. I didn't see him, but a couple of times prior to the class he seldom made a comment when I did. I had to prepare for the class if----! He made it!

One of the tours at Ft. Benning brings a clear memory to meeting and visiting with an Australian major - a Major Key. We had many a pleasant chat. He was at Ft. Benning on some exchange program for the summer. Time and time again he would comment on how wasteful the "Yanks" were - wasteful with equipment, but mostly ammunition. He would tell how he had seen GI's shoot round after round at a monkey or some tree animal. With his unit the men received their initial TO & E issue of ammunition and they had been use it wisely. They did! Our GI's would expect a chopper drop to replenish theirs.

In 1974 I retired from the USAR in October - 6 October - the date of my commissioning. I had been passed over twice for promotion to LTC - no C & GS - so I was out at the age of 53. I had 28 years of credit service and 35 total since the CMTC in 1939. I was ready to quit. The 5043rd school had closed or was pending and it was time. I thought I'd miss the fraternity but times and interests change. Like the school retirement I thought I'd miss the kids, but they change every year. It was not traumatic!

I was scheduled for Ft. Benning and I said, NO WAY!. This is my last tour - make it pleasant. At first I received an "impossible" but like everything in the army, anything is possible. I received orders to go with the 5043rd school staff as assistant S3 to the University of Nevada in Reno for the two weeks tour. I left with a friend and we made Wendover, Nevada that night and stayed at the Stateline Club. It was going back 30-40 years. The main club area had an eight piece band with vocalists, etc. My kind of music. (Boots Randolph & yakity-yak sax!)

The tour was interesting and the time flew. I had my wife fly down on the second Wednesday and we drove home that weekend. One incident sticks in my mind. How many of you believe that we possess some extra senses. Probably a carryover from the basic years of man. One sense - the one where you can feel the presence of another or somebody is watching you. And like an animal you are ready to move - jump - go? Anyway, the University is less than a mile from Reno proper. After a day or so to get rolling, a group of us went down the grade, under the Reno arch, to town. Lights and people. None of us played or tried the machines or the tables. We just went in and out and watched. We were not in uniform, but dressed in shirt, pants, shoes and clean. Within a few minutes I would get this oppression feeling of big brother watching. You saw no one, but he was there. We found out later that we really had shook up the security of the places we visited. Who were these guys? Where are they from? All middle-aged. No one takes notes! And, and, and. They checked and found (easily) that we were nothing but USAR officers at the University up on the hill.

Some of the officers had been here before so knew the places to eat and visit. One place was noted for its ribs - they were good. You should remember I was younger then and could still eat and eat. With food in mind, we went south out of Reno to a small town known for its Basque suppers. One was served from five to seven different meats (courses) for, at this time ('74), about \$6.00. Delicious! They did not take reservations so after standing in line and waiting for nearly an hour, the door opened. The rush was on. Such discourtesy! I was standing with my hand on a chair by our selected table when a woman tried to take my chair. I spun her around and off her grip with no apology. Actually I couldn't believe the rudeness. The daughter of the owner recognized one of the men in our group (6) - he had been there several times in past years and had us - follow me. She opened up a new, much nicer, dining room and seated us.

Paradise Valley ski area is in this area and a young couple with two children came in to eat. One child was only months old. The mother had dressed the baby for outside and now, with all the bodies in the dining room, the temperature rose. The baby started fussing. The young father (from the old school of fatherhood) was filling his face with gusto. The poor mother was trying to eat, feed the oldest, pacify the baby - to no avail. I have finished my meal and decided to offer my learned expertise. I told the mother that I had raised three and that the baby was too warm. Did I think so? Yes! She uncovered the baby, passed him to me and, within minutes, he was sleeping on my shoulder.

We went to see Burl Ives the first weekend. This was right in Reno. Sammy Davis, Jr. was playing the next weekend at Tahoe but as for tickets - forget it. My wife got quite upset that I was unable to secure. We were coming back from Tahoe the next weekend when President Nixon made his resignation public.

I have to tell a story about the difference in efficiency between vertical core and cross-flow radiators. We headed east the first weekend to ??? and the map showed a pass east or south at 10,500 ft. elevation. I was driving a 1970 Chrysler New Yorker and

there were six of us in the car. Outside air temperature was at least 80 degrees. Air conditioning was on and we were climbing steadily. Not too fast - really no power. Along the way were cars stopped with the hoods up - steaming. I noticed many were Pontiacs, which had some of the first cross-flow radiators. (Lower so style and hood could be lower). Finally at around 10,000, the car just moaned. Ran just like a flooded engine. Gentlemen, if you don't want to park, open the windows. I'm turning off the AC. I gained about 10% more power and we made it. Going down the temperature gauge needle sank to the bottom of the gauge.

If you ever go to Reno - especially with a family - be sure to visit Carson City and the old mint. Please warn the children that the silver dollars on display are not souvenirs. I kind of miss the jingle-jangle of coins in my pockets but not the weight of the old cartwheels. A couple at 1 ounce per coin weigh up in a hurry.

Another place that is worth a visit is the Heavenly Valley Ski Resort. There is a parking lot at the bottom - quite sufficient - and the tramway leads to the restaurant. At the time the menu offered meals styled in the Basque fashion - many courses. Of course, cocktails were available. We had reservations, but had come early. We had been informed to do this so we could watch the sun set behind about seven mountain ridges. It was quite picturesque - different. While waiting for the sunset, I watched the crowd mingle. America is really a mass of ethnic islands with each retaining their own customs, cultures, and mores. The people from the metropolis areas are the most affected by simple nature. Many of them couldn't get over or accept the many chipmunks running and begging. I thought, if they only knew how the little beggars would steal you blind if you dropped your guard. The meal was delicious, met some strangers, and the ride down to the parking lot - fun - fun.

We headed home with a two day - one night stay in Wendover. I had reserved a room and was hoping to see and hear the outfit I heard on the way to Reno - but, contracts changed every two weeks - so a new band. Not quite as good. I ran out of money about this time but the main cashier was more than happy to cash an army check for around \$1800.00. (I spent very little on the machines). Another day and a half and home we came. Another era in my life was over - no more army.

Is it really hell to get old? Not really!

USA – USAR COMMENTS

I will be the first to admit that a life of dedication as an active service (20-30 years) requires many adjustments and self-sacrifice of the service member and his family. However, many service members completed twenty to thirty years and served only during a war era, never missed a meal, never scared or hungry, cold or hot, and still have the ID card (DD Form 2, retired). It indicates at least twenty years of quality service.

And now, the Army Reserve or National Guard personnel! These service members either joined a unit after a war era or EAD or enlisted or joined (officer) a unit

and were then recalled to EAD. Either way, their active duty is fragmented. But, some during their EAD time saw more war and horror than many twenty-year retirees. This does not show. The Marines are the best example of EAD to reserve and back again as a Marine reservist is subject to EAD until he or she is at least forty years of age.

In my own case, drafted 10/42. Four times a private. Left for ETO in fall of '44. Received CAB and BS. Discharged a S/SGT -only one left in original squad. Received direct commission in 10/49. Recalled to Korean service on 10/50. Korea 8/51 – 2/52. Second CIB. Returned 1LT from Korea. Retired 9/74 as 04 – Major. Original DD Form 2 issued 9/74 as USA. I earned this – I'll keep this.

The best example: neighbor enlisted in '48 as EM-USAF. Commissioned – trained 5/52 as a pilot. Retired in '68 as an 05 (LTC). Service record: bombing runs to Bermuda for rum!

CHAPTER 13

THE VA

In March of 1929, I was "admitted," actually exposed to, my first VA hospital. The VAMC at Fargo, North Dakota officially opened its doors for veterans - patients on March 29. My father had been hired as head electrician and started work that month. So, although I was only eight years old, my "love affair" with the VA hospital system began. My opinion of the system still holds today. Some of the horror stories you may have heard or read may be true to varying degrees, but medical imperfection occurs with the administration of the system not from a few medical personnel that are beyond their expertise. (One bad apple teacher does not destroy a school system, but a poor superintendent can annihilate it).

There is one human nature story I must tell about the early days of the Fargo VAMC. I doubt if it could happen today. With all the Harvard graduates in business now "commanding the ships," a family, basic, unit cooperation esprit de corps just doesn't and can't exist. These experts can put a monetary value on human nature. (To this day I have never heard a definition of the term that really makes sense. What is it?

As if it were yesterday, I can remember an elderly, kind, sweet, patient, all the positive traits of medical perfection, a retired doctor, Dr. Jensen. (First name?). He lived in a room at the hospital, but I guess no longer practiced medicine. Actually, I would describe him physically and vocally as an everyday Santa Claus.

He was originally from the west coast, Tacoma, Washington, and still received the Tacoma Times on a daily basis. Why my father saved this paper for him I don't know but we had stacks of the Tacoma Times in our attic. I also had my first lesson in enunciation and emphasis of the English language. For a year or two before corrected, Tacoma was TACK-A-MA. In a year or so I got it right: TTA-COMA.

Every summer there was a family day. With over a hundred employees and the families, quite a gathering. This affair was always held on the south side of the hospital building in the sunken garden area. Dr. Jensen, with help, had built a garden area with goldfish pools, plenty of varied flora, no fauna except the guinea pigs in the maintenance building, with walkways, etc. Very little monies of the government (taxpayers) had gone into the development. Oh, electricity for the aerator pumps for the fish ponds probably came from the hospital source but labor was free and the small use of other materials was of no significant value. Today - bah! Our new "leaders" with their MBA's just couldn't accept or understand. (Yet, we continue to police and bank the world with billions).

The bed count was critical in those days. Most patients were admitted as in-patient cases rather than the trend today on out-patient approach. So the utilized use of the "new" system was being monitored closely (why does the monies for veterans' care deserve such scrutiny - especially today- when the government gives away or the Pentagon wastes the VA appropriation without an apology or explanation. (When the

"titulars" need the citizen we are "Heroes For a Day" and when the "shit is no longer hitting the fan," we become a debit!)

It was here as a kid I began to see the inequities of the title of Veteran and the classification of the adjudication process of the VA. It gets cold in Fargo - many days below zero - so many "vets" would admit themselves for their alcoholism and get "dried out" - temporarily. This kept the bed count up and the "monitors" were happy. Even as a kid I questioned why the government - taxpayers - were liable for the self-indulgence or lack of self-responsibility for a chemical habit. (Alcohol use is as destructive as nicotine is addictive but the law apparently can differentiate between the tax income between the two. This is one of the few times I ever heard my father express his disgust at the compensation system. A finger lost in starting a scout plane paid as much as a bullet or shell fragment. This is pure bull shit. There is an easy answer to the system. Establish a base award for combat wounds only and then all non-combat disabilities will receive a percentage of the combat base. How under any interpretation of "debt" can the government rate a stateside injury with combat? I don't care if the state-side injury is as disabling as the combat injury - the recipient did not, does not, will never, experience the stress or exposure of minute by minute death. COMBAT!

I mentioned earlier in the book about my father. Wounded four times and awarded the Silver Star. He seldom talked about his war, WWI, but when I returned home from WWII he did open up a few times. How much pain, discomfort, or what he contended with from 1918-19 to 1948 (date of his death), I don't know. But, he refused to apply or draw any compensation. He had no time for the "leeches." This was his privilege but after his death the fact he had never drawn a pension (compensation) affected my mother's lifestyle and income. We were able to establish recognition of his disabilities and my mother began to receive a widow's pension of, I believe, about \$40.00 per month. I've often wondered what percentage he would have been granted.

Back to the VA. Prior to the floods of '49 and later years of the Red River, there was a utility building near the river. In 1930 the medical service kept guinea pigs for the medical testing. Why guinea pigs? I was told because their blood is quite similar to ours so testing could be correlated and the results applied for a final diagnosis. In later years I wondered why their blood, members of rodentia, was any different from rats, squirrels, gophers, etc? Anyway, I loved all animals, still do, so I would sneak out and play with the guinea pigs, especially the young ones. In the spring with the lush North Dakota quack grass picked as food offerings, they would soon learn to come screeching and talking to enjoy. When their use was discontinued, I don't know. Also, I would visit the boiler room. I got to know all the men and I was now in my teens - a know-it-all. One day the laugh was on me. An annual test of the boilers was in process - high pressure boilers for heat and autoclaves. Pressure could reach 300 pounds per square inch. I was visiting when the safety valve let go. The sky was falling - the world was doomed, it was the time of the apocalypse. Instantly the room was filled with hot, blinding steam. I set the world's record for evacuation. Up the ladder to the ground level and out. But, I was alone. I waited - still no one followed. The steam abated and

slowly I went back. It was hot and moist - 100% humidity, but all the men were where I left them. One of the many days of deflation I have experienced.

Some day I want to go back and check another story. I wasn't there, but my dad told me what they had done. (Remember in the early thirties the VA was a family affair). Wages - \$80-\$100 a month for most maintenance personnel. My dad drew \$155 through the early throes of the depression. Like any man with a mechanical interest, the talk turned one day to grinding stones. Each was speed rated to match their use with a similar motor. What would happen if a stone was used in a RPM other than for what it was designed. There was no question that there had to be some damage and probably an explosion. So, one day they put a 1750 RPM stone on a 3450 shaft. Wired a switch near the door and tried it. The room was solid concrete and the door two inch steel. Within seconds, the "bang" could be heard and the vibration felt when the fragments hit the wall. A short wait and they opened the steel door, turned off the switch and looked. It was like a fog from the dust. After a bit - let it settle - they went in. One could see the dents and chips in the concrete walls. Ah ha, one should watch the RPM ratings to insure they match. One could get hurt. Ha! I'm going back some day and introduce myself and see if I can still detect the damage - even after 60 plus years.

I left Rapid City on 19 May 98 and drove up to Fargo for sundry reasons. On the morning of the 20th I went to the VA hospital center to check on my memory of the grinding wheel incident. I stopped at the regional office, introduced and identified myself to a very cooperative lady. She immediately recognized my request as an engineering problem. Called at first: penetrating wound right thigh. She called a secretary named Ruby in that department and gave me directions to the office. (Ye olde hospital ain't what it once was - new additions, etc). Ruby was waiting and introduced me to Dennis, the head engineer and a 1996 graduate of NDSU. To a corner and table we went. (Please sit down as you read these next comments). He brought out a set of blueprints - dated 1928 - the original. A bit dog-eared and brittle, but original. Can you believe the government still possessing an original blueprint that was 70 years old.

The boiler room is no longer the boiler room. The boilers were removed to another separate area years ago. But I spotted the concrete room immediately. Dennis looked, paused, and then stated that things didn't look good. Too many changes, modifications, removals, etc. But, away we went with Dennis carrying a huge ring of keys - through steel doors, down steel stairs, under concrete foundations, to no avail. Dennis explained that the various changes through the years that the original plant had been either incorporated into the change, covered up, or just completely destroyed. So, I didn't reinforce my memories - maybe one-half correct?

I remember some names of the hospital personnel. A Mr. Hoverson was director. A Mr. Hugh Lane was the x-ray technician. He was a tall, handsome man, with a very attractive wife. No children. He reminded me of Gary Cooper. Could the "no children" have been the result of our early cathode tube technology? Here again the citizen pays with health and life while the "employer" reaps the wealth. Another name -

only Andy - comes to mind. I saw him in 43 and he loaned me - insisted - his car when I was home on a delay-in-route. He always drove a new Hudson - straight eight - with the new electric shift when it was offered. (How many of you have ever seen the block of a straight eight? It looks ten feet long). He shot an H & R target revolver nearly every day. He was good. We would go out to the city dump west of Fargo - open burning, garbage, rats, and bottles and stink those days. Seldom did he miss a bottle in the air. He was married - no children - and his wife must have been a saint. In 43 when he loaned me the car he was retired and living in a flop house. Fargo had their "ladies" in those days and he tried to get one of the ladies to give me a roll in the hay. She declined as the ladies had all been warned to not mess with the servicemen or else. It was or else - no problem.

Enough of this early romance!

My first visit to the VAMC System came in June 1947. We were married on 28 May 1947 and the problem occurred a couple of weeks later. One morning I passed fresh blood in my stool. Oh! Oh! Did I strain myself on the honeymoon? Afraid not! To the VA I went and the diagnosis: rectal fissure. I was to try to remedy the problem by a fiber diet, etc - soft stools - etc. and for the pain I received a medication with belladonna - atropine, a powerful medication. I bought some commercial type named PAZO and used that also. Too much could cause dryness of throat and blurriness of vision, etc. It helped but no cure and one morning after I had obviously used to much, I woke up with no voice and the vision problem. Both returned to normal at noon. But, enough! To the VA I went. The surgeon was an out-patient doctor and good. I received my first spinal in my life - hardly as easy as today's epidurals. Also, a lesson in humility. To expedite and assist I was on my hands and knees on the table with the sphincter area exposed to all. Also, one's genitals hung freely by gravity.

All went well! I can remember being forced to lie with my head lower than the hips for several hours. I guess in those days this helped dissipate the Novocain. Today that drug, Novocain, is seldom or never used in spinals. Today, lidocaine or xylocaine have replaced the early use. Even in dentistry there is little use of Novocain. The name continued in the public use of analgesics, however.

The next morning I was just comfortable when two orderlies came in. (ward) One read the chart - the name matched his order. A Sitz bath! No-no-wrong guy! Nope! So these two nine foot tall gentlemen dragged this young veteran to the bath area. It was a large room with a big high-sided tub in the middle of the room. Toilets bordered one wall. They lifted me up and plunk - into 98-100 degree water I went. Heat does help! No pain in the bottom! As I sat there, however, I felt gas a-comin'. It did! Bubble, bubble to the surface! Now I remember from the surgery yesterday that a plastic or cellulose plug had been inserted in the rectum. How could gas pass with the plug? Gas, hell, I had to go! (I had had two enemas two days before - I was clean from the bottom to my ears - but I had to go. Now the orderlies had left after they plopped me into this small ship with legs. The sides were at least three feet high. I was weak and finally got my body up and one arm and leg over the side when nature cut loose.

Vile, liquid green fecal material followed me from the tub to a toilet. Settling there I could feel myself hemorrhaging my life away. (False) Finally back came the orderlies. They stood in the doorway and the waves of odor from the "green death" twisted their nostrils. Finally one said, "Boy, you were right, we should have left you in bed." They tenderly helped me back to the ward and bed.

I have told this story many times. With the passage of time it is now a humorous memory. Luckily for us that pain per se cannot be recalled on demand or the general memory. I have a dear friend who insists I tell it (after a few scotches) and he still doubles over. I used the story once in school for a ninth grade class. We had a lesson on drugs and how if used correctly can insure a long and painless life within the sphere of medicine. I had made reference to Demerol - meperidine, the derivatives of morphine, the new synthetics, hydro-oxo codone, etc. all the new tranquilizers - "pams" etc. I told the story and included the "bubbles in the bath." Apparently the only phase of the lecture for some was the "bubbles in the water." The phone rang from several inquiring parents in the principal's office. All was resolved but I decided that truth was not worth the time - at least in this area.

Remember the building in Camp (now Fort) McCoy in 1945? We were standing in the rain and the announcement that all wounded to go building so and so. From this quick pass through I received an award of 20% of compensation for "penetrating wound right thigh." (Today with the rush to be medically and politically correct, my service-connected injury is listed as "right thigh injury." This is pure bull shit! Why no longer the exact or true source of any injury?

The monthly check had carried me - us - over a problem many times. A dollar was a dollar (nearly) in 1945-46-47. In the summer of 1947 I received a correction letter on my 20% award. Something to the effect that there could not be such a percentage in my case and the 20% was raised to 30%. Also, a check for over \$700.00 (if I remember correctly) for the adjustment. It was welcome.

Now after the above preface I received in 1948 a letter requesting me to report for a physical to the Fargo VA. Here again I must digress. You must remember and understand that my generation was raised on the premise that authority figures were to be obeyed. We resented authority, we tried to avoid authority, and we did not always respect or accept authority gracefully, but we obeyed. It was just that way. Even the services benefited by this ingrained sense of duty.

I reported and had an x-ray. No blood work. I can remember that I sat and sat until 11:30 that morning and no one or answer came on the x-ray of the chest. I received a meal ticket and went to lunch. (In the old days all ambulatory patients all ate in a mess hall. Also, all out-patients who came early for laboratory work or who were in the hospital over a meal period were offered a meal ticket. Not today! After dinner I received the x-ray diagnosis. Okay. A few small calcium spots had been examined closely as possibly TB infection.

Now, to a doctor. A young man - new to me. Certainly no bed-side manner. His only concern and interest was the "penetrating wound right thigh." (To my

knowledge no x-ray was ever taken of the fragment in the thigh until in Korea and then by VA in 1978. He would have me look away and then take a pin and ask about pain degree. Some pricks were in the scar tissue. He offered no chit-chit. A real prick! I remember asking him about the pain I experienced whenever I overworked the leg, etc., if the pain could be psychosomatic? No comment? In a month I received the adjusted award change to 10%. (It is there today). Here I made my first mistake with the VA and the U S Government. I should have challenged this adjustment. But, authority is authority! Bull shit! I have had varying degrees of pain since 12 Nov 45 - put a value on that. Especially today when we now have 100% "gifts" under the new PTSD classification. I will be challenging this percentage this year (1998).

In January, 1950 our first child was born. A son. I guess all men want an image of their ego first so expect and pray for a son. Whatever, I started out strong and then had two daughters. Love 'em all! If birth brings no harm to girl friend (wife) and the babies are normal, really all a man can ask. Now I hadn't felt nervous during the wife's pregnancy. And, starting on the 1 Jan 50 Fargo started preparing for its 75th anniversary. No shaving - beards were in order. Son's DOB is 16 Jan 50. Shortly after his birth (mother and son doing well) I broke out in a rash on the calf of my right leg. Did it itch! I tried home remedies (?) and recommended salves, etc. from the druggist. To no avail! It got larger and larger and started to spread to the back of my hands. I could squeeze out a fluid by squeezing my hands. Cirrus fluid? One last stupid act before I finally went to the VA was that I super-saturated water as hot as I could stand it with table salt (NA & CL) and with a dripping cloth slapped it on the "mess." Wow! My thinking was that if the "mess" was due to a fungus(i) that this application would have a fungicidal effect. No way! I probably pickled both the live and dead cells in the area. To the VA I went.

I was making \$1.10 an hour and was at the VA for nearly two weeks. They put me on Burrough's Solution soaks. It finally worked. (I got out and it started back). I went to the wife's gynecologist and he tried ultra-violet. It worked in one day. So I bought my own for \$8.00 - his charge per visit was \$3.00 - and he agreed with he - do it yourself and save dollars. If you ever get a tropical fungus, try ultra-violet. Be careful in following directions, you can burn yourself severely just like sunburn.

I was in a ward of four beds. All beds were full. All of us about the same age as all were WWII veterans. Now using the various adjectives that start with the letter "C" - for examples: cautious, clever, courageous, cold, cute, etc., etc. and clod. There is one in every social group. There was one in this ward- a simple shit who was probably as useless on active duty as he was tasteless here in the ward.

I had been in this ward a couple of days but was not ambulatory. As usual, introductions had been made and the usual BS. The bed diagonally across from me had a patient who was partially paralyzed. I didn't know this the first day or so in the ward.

Every morning several doctors and nurses would come in to his bed. Unlike normal rounds they would pull the curtains around his bed and work extensively on the lower back or buttocks. Listening to their comments for a couple of days I gleaned

the facts that they were very much concerned about the "problem" and that "problem" was in the above named area.

On the third or fourth day the routine began as usual. All of a sudden a nurse's voice became agitated. "Doctor, doctor, look here!" Her voice had a positive note. Good news!

The patient had been admitted for a severe ulcerated bed sore. Ulcerated to the bone. For the days I had lain and watched the staff had been removing and replacing the area with medicated packs. It had been touch and go. For several days the necrosis had balanced the new-tissue growth. That day first, the first time in over a week, there had been pink tissue - new. (He healed rapidly after this).

I visited extensively with the patient as he recovered - at least for a couple of days and I was discharged. He had been hit in back and been paralyzed since. He had married and had two children. He was years ahead of society and the disabled mandate in that he had ramps to his home - in the home - and facilities for driving his car. I'm sure he did very well in all areas.

I mention the above to illustrate a past and present problem. We all have "put our foot in our mouth" sometime. Plain clods! The service and VA is no exception. There was one big, big clod in this ward. After the healing started, everyone visited more. The paralyzed patient had commented about the paralysis from the waist down. Our clod speaks up one day and asks, "How do you and your wife do it if you're paralyzed?" The patient told me later that questions like that used to bother him but time had helped him ignore such comments.

Every group seems to have a natural comedian. This guy was a natural. He could spew out one-liners all day. He was also a likable guy so you listened and laughed. The nurses, doctors, orderlies, and other patients all enjoyed him and helped spread his reputation.

If I remember correctly, he owned a bar in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota. I have always planned to stop in and visit the bar through these years but the best laid plans of mice and men.....

Anyway, I remember a story he told about his bar which proved so vividly the results of alcohol on literacy.

His washrooms for the customers were near the stairs to the basement. And with his sense of humor, the doors were marked: Tis Hers; Tain't Hers. His stories on the problems resulting from the "directions" were legion - especially as the evening progressed. Many red faces - much profanity - rapid exit from area.

The stairs to the basement started to the basement in this area. His extra liquor and beer were stored there.

Although the supplies were protected by a heavy screen, there was absolutely no need for any patron to go down the stairs. He did not want them down there with their cigarettes and danger of fire. Here again his sense of humor resolved the problem.

The stairs went down six steps to a landing - then turned 90 degrees and six more to the basement. His solution was to put a blown up picture of a coiled

rattlesnake on the wall on the landing, put a 25 watt bulb lighting the picture and the caption read:

RATTLESNAKE PIT

Many a stumbling drunk regained his composure and reflexes as he exited up the stairs.

He can't take all the credit for this day's performance. It was, however, his idea.

Those of you who are old enough to remember the Korean War will also remember the Brink's robbery. The biggest take in the history of robberies. The method used by the robbers, however, to conceal their facial appearance. They used a silk stocking over the head which is the key to the incident. The color of the stocking changes the skin tones and the pressure the shape of the face. One looks weird and different.

I had my wife bring a silk stocking. We/he waited until nap time (another story) and the prank started. He put on the stocking, put an extra pillow under his head and put the sheet under his neck. All you could see was the grotesque head lying still on a white background.

We waited a few minutes to gain our composure. Since it was nap time no visiting, noise, anything was tolerated. After a few minutes, two of us ran down to the nurses' station. (I think we did a good job with our act).

Two nurses were on duty. One, over 30, had experience with the humor of men in uniform or hospital clothing. The other, a new - a neophyte, showed her immediate apprehension. We explained with pleas, gestures, vivid descriptions that something was terribly wrong with "He." (I don't remember his name).

The older nurse failed to see our sense of humor or accept our plea.

She made it clear that she felt this was just some more of our nonsense and we'd better get our butts in bed where they belonged. The younger nurse refused to come and check, but her senior calmed her and invited her down to see.

We all stopped at the door. His bed was across the room to the left. A four bed ward. He looked terrible. Like death and decomposition were racing each other.

The older nurse stood a few seconds, looked, paused, and then said, "I'll give you five seconds to get your feet on the floor and that damned sock off your head and get on with your nap."

No movement - no sign of life.

She started, "One, two, three," at about four he sat up, smiled, removed the stocking and commented with, "Party Pooper!" or something to that effect.

The young nurse received an A in the three hours course titled: GI Humor.

The Korean War started 20 May 50 and I was called back to EAD (extended active duty) in October 50. That ended any use of the VA facilities for several years. I do have one quick story about the burdensome, inefficient federal bureaucracy. This was before the days of computers but I wonder if even today with the stated panacea of today's computers if the results would have been any different.

I was home on a short leave and a tooth started acting up. Since there is no

active post near Fargo, I tried the Fargo VA. They were very helpful. Took me right in and put a permanent filling in the tooth. But, since I was now on active duty and not of a veteran status, the army must reimburse the VA for the dental work. \$6.00! I signed papers and papers. The payment would be a transfer of appropriated funds from one agency to another. How much did it finally cost to get the \$6.00? How long? There must be a better way - but what?

Another area where I'm sure millions are fraudulently wasted and lost is in the area of VA compensation and military base pay. You cannot draw both. One must be waived. And rightfully so! How can anyone claim a dysfunction in any physical area and then claim (by fact) that he can meet all the rigors of service life? I had not been forced to waive my VA compensation since the commission in 1949 because I had never drawn any monies. On receiving my orders I went to the VA and waived the compensation for an indefinite time.

All active duty for training, etc., with the USAR and NG require the same waiver. But, in how many cases it is not done? I knew of a case in Sioux Falls where the service member openly bragged about his dual income. I contacted a South Dakota senator to this effect and his return suggested I contact the CO of the unit. I never did - if the senator didn't want to investigate at the level he was able to, the hell with him. I did visit with a full time technician about a computer cross-check of active duty pay and VA compensation but he didn't think the computers were set up to this at the time. How about now? It's still being done, I'm sure.

I learned another "frailty" of the government titulars after I returned back home after Korean service. I joined a unit with pay and tried to pay in cash at the end of the calendar year. I did for a couple of years, but cash screwed up something- some where so badly that I was asked to use the waiver.?

I had full health coverage on active duty and on returning to ORC-USAR status I taught school from 1952-54 so had good insurance. So, by enjoying excellent health and no need to use the VA facilities, I did not visit any VA hospital until 1954. We had moved back to Fargo and my wife began to experience problems with "floaters" in her eyes. Most of us have them to a minor extent, little black spots or ribbons which levitate in and out of one's visual range. What they are and their source, I believe, is still a medical mystery. The vitreous humor, the liquid which fills the eye ball proper, is not connected to any blood source. So, if the floaters were subject to antibiotics or the like, they would be unable to reach the "floater" infection. The answer, rather the treatment, was to induce an artificial fever through the medium of injected typhoid fever, control the resulting fever for a day - 105-106 - then kill the typhoid source and allow a day of rest. Repeat the process! It helped - only!

I was on my way up to see my wife one evening - a Saturday - and was loading the kids into the car to take to my mother's to baby-sit. I turned my ankle on a depression and took a couple more steps on the turned ankle carrying my son - in pajamas - 60 pounds. I went down and the pain started. I dropped the kids off and went to the hospital. As I sat visiting I could feel and then watched the entire foot and

ankle begin to swell. I went home, took a couple of aspirin and tried to sleep with the foot elevated. Ice? Don't remember. In the morning, Sunday, the foot and several inches above the ankle were solid black. The hemorrhaging looked like a black sock. I called a friend and we made it for the VA. The OD thought it was broken for sure but no X-ray technician was available on Sunday and could I, would I, mind waiting until Monday for the pictures. It would have been double-time to call the technician. No problem. They kept me comfortable with ice and Demerol. Next day - not broken (the doctor was glad he hadn't bet.) I was in bed for 3-4 days and out a day later. I had to get back to school. I was working on my Masters at the time. The wife's doctor asked about my whereabouts (my absence) and his chin hit his knees when she informed him I was in the VA hospital. (I believe this helped him decide on his bill - \$400 for everything for about a week. Today?)

In the spring of 1955 I was getting dressed for a Saturday night dance and I looked down at my knees. The right one looked like it had a lemon attached. Monday and a trip to the VA revealed a monstrous ganglion cyst. It was too big to break, so surgery was scheduled for the next day. The morning came and went - no doctor. After dinner here he comes. He looked at me, blanched, swore, apologized. There had been an emergency that morning. I asked if it was too late for now - the p.m.. He left - came back, no, if you'll help. Let's go. He got a wheel chair - to the operating room we went. Now this is definitely not medical protocol. He draped the knee - one of the caines into the base at several places (Novocain in 55?) and we sat and BS'd a few minutes. Let's go. I sat and watched him cut the skin open to expose the cyst. It looked like a pinkish-white, veined tennis ball. Out it came with a little extra scraping on one "root" attachment. Done! I went home the next day but soon noticed a swelling at the same area. I went back to the VA and found that this is quite common. Cirrus fluid? It was aspirated and home. Back one more time and we had it. Today you would get an injection of cortisone. Our generation should receive a blanket citation for being the guinea pigs of medicine. Look what war injuries furnished medical science for practice and learning.

From 1955-1978 I was near but never in a VA hospital. I finally settled down and was in education either as a classroom teacher or counselor from 1957-1985. Excellent insurance and other than five broken ribs in 1977, in excellent health. I had no need for any hospital until 1978.

I forgot one visit to a VA hospital in 1966 - first visit to Ft. Meade. As CO of the 247th Chemical Company in Rapid City I had about eight officers attached for training. Most were doctors and nurses and quite helpful. Most outranked me but DD 1380 used to confirm their attendance?) I had received notice that a four year physical was due and wanting and had mentioned this to one doctor. He had immediately offered to do the work and scheduled me for the next Saturday afternoon at Ft. Meade VA. (He was a full-time doctor there at the time.)

I showed up and although the examining rooms and area were deserted (weekend) we completed the testing. He asked me about colon problems, etc. and since

I had never had a proctoscope, he performed the act. Quite uncomfortable. He brought the completed forms to the next meeting and I forwarded. Then I received a bill from the VA for the physical. What the hell? I called the doctor for clarification and he said he would handle. I never heard again.

In 1970 the same physical was due. This time I went to the hospital at EAFB. What a difference. This pompous prick acted like he was doing me a favor. My teeth were starting to go and he commented on the fillings, etc. Actually, outside of being completely negative, he had little to say. In about a week I received a call from headquarters in Sioux Falls. Physical stated: Not recommended for reserve duty. Why? What? The AST, a friend and a good one, told me that there were shadows in the chest area. I asked for a second opinion and he got authorization for a civilian doctor. Passed with flying colors. The problem - I had added a few pounds in the chest area and the extra tissue (fat) gave a shadow effect on the lungs. He must have been right (the civilian doctor) as 28 years later I'm still here. As for the active duty hospitals, I have one suggestion. That is not to have or show disdain for the uniforms of the other services. Aren't we all in this together?

Ye olde war leg started acting up on the spring of 1978. Why? I wasn't or hadn't done anything physical out-of-the-ordinary but it hurt. I was having "words" with the current school administration. I never correlated the resulting stress with leg pain. Believe me - it can be a factor. Both gentlemen were here about three years and then left. One went to a small town in Nebraska and ended up being indicted and convicted. He is now a convicted felon. Enough said!

I had received a new type service connected card from the Fargo VA some years earlier and when I reported in for the first time, it was noticed and comments made. (I had it changed to Ft. Meade code later but now the cards shows Korean service, rather than WWII. My disability (wound) was from WWII but policy is to show the latest service. Really can't agree - either the one for the service connection or list both.

The regular "greetings" awaited me. My blood pressure was taken, height, weight, etc. It stopped there. No further assessment of the leg. The BP was 179 Systolic 120 diastolic. Strokesville! More checking on the BP area - medication and a rescheduling for the leg. I started on a mild diuretic.

On the rescheduling there were X-rays, etc. Also, a conduction study was made using electrical measurements on the nerves feeding the leg. On the X-ray I finally saw the fragment. Quite small, about the size of the head of a "farmer" match. All this work took over five years. Since the BP was more life threatening than the leg pain, I had to agree. Finally in the spring of 84 we decided to operate. I had nothing to lose and no guarantee but one gets tired of reoccurring pain.

One incident that happened in 1982 helped in our decision. Since 1945 the leg had collapsed - without warning - about three or four times. Just quit for a fraction of a second to support me. In seconds - after I had hit the floor - full use returned. But, sometimes with pain. In 1982 I was carrying a heater to the basement when, at the second step from the bottom, it let go. Up in the air I went, fell on my right hip and

buttocks and slid twelve feet across the basement floor to the wall. I was home alone but got up and "walked" upstairs so I knew the hip or leg bone wasn't broken. I sat down by the kitchen table and my wife came home. I guess I went into a mild shock but got to bed okay. In the morning up to the VA I went. I was solid hemorrhage from my hip to my knee. In a few days down to my ankle. The VA wanted to hospitalize me but I talked them into some pain pills and home. If I promised faithfully to stay off my feet. Phlebitis!

The surgery went well. It took the surgeon only three tries to locate the fragment. It was encapsulated with tissue like a jelly bean. I knew all the surgeons and the chief of surgery had graduated from Central High School in Rapid City in 63 or so. I had another friend stand in to watch. All in fun! I was conscious but "happy" during the "work." That afternoon I talked them into discharging me and home I went with the wife and a supply of Tylox.

I had two dogs at this time - dear, dear friends. I violated every rule of veterinary science for their feeding and handling but they lived 16 and 17 years and both died of complications of cancer and heart. They were quite unique as they were half Besingi and half beagle.

I had been home a week or so and was out walking (running) the dogs in the government land west of our home. I came to a barbed wire - single strand - about 2-3 feet above the ground. Without thinking I threw the right leg over the wire. Wow! Ouch! GD!, etc. There was pain. I caught the wire with both hands and gingerly brought the left leg over. I knew something was wrong and limped slowly home. Dogs must read one's feelings and pain as both stayed right beside me all the way home.

I dropped my pants and here was a small lemon-sized piece of muscle bulging out between the new scar tissue. No breakage and no blood but out. The next day to the VA and a repair was scheduled. The same surgeon was present but a third or fourth year student did the work. She was pretty! No trouble since except phantom nerve pain. Good work!

I want to digress here in defense of the VA system. It is open and available to all veterans - mostly WWII - and we're getting old. Some of these men weren't able to read or write when they enlisted or were inducted but now as men in their autumn years have only magnified the initial dysfunction. Why should the VA or government be held legally or medically responsible for the stupidity, inability, or other disregard to reason that they now display and/or practice. Some can't read or attempt to read or follow the labels on their prescriptions. Many are out and out drunks. A few true psychos! A hospital cannot be a primary education facility. By the very token that they find their way to the facility indicates they have some knowledge of fact and direction. Now today I understand some are becoming addicted to the heavy-duty narcotics. Like our Hollywood or TV entertainers they learn to need the crutch of hydro-oxy codone and similar synthetics. This is the VA's fault? Bull shit! All medications are explained and silence is golden. No questions! The VA should be able to assume an understanding. No one ever twisted my arm or threatened me to smoke or drink. Why

blame the manufacturer or the source? Is sex addictive? Who does one sue for that pleasure? As with any area of human nature there must be a sense of responsibility to one's self. If I don't give a shit - why should you?

In 1986 I was washing my car and as I bent over to get the front wheel, the pain knocked me down. Wow! What? To my GP I went and after probing and checking he ordered me to a hospital. I said okay and left. My wife drove me up to Ft. Meade and within minutes - diverticulitis. The pain was on my left side. I did this to myself. Not on a medical record but my young doctor admits it could be possible. (I'm a challenge to medical science - lots of questions. Ha!) What had happened a couple of days earlier was I had had the last of my teeth pulled for plates. I came home with the "caine" still working about noon and ate a large meal of Fargo tomatoes and cucumbers. All seeds. Then about 2:00 p.m. I took a tylox. This covered the "exit" of the caine. About 6-7:00 p.m. another tylox and then to bed at 10:00. No hurt ever for the day. But, with the tylox at 2:00 and 6:00 I stopped all peristalsis and the load of tomato and cucumber seeds passed into the diverticuli. All stayed! It took about five days with antibiotics, etc. and back to normal. My daughter came up to see me with my two year old grandson. He wouldn't come near me. Can't blame him - metering machine and tubes all over. Ha!

We finally got the blood pressure under control. Actually no one contributing source was ever located. I ended up taking a mild dose of calcium blocker, ACE blocker, and a beta blocker with a mild diuretic. The BP would vary slightly but the sky-high readings were gone. In the initial stages I was hospitalized one day-night and mini-press, prazosin was tried. Only 2 mgs but potent stuff. I took my first pill about 2000 and about 2230 thought I had to go to the bathroom. Put my feet on the floor and the world started to spin. I fell back on the bed and rang for the night nurse. BP - 60/40. Lowest it got but took about an hour to come back to normal. I know this was the reason I ended up on pro cardia to adalat, nifedipine - the calcium blocker.

In the spring of 88 I was mowing the yard when I didn't feel right. No pain (both my wife and I apparently have a high threshold for pain - not always a credit). High on each shoulder it felt like someone was trying to pull off adhesive tape. I called my young doctor friend that evening and he immediately ordered me up to the VA - and the ICU. (He was employed at the VA at that time.) I wondered why the ICU since I didn't hurt but this young doctor borders on a medical marvel. I have known him since 1981 (luckily) and have yet to "lose" him with a question. His only chink in his armor is was marksmanship. The above statement is a prevarication but it gets his dander up.

Tests - tests - tests. never any comment. I should have known - guessed that the problem was serious. The young doctor seemed to have lost his sense of humor. Usually he could banter with the best. In a couple of days came the decision - ischemia. Ischemia. I had blockage in the arterial vessels. To the Denver VA I must go. The ambulance plane was scheduled to go on the weekend. Here again in retrospect I see the hand of the Good Lord. The departure was delayed for three days or so due to 100 MPH winds near Boulder, Colorado. No way, Jose! This set back my arrival and time

at the Denver VA about three days. Three days which proved to be critical in my span of life. At least by my interpretation.

I must insert the name of my young doctor. The reason I'm able to write this today. He left the VA in 1989 or so, spent two more years at the University of Utah specializing in Nephology. He is currently head of the dialysis operations at the local hospital. It is with utmost awe and respect that I credit Dr. Fredric Birch, MD with my life.

If you really want to travel first class air go by air ambulance. You are the "king of the skies." Of course, you could be getting an early trip to the pearly gates." As we approached Denver the pilot received his instructions to land. Never once did the plane vary from the approved landing. Everything else just stacked up and waited. Down we went and an ambulance was waiting. To the VA hospital we go.

It was busy, busy there. I felt sorry for the receiving nurse. Live but such bodies everywhere. She knew I was coming but didn't have a bed ready. I was in no pain, and comfortable, so asked her to relax. Shortly after that a room was available and in I went and in came the first doctor, Dr. Elaine. Wherever she is today some community is surely benefiting. She had tried teaching and library science but decided medicine was to be her forte. Her specialty: orthopedic pediatrics. I asked her why such a narrow field and especially the children. I'll never forget her answer. Chris, nowhere in medicine can you watch the recovery rate change as quickly as with kids. Granted, conversely, nowhere can you lose a patient as quickly. But, if you're right, it's like a new world to watch the little bodies recover, the eyes shine, and the exuberance of youth explode before your eyes. I liked her!

Dr. Elaine also put a worry or problem I had to rest. In working up my personal medical history, the inevitable question of one's parents and status was asked. Both my parents are deceased. My father died in 1948 of coronary thrombosis, my mother in 1961 of Hodgkins. Heart and cancer! Where does - did that leave me. Dr. Elaine calmly explained that although 62 years (father) 73 (mother) are not exceptional life spans, both spans were a good life. When heart or cancer takes on in their 20-30-40's - then you've got a problem. If that weakness or tendency lies in the genealogy of a patient, medical science is concerned.

The next day I had an angiogram. Two young doctors, one had a Dutch surname, did the work. I watched the screen as they worked but all I saw or understood was several black squirming "worms." Plugged arteries. They pointed them out and the percentage of blockage. I had troubles. They estimated at least four were in need of a by-pass. When? By whom? Back to the ward I went. The room the angiogram was conducted in was a large, new, air conditioned room. The young doctors commented on the equipment and cost. This all within the last two years and now obsolete. The changes in medicine occur daily and therefore the cost of life increases. There was an entire ward, brand new, that was empty due to lack of appropriations. (Yet #1 can fly around anywhere, anytime, with no concern for the cost.) A veteran didn't ask for the war - the president did ask for his job.

The ward was filled with patients waiting to be examined, waiting for surgery, or waiting to be discharged. Everything was based on triage - the sickest first. I was scheduled for discharge and return in a month. (I never would have made it) My wife and one daughter were there during this time and we could visit and walk around the area. They stayed in an apartment complex within a block of the hospital during their stay. Quite affordable and sufficient. TV, cooking facilities, parlor, beds, etc.

The ward(s) were living examples of the range of intelligence and/or common sense in the former servicemen of all the wars. Here were men dying in front of your eyes but still sucking on their cigarette. Smoke-smoke-smoke that cigarette! I never saw a memo actually printed and posted but the word was that if you smoked - no bypass. Why not? Why take the time and effort to save a patient who doesn't want to save himself. There was actually no smoking in the hospital but one room had been set aside for the "puffers." Even here one could see the results of ignorance. The rug was littered with burn holes from the clowns. I never spent any time in the room as just walking by the area reeked of smoke and tar. I wonder how many of these veterans - if still alive - are trying to climb on the new band wagon for help and compensation for smoking during their service years?

It was Sunday evening about eight that the world changed for me. My wife was just leaving when I knew something was wrong. No pain but something wasn't right in Georgia. I hollered at her to get the OD. In he came, took a quick listen, and down went the bed, up went the nitro drop from 40 to 140, in went the morphine. Never any pain but whatever he saw or heard made him move. I don't remember his name but a big man and good.

Here is where the three days lost to the wind came into play. If I had arrived as originally planned, I would have had completed the tests on Tuesday or Wednesday but with the delay all the results were not in until Friday. Since only emergencies were handled on the weekend, I was held over and scheduled for discharge and back to Rapid City on Monday. Now with the new change in my condition (?) I went from discharge and coming back in 30 days to numero uno for surgery. If I had headed home earlier or on the scheduled Monday, I wouldn't be here today. I'm sure the heart would have acted up on the way home.

This is a little early but must insure that I comment - so insert here. A week or so later when I did go home we (wife and I) went by air. I had drawn the TR for my travel (travel request) and I remember the cost to the government: \$77.00. I had to buy the ticket for my wife. Same plant, time, next seat, same schedule: \$148.00. I have only one question. Did the airline lose money on the TR? I doubt it!

Sunday evening was busy, busy. The anesthesiologist came in and explained his role in the coming surgery. The cardio surgeon came in and explained his role. (Why he was still there - maybe called as it was Sunday.) It was love at first sight. He was a young man, good build, reeked of ability and sincerity. He was here as a resident and his home town was Philadelphia. Wherever he is today some community is better off by his presence and practice. I can remember one question or comment I made after

our brief visit. You lift weights or run? Both, was the answer.

The next day and a half are a blank. Actually, I don't remember the preparation for surgery other than someone shaving my chest that Sunday evening. During the surgery my wife received reports on the progress. As for me - nothing. I guess I woke up in the late p.m. on Monday, but drugs, etc. kept most coherent action from later recall. I do remember I was quite uncomfortable. I found out later I had as many as eight shunts inserted in different areas. One big one - taken out on the third day or so - was in the carotid artery in my neck on the right side. This one really let me know it was there. All-in-all, time was relative. It either moved or seemed to stand still. I'm afraid I was a poor conversationalist for those first days.

I must comment some more on the young cardio-surgery doctor. His demeanor that Sunday p.m. was one of candidness and yet, sincerity. At no time did he show any of the "prima donna" airs and actions so predominant in specialized surgeons. He was just there and even appeared to be apologetic at times. I liked him. Here we had the patience and attitude of the general practitioner in a surgical specialist. Somewhere in our conversation I interrupted him and asked if I could make three observations. Go ahead? Now remember I had only met the man minutes before, was a bit woozy from the morphine, and we were discussing my life on the morrow. (All my life I have lived by this rule - judge not a man by what he says, judge him by what he does.)

The three observations: 1. You're a health nut; 2. For your size you're quite a powerful man; 3. You reek of empathy. (He smiled and thanked me.) I found out later he jogged, lifted weights, watched his diet, no cigarettes and light on the booze. As for empathy - either Monday or Tuesday night after the surgery my wife and daughter were walking to the apartment near the hospital about 2000 or so. A car honked, pulled up alongside them and stopped. It was Dr. Witman. He had been at the hospital since dawn but still took the time to visit and help dispel any qualms the two women may have had. Quite a guy!

In visiting with him I asked about 26th and Woodland in South Philly. He looked at me with an odd look and asked why that address? I told him that was the location of a bar called the Leo Lawler's Swing Bar. I was AWOL in the fall of '44 and spent a night there. I saw the young doctor several times after the surgery but missed him on the day I was leaving. I wrote a note and had another doctor promise to deliver. In the note I thanked him for my life and commented how what a paradox it was that of the two nationalities that have contributed the most to our standard of living, medicine, transportation, math, communication, etc., the Germans and the Jews - that the "track record" between the two was deplorable. Deplorable and sad because man apparently will never learn from history. There will always be successes and failures in life and whenever the successes are being enjoyed by only a select few, the envy, jealousy, desire to emulate can and does lead to death by genocide.

I must be honest that I have harbored, right or wrong, correct or incorrect, derogatory thoughts of the American Jewish citizen's role in WWII. I was in a lot of different outfits but it seemed to me that the percentage of Jews in the line outfits was

not up to the percentage of the population total. If I am wrong, I'll apologize anywhere, anytime - to the parents of all KIA's my condolences and respect. I have checked with many veterans both while in the service and out on this interpretation - I'm sorry to say I heard mostly positive comments on this thesis-hypotheses.

An incident: It was four or five days after the surgery and I had recovered well enough to be back in a regular four-man ward. No one was ambulatory to any degree so introductions had been made and we visited whenever.

Diagonally across from me was another by-pass patient. He was a former marine, lived in Denver, about 61-62 years old. He had had his surgery a day after mine so was still in some pain with mild hemorrhaging from the sutures.

A day or so after I was assigned to this ward the marine had some company. Three of his former buddies and Denver residents came for a visit. Introductions were made and a few comments exchanged. All three of the friends were big men. Some comment was made about ratios of 2's or 4's - not to me - but I had to open my big mouth. I commented that four marines to one good GI is about the right ratio. The three walked slowly to my bed - bigger every step - one said, "You ain't in a good position to smart off, soldier?" A long pause and all their faces without any emotion - then smiles. Is the moral here - don't smart off while in bed?

The marine's name was Tony; last name?? His wife came every day and I enjoyed her visits and conversation. She had been in choreography when she was younger and had had bit parts in several movies. I remember one she commented on was one of Clint Eastwood's, *Any Which Way But Loose*. I asked her about the orangutan. Her comment, "No way! He could be mean. I was afraid of him: (Since they have 5-10 times the strength of a man, I certainly agree with her. Not a good pet.)

This world has always been smaller than one can believe. So small in fact that regardless of where you go or do, someone usually knows someone that you know. (Is this coming out correctly?)

One night nurse was in her late fifties or early sixties. She was always very gracious and found time to visit - if necessary. My first night in a regular room she found me awake and asked if I would like a sleeping pill. What have you got? A new one - supposed to be the best ever. Fast, efficient and no residual effect. It's called Halcion-triazolam. Also quite expensive. (As usual the pharmaceutical company was trying to get a return on their research costs in a hurry.) It didn't work. No effect. Since then I have had a different prescription named Restoril-tamazepam, 15 mg which I find far more effective. I really don't like to take any of the newer hypnotic agents but no sleep will drag you down so necessary once in a while. Any medication that causes you to lose consciousness also takes away your mind control. I can feel the effect of narcotics, but can control the need and number but not medication that puts you in dreamland.

We had probably met before or had crossed paths both before and after this current "stay." She had graduated from St. Luke's Hospital in Fargo, North Dakota. For a few years she had worked at the VA hospital in Fargo. Her personal friend was

also a surgical nurse and assisted in my fissure operation in 1947. This nurse, also a Captain in the ORC, was named (surname) Wycoff (sp.). I believe she transferred to Alaska. My night nurse had married an engineer by profession and had moved extensively. Her nursing degree came in handy as always work. Her daughter had married a former student of mine while I taught at Breckenridge, Minnesota from 57-61. Seemed like old times.

Another night - sleepless - since Halcion was a waste of time (to me) I met another sweetheart. She was a black nurse with a terrific sense of humor and lots of common sense. She asked if I wanted a pill for the sleeplessness. I told her I had tried Halcion to no avail. She suggested a pain killer even though I was not much more than uncomfortable. I questioned her on a narcotic to sleep? Yes, many people find sleep if all facets of minor pain or comfort disturbances are eliminated. Okay. I took 10 mg of oxycodone at 2345. I was wide awake at 0145. Three hours only! The next night she asked if? I hesitated and she commented that one try wasn't a fair test. So, okay. But, how about 5 mg now and 5 later on your rounds. She hesitated and commented that when she broke the seal on the pill package she had to insure that I took both and then certify this and time/date. Then she asked how did I know that the pills were 5 mg's? I explained that as a high school counselor with the expanding drug scene and use in the 50-60's I studied the PDR extensively. I wanted to at least talk the kids' language. So, using the army way to interpret policy, regulations, etc. I took one (5 mg) at 2300. Then we put the other behind and under the water glass and at 0400 - whether I was awake or not - I would and did take the second 5 mg. I like a woman who is flexible. She was a sweetheart. All my experiences at any VA hospital have been pleasant with all members of the medical staff.

Your strength returns quickly once you get your feet on the floor. By the fourth or fifth day I seemed back to normal on ye olde legs. I have always hated a bedpan for either end so had been using a washroom down the hall. I'll never forget this day - probably one of my first uses - of what I found. Some poor bastard had never made it to the toilet. There was shit all around the stall, all over the toilet and floor and all of diarrhea density. And it seemed like gallons. I wondered what the poor guy looked like himself. The odor was overpowering. I didn't stay long. I have always thought that specifying of a drain or more in a washroom was good thinking and planning. I'm sure the one in this room was used during the cleanup. I think I would have sprayed the whole area with bleach, Pine Sol or the like, then some strong germicidal soap to finish the "chore."

(I must be a jinx in this area. At Ft. Meade once in a four bed ward the nurses, two, were working on one patient and I heard him say several times - please, I've got to go. Whatever they were doing was not or could not be interrupted and they would answer - just a minute - just a minute. He exploded. The same violent pressure type of "fecal paint." I was not ambulatory so the stench got a little strong before it was all cleaned up. The poor guy was so embarrassed. The nurses apologetic.)

Home we went. Excellent care here as airlines had wheelchairs and aides at the

Denver Airport to assist. The trip home was uneventful - weak but no pain. There was another patient with me who had had the same procedure. Hospital aides were waiting for us at Rapid City Airport and to Ft. Meade we went. They dropped my wife off at home so she could get our car. I did not want to stay overnight - and I didn't. I got my instructions, medication, etc. and when to return.

For a week or so, every time I would get into bed - even sitting up with a couple of pillows - I would get out of breath. I've read or heard since then that the side effect is now an accepted fact from the by-pass procedure. My young doctors were concerned and, of course, so was I. So in less than three weeks since the surgery I went through an upper GI testing. All negative and all was well and time and returning strength soon eliminated the breath problem. I can remember the radiologist asking how long ago did you have the surgery and why are we doing this upper GI? The scars were all brand new and I did hurt a bit in some of the positions necessary for the testing. But, you must remember that my generation was - is not a complaining age group. We resent authority but do as we're told - when necessary.

Letter to VA - Director - dated 16 June.

Dear Sir:

It was 30 days ago today about this time that I went into surgery for a quad bypass. I'm happy to write that the incisions are nearly healed and my strength is returning. I now am capable of writing this letter.

Big is better? Not always! (There are horror stories of adverse treatment in some of the larger eastern V.A.M.C's.) Your facility is much larger and elaborate than Ft. Meade, South Dakota, but you haven't lost that personal touch. You have - shall we call it - an atmosphere of care. Your nursing staff, although a greater range in age and race than Ft. Meade, seemed dedicated to my/our well being. On a daily basis I saw candid instead of maudlin assistance, empathy instead of sympathy, and sincerity instead of medical protocol. "I'll never forget the look on one nurse's face when I told her that 5mg of oxy codone was enough."

You, I'm sorry I don't have your name, and your staff are entitled to some bows. The Denver V.A.M.C. owes no apology on any area of patient care.

Accolades and kudos to the entire staff who affected my recovery. I must, however mention a few by name - dangerous - but if I miss anyone, please include yourself.

To Barb in M.I.C.U.. my sincere thanks for your special time in catering to the whims, wishes and vanity of an old soldier. To the three "lady" doctors: Dr. Elaine D., Dr. Patricia Burns, and Dr. Carol Z., my sincere thanks for your "extra mile," interest, and involvement. Your eyes gave you away! Maybe that abstract quality referred to as maternal instinct, is a fact. Whatever, I loved the attention.

To doctors Luke, and "Texas" - your morning rounds were the highlight of my day. And, (I never got his name) the OD in the p.m. of 15 May 88, thank you for being available and saving my life. I was fully conscious during the eight minutes it took you to get me stabilized. Nitro was 140/and you used 8 or 10mg of morphine sulfate.

Dr. Whitman (sp.) - here we have a walking enigma. A man who I come closest to holding in awe of any man I've ever met. Meeting him was my pleasure and I'm sure the man upstairs had a hand in the process. I'm here today thanks to him and his staff. He's unique to medicine and especially his specialty - he reeks of empathy. (Most surgeons are the "fly boys" of medicine and the GP's the foundation.)

I'm sure that most combat veterans in retrospect have asked "why?" (I was infantry in WWII and Korea.) Especially after time has clarified our mortality; the answers and reasons would be legion. In these past years I finally decided that one reason for me was so I could play with and enjoy my grandchildren. After meeting Dr. Whitman I wonder if somehow I was also charged with insuring that there were no interruptions in his or his staff's genealogy. This would have insured his presence and skills on 16 May 88.

With humility and respect,

Keith Christensen
502-05-9282, CO6586862, MAJ-INF, USA-RET.

In 1989 or so I began to notice that sleep - still spotty - was often accompanied by a trip to the washroom and urination. But the voiding was getting a bit slow. So, back to the VA in 1990. Tests, etc. and PSA showed a 6 or 7 and X-ray an enlarged prostate. I did not hesitate to accept surgery when offered. Side effects be damned - one can't always have his cake and eat it.

The TUR went well. It took about 70 minutes. I had had an epidural for the general anesthetic so had no pain but after 70 minutes on my butt I certainly can sympathize with any woman giving birth. Even with no pain my butt was getting "flat" from the prolonged position.

The surgeon was of the no-monkey type. Dead serious and had never shown any sense of humor. Business only! He finished his work and walked around my right side and stood near my left ear. He commented, yes, the prostate was quite large, Mr. Christensen. We did the right thing. I asked, on a scale of 1-10 how would you rate the size, doctor? About a 7+ he answered. I looked him in the eye and said, well, it took 68 years to get to that size doctor. Not bad! Then, the devil made me do it side said, Doctor, how come other things don't enlarge as one gets older? A trace of a grin appeared on his face, he smiled, choked back a laugh, turned and left. The two surgical nurses in the room commented that this was the first time they had ever seen or heard any resemblance of a smile or humor. (He did - does good work.) It's been over eight years now and I can still piss with any twelve year old. Several friends have had to go back for their second TUR. One had had this surgeon but other conditions and medications had negated the initial work. His name: Dr. Andrew Yamada.

I went home the next day or so - weak and clear urine. Several nurses, etc. had commented on how fast the flushing had cleared. At 68 this is good news but one must cooperate with common sense. The evening I got home I took a wagon and two of my grandchildren for a ride up to the church and return. Up hill and about 600-700 yards. I didn't feel too sharp and on a trip to the toilet I passed pure real blood. I waited until morning and once again I had stopped bleeding so no trip to the VA necessary. No more wagon pulling either! If a grandchild kills me from over exertion, it really won't be a bad way to go. Put a price on the unconditional love of a child or a pet.

Time out for some accolades. When I returned from Denver in 88 after I had had the by-pass, I was assigned a new, young doctor, an internal medicine type by training. The other doctor, Dr. Birch, who had caught the heart problem in early May was leaving for more training (new) in nephology at the University of Utah. He finished

and returned to Rapid City and is now head of all dialysis at our local hospital. He hasn't changed in ability and I still call him now and then for a clarification. If I argue with him, he tells me to shut up and listen. Just no respect for age and his elders. Since it's been 18 years since I met him and ten since the by-pass, he now has a lovely wife and four children. Our community is richer by his presence.

The new young doctor is Dr. Michael Davies. He received his initial training at the University of South Dakota and some of his residency work at VA hospitals. Where? He is also married to a lovely lady and has three children. They were all kids when I first met them but in ten years this is not longer true. Odd that everyone gets older except the WWII vets. Ha! I doubt if any coins were flipped or case numbers examined when I was assigned to his care but here again, the Good Lord had to have a hand in this assignment. A few reasons why I feel so fortunate to have his name on the head of my assigned team. The man is as near as a doctor can get to being an empathetic marvel. He listens! He overflows with patience. He fields my BS and ramblings with a smile. Anything that's been "fixable" he has fixed. At present I'm in the middle of ye olde catch 22 of medicine where the cure has a catch. Of course, I've diagnosed myself and have offered him my expertise - a smile and little comment. Maybe! But, if I have had any comment of worth he has requested a "look see." For example: X-rays showed general old age asymptomatic arthritis - nothing specific - uric acid check was normal. Glucose normal on diabetes. All these for a creeping numbness in the extremities. I feel the problem meets the symptoms of peripheral neuropathy. Probably the result of the Beta Blocker I take daily. I could feel the change coming on slowly so years ago the biggest problem to date had been the loss of feeling to temperature. If I test the bath water with my feet - fine - but when I sit down - wow - hard on the bottom end.

Dr. Davies was promoted to Chief of Staff several years ago. A raise but also more travel and paperwork. But, bless him he has maintained his original clinic in addition to the promotion. Attrition by death has decreased the total assigned but he maintains his clinic and I always am granted the time I need. Dr. Davies does not have the Prima Donna Syndrome so common with "hot-shot" surgeons. An example would be a misinterpreted memo several years ago that when the mistake was brought to his attention he called me at home to apologize. Love him!

There is too much insincerity, social facades, thin veneers in our world today. Too many critical positions have been filled by the Peter Principle, or when "the chips are cashed in." Words cannot express how fortunate I feel to have had excellent, caring, capable doctors all these years for my care. In only a few cases did I sense or hear professional arrogance (a smart ass). My doctors have and do wear their white coats with pride and their demeanor is a credit to their oath. In medicine as in law the putting on of a white or black coat or robe on a dunce does not make that person a seer.

Other than an incident of slipping on some ice on 19 Dec 96, I have had routine visits to the VA. The blood pressure has been within acceptable vectors and other than daily pain of varying degrees - good health. I do want to relate the 19 Dec 96 incident,

however, as it might save some reader from a similar experience.

I was coming down a slight incline driveway when my right foot hit ice. Forward it went and reflexes threw the left forward to compensate. I learned there is a danger in compensation that body builders already know and watch closely. Never let the body forward of the vertical axis of the lower legs. This I did and the weight of the upper torso caused the left leg to collapse forward. I heard and felt the snap as down I went. It hurt. I lay and swore for a couple of minutes and then tried to get up. I did - good sign - but boy the pain. My wife was out of town so I called my daughter and alerted her that I may need help in the morning. Other than pain - I could stand - and I had some percocet for the pain. A hemorrhage appeared above and below the left knee.

To the VA I went on Monday. Bad news? The quadra cep muscle had been separated. No repair was possible. The medical assessment was that about 50% was still holding and working and 50% had rolled back into a ball about half way between the knee and hip. All I could expect of surgery would be a new scar from my hip to my knee. Here again the VA showed its leniency and understanding. Get a second opinion if you like. I did and the diagnosis sounded like a broken record of the VA's "arrangement." I know it's there but by walking and riding a bicycle in the formative years the muscle (½) will work as a whole. Today's kids may pay for their TV or computer hours in later life.

In October of 1998 all veterans are expected to be enrolled in a new VA program. Where it originated, why, necessity, interpretation, etc., I don't know. I do know it is another slap in our face for the implied and contractual promises we received in the war years and later. Seven categories from 100% to category 8 or a means assignment.

How many veterans were ordered to bring their last year's 1040 or income tax records to the enlistment or induction center. At no time - to my knowledge - did a man's monetary worth enter into a requirement for service. And now - BULL SHIT!

Congress has had a hand in this latest change. Now the membership has changed in this distinguished body since WWII but not their roll or responsibility. This body who has voted themselves midnight raises, fortunes for the retirement years. (The citizenry gets social security), and even retains their "war chests" for campaigning on leaving or retiring from office. Somehow I don't understand why the veterans' needs and causes must be the source of their pork barrel needs. There will be 15 billion transferred from the VA to highways in 98. Thank you so much, gentlemen. I guess as the percentage of veterans in Congress diminishes, the foresight and respect for the veterans follows suit. Except for their own needs.

There is an answer to this entire travesty of justice. The VA need only follow the new changes but the Congress and the veterans' organizations have got to accept and change the present method of linking all present and former servicemen under the same general title - veterans. Like any group titled, teachers, policeman, lawyers, doctors, etc., the range of ability and input varies from 1-100. With veterans some have seen war - others were on active duty during a war era. Oh, and there is a difference. A big difference. You don't die in an era - you do in a war. Yet, at present a combat record,

unless one was wounded, is no concern in rating or assigning a veteran's medical needs. Let me use myself as an example although I cannot complain. The VA's at Fargo and Ft Meade have always given me their 100% attention.

From CMTC in 1939 to retirement in 1974 I was exposed to the U.S. Army for 35 years. Twenty-eight of these years were years I was actually involved with either active duty; WWII and Korea, or in the reserve on a credited status. Yet, today with the new rules, I would not be qualified for VA or active care...if I had not been wounded. Why must a wound be the only recognized proof of service:? There are hundreds, thousands of WWII, Korea and Nam vets who weren't wounded and therefore, do not meet today's requirements. Also, these hundreds and thousands came home to an honorable discharge, school, training, job and/or business, and have been outstanding, law abiding citizens all these years. Now with no WIA record they do not meet the basic entry requirements and since they have improved themselves by their own sacrifices and now enjoy a successful life - at least by monetary record - they cannot receive medical help or assistance.

Daily I read in the paper or hear on TV the expletives of the "human behavior experts." Answers for all. If their expertise is a matter of fact, let these seers and soothsayers design a screening examination for all servicemen, cops, teachers, lawyers, etc. so that all the dysfunctional would be prohibited from entering and then failing their oath only to be picked up for life by current regulations of the VA system. (I know of a personal case where after 91 day - 90 minimum - and a medical discharge the recipient gets better care than combat veterans. No one can justify this - no one.

The veterans organizations must also accept a varying class of status in their work. All veterans are not equal. One heard in WWII - I was overseas years and years. I ask - doing what? I had one kid who lived 10 hours in combat. His donation to the war effort. And the greatest responsibility lies in the conscience of the individual servicemen. You and your God know what you did or didn't do. Let all records of any individual be available for assessment and investigation and, if any fraud is found, let the penalty be quick, severe and appropriate. Remember, other men died doing their job.

Many years go I was able to acquire some health and auto insurance that was top rate and reasonable. (I had a \$10.00 deductible on collision.) Any and all claims were paid quickly and without delay - until I asked the company to pay for the costs of some non-service connected problems I experienced at the Fargo VA Hospital. Yes, even in the late 40's the VA did try to collect from one's prime insurance carrier. How successful, I don't know.

I disagreed with their decision not to pay and stated my case. I was paying the premiums on a policy of my choice which you (the company) approved. Now, I'm told that you will pay all costs on any and all hospitalizations - at a hospital of my choice - except a VA or active army hospital. Why? Because these hospitals are tax supported, the monies appropriated. So what? This is what I want. Sorry!

Litigation is in the mill at this time to correct this "scenario." Corrected by the

use of Medicare insurance. The payments are paid by me and the insurance is totally sponsored but not managed by the government. So are the two types of hospitals in question. Since the administration is all under "one roof" shouldn't these simple transfers of credit be within reason? I think so. And, unlike the current practice of all payments being returned to the general fund for use in any and all areas except veterans health, the payments will go to the hospital where the costs occurred. Here again you would find proof positive that the administration of the hospital can make or break its efficiency. Wouldn't this direct return to the "coffers" of the serving hospital test the ability of the man in charge" (or woman) What better evaluation could there be for the top dog?

I'll close the VA Chapter with a bit of true history and nostalgia. My mother saved most of the V-mail, telegrams, and correspondence while I was in WWII. Mothers! I found a card – no date – written shortly after Thanksgiving '44. (Remember at this time my brother was home and discharged from the pneumonia problem.) I commented: Envy Wilber in ways. He's really got it soft. Of course, if and when I get back – I'll draw more benefits.

With all the former examples of the awards on compensation in the VA, I offer the epitome of a civilian, past and current status. I'm referring to the former press secretary, James Brady, who was wounded in the assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan on 31 March 1981. He not only drew his full salary for the remainder of President Reagan's term of office, but all expenses on his medical costs – six figures – were paid in full.

My basic gripe is that everyone in federal service, regardless of department or job level, should receive the same equal treatment in time of injury – the military excluded. With his wife, Sarah, actively involved with handgun control and Jim also probably drawing some compensation, I asked five questions of a former senator. I received reams of generalities, but few answers. The one comment I received which really shook me up was that I was asking for private information on Mr. Brady.

Do you agree? The five questions were: (1) What is or was Mr. Brady's salary at the time of the injury. (About \$70,000.), (2) What hospital handled the injuries, rehab, etc.?, (3) Cost of the hospitalization?, (4) Is Mr. Brady receiving compensation now?, and (5) If any, then how much? Since all of the above questions involve monies received from the United States Treasury, why and what was private?

After the hysteria caused by these acts diminished, the gun control crowd went to work. Using the incidents as a base for their prevarications. The public once again was flooded with the half-truths and out-of-control data. And, Mr. Brady's wife, Sarah, became the spokeswoman for Handgun Control. (What is her salary?)

The above brief synopsis is for an introduction to an area of great concern to me. It appears, as always, that there are several indices used by the United States Government in determining compensation for injuries incurred in the line of duty. And, Mr. Brady was wounded in the line of duty. As a civilian, yes, but he was WIA. Therefore, he is receiving a monthly compensation for this injuries. I wonder how

much?

I had this question in my craw and had had since the 81 incident as I wrote the chapter on the Veterans Administration. I decided to now was the time to explore. I wrote several of my elected representatives with a brief explanation and a request for information to the following questions.

1. What was Mr. Brady's salary as secretary?
2. What was the total cost for the hospital and doctors' fees for the injury?
3. Who paid these costs?
4. What does he draw now for a monthly compensation?
5. Who pays this?

I received very little information on this request. One gentleman had the temerity to answer that most of my questions could not be answered since the source of the monies was from a private source. Private source?! Mr. Brady was an employee of the United States Government. Typical politics! Hitler nearly destroyed the world with half-truths and out-and-out lies.

My plan for all this information was to compare Mr. Brady's present medical status with the current VAMC compensation tables. Why not? If we consider Mr. Brady entitled to a compensation from being WIA, why not use a current active index? And, if not, why not? Shouldn't the index applied to our servicemen and women be good enough and fair enough for all? Or, are politically appointees better citizens or what?

In essence, as a veteran, I'm saying with emphasis, why isn't Mr. Brady treated like any veteran who was wounded in the line of duty? Why should federal employees be granted special consideration under the Federal Employees Almanac? (Source of information.) the common man and the titulars both bleed the same. And the common man (veteran) usually doesn't have the medical facilities so handy to this place of injury.

I offer what I feel is an excellent example in the variation in the adjudication process. (This is still SOP today.)

Many veterans served for the duration-enlisted or drafted. Thousands more enlist today and have since the Nam draft for a period of time. They served honorably and were discharged. Now, if they have been injured during the enlisted time this was entered on record and available for the VA to adjudicate.

But, now, the career soldier, twenty years or more, as they near the selected date (if more than twenty years), are deluged with info, methods, ways, etc. for them to consider. They also, be regulations, have to receive a complete physical. In the case of a twenty year career, this is usually sometime after the 18th year. The physical is conducted at a base, fort, port, etc. by a service doctor. He had no affiliation with the VA and in some, many, none cases may know the patient.

Now, for 18 years the serviceman or woman was allowed to serve with full pay and allowances. If there were any "hindrances," they were either not mentioned or

recognized. Full pay – no limitations.

Now, the 18 plus physical. All of a sudden we find minor hints or actual diabetes, by pretension – assumption.

Asymptomatic arthritis, or periarthritis lower back problems, muscle group problems, etc. that have apparently developed over night, but are not quite fully developed as to infringe on the serviceman's or woman's last year and half of EAD.

The service doctor sets a percent of compensation for the "liability" and on discharge or separation, this amount is granted by the VA. There really is not any monetary gain to the retiree by these manipulations, as the VA compensation amount is subtracted from the retiree's retirement pay and is not taxable. Some retirees can save a hundred or more dollars a month by this action if the VA percent is high enough.

Some of the above retirees are probably deserving of the evaluation. They, probably, would have received the same from the VA. But, how many receive this "bonus" for years of faithful service? Years in which many of them never missed a meal (hot) or got their feet wet.

I have discussed this theory of mine with my favorite doctors. They agree, possible, but not able to prove medically. Here goes: You take a young body in wartime. Train it, develop it, run the piss out of it, shoot it, shell it, whatever. Now, in the later years will young body develop residual problems due to the earlier demands?

I'll use the analogy of comparing a young body to a new engine. As long as you do not overheat, keep it lubricated, change the filters you have an engine that will theoretically run forever. If you over-rev while new and "blued" the bearings, it is not going to make it.

How many of the veterans' ailments, old or young, are due to abuse by order?

I will close the chapter on the Veterans Administration with a last try on the matter of rights compensation, recognition, health care, etc. Please remember that the title of term *veteran* is nebulous in the degree of involvement in any war or police action. And, if men die in any type of a politically expediently named conflict, a KIA or WIA are all the same.

War is the greatest challenge known to man. Combat is the greatest game within a frame of war. There are many and varying degrees of participation available to an incoming serviceman. Many of the options available, however, are still based on the new version of screening or the WWII AGCT measurements. I must also add that I see little change or choice in the applied fallacy of a positive correlation of intelligence and leadership practiced in WWII. Why a college degree should guarantee leadership and concern for a command position, I cannot fathom.

There have been a myriad of studies since WWII on the behavior of servicemen. Studies including both normal service life and life under stress of death – combat. One area of study always came up with a percentage of involvement of the number of men who served under combat conditions. This percentage was always under 10% in all the studies I have read. Also, one study from years ago ??? concluded that quite a few, 20%, 30%, 40%, of combat personnel never even fired their rifles during the combat

period.

The army and all services recognizes the added degree of danger incurred with certain MOS assignments. For this extra "threat" to our welfare, we receive extra monies per month added to our base pay. Some examples would be: flight pay, jump pay, combat pay, submarine pay, Special Forces pay, Green Beret pay, and Commando pay, are some. I can remember after WWII that a green felt bar (under the rank on the arm) and a loop through the shoulder strap was authorized to show combat experience over just screening.

Here is where the army and all services, the VA and I split company. I ask one basic question: If a hazardous duty assignment is recognized and paid extra for the danger (and more men do die), why isn't this same recognition carried over to civilian life and retired life? Why should a man's current income become the base for consideration for treatment at the VAMC's? No man ever had to furnish a 1040 to enlist.

Some men never had it so good as when they were in the army. After the \$21.00 per month was raised to \$50.00 per month and the NSLI straight life became free, and all clothing, board and room was furnished. One area seldom mentioned, and quite a shock to some, was/were the availability of soap and water. Personal hygiene was a foreign word and experience to quite a few. Some had a problem adjusting to life with others, but a few "GI baths" soon helped a decision along. (I can remember one incident where the odor became so bad that after the source was identified (stocking were rotting on the feet) the man really enjoyed and accepted his new being.

Let me offer an analogy to these words and I'll hang it up.

Every year thousands of young men and women try out for baseball, basketball, football, golf, etc., in our public schools. Now, all are not going to make it. The costs, equipment needs, plain numbers, etc., are considered. So, some are dropped (cut). Sometimes as much as 50% of the original number are lost when the season begins. Do these kids get a letter? Do they expect a letter? No, to both questions. Why, then, should just being in uniform and gaining the title of veteran be equal in the VA? I will admit that a WIA statue should receive a priority and does, but how many veterans are there that served on the line, were NOT wounded, but, now, are classified category 7? Many of these men put in a "dent" in the enemy numbers but now get no credit. I am being facetious now when I say that we don't want to go back to the days of scalping to prove our kill.

I'll close with a simple solution. There is a present and established, accepted index used for the amount of compensation awarded. At present there is no differential made or offered in the source of the disability. A fall off a truck in basic training can bring the same percentage as a severed vertebrae. This is wrong, wrong. The full compensation allowed for a disability should only be awarded and paid for a combat wound. All other non-combat "problems" would receive half of the combat award. Here we recognize the injury and will and would hospitalize whenever necessary, but we are "paying" full compensation only to those injured in or by a combat situation.

Hero for a Day

Pay for the rigors and hell of living with death on a daily basis. Like the PL385 and PL16 of the G.I. Bill - \$1.00 per day for combat pay or recognition – we're worth more than that. Try it sometime. I'll think you'll agree.

CHAPTER 14

MINORITIES AND ETHNIC GROUPS

My grandfather and grandmother came to this great country to enjoy freedom. They knew that freedom sometimes demands an exacting price. War! Death can be the final demand. Yet they came, settled, and became citizens. They did not forget their heritage-culture, but allowed these "habits" of yesterday from the "old country" to be exercised in the home - probably at the kitchen table. Even the home language disappeared as they sought to be true American citizens. In plain English, they came to America to be Americans not to use America to further their heritage and culture.

The question of a base language - a legal language - has been bouncing around for some years now. I understand in history that the original vote to decide was between English and German. English won by one vote!?! Congress today in their continued zeal to protect their own individual status will not or cannot bring this problem to a final vote. Why?

I read or heard recently that 30% of the population in the United States is of Hispanic origin. How many of this 30% are not naturalized citizens and how many cannot speak or write basic English? If not, why not? How can the Immigration Service and the courts allow naturalization without a basic command of the English language? I ask this question purely from a military standpoint. We cannot afford a splintered command of various languages in a democratic service. And, I cannot understand why anyone from any origin would not hasten to meet the basic use of English. They are here, they are free, and they enjoy the equal rights for all, what better way to show their appreciation and love for the greatest country in the world?

As arrogance is the bane of military leadership, ignorance is the bane of any successful relationship with minorities. This has been true throughout history and history alludes to three main minorities in these United States, at least to me. I am not referring to all the ethnic islands created in the last quarter century under the guise of political "escape," but to the major three minorities: The Black Citizen, the American Indian, and the Nisie. The first two established themselves as part of the American scene long before my time, but the Nisie are my generation. I cannot change history and the treatment or disposition of the first two but if any minority has a legitimate gripe or a clear-cut litigation choice it is the Nisie. Here we have (had) American citizens by all definitions of the Constitution who were denied their basic rights, rounded up, and held in detention camps. All under the hysteria of war, or did politics enter into this disgrace from the pressures of the non-Nisie produce farmers?

I can sympathize with the varying plights of the Afro-Americans and the American Indians, but for both the problems and conditions started and existed long before my birth. Now, with the claims and counterclaims of today's ancestors, 3, 4, 5, 6 generations later, I can only conclude that greed for easy money must be a paramount base for their concern. Like slander and libel, shouldn't all claims of compensation be

based on the living and not the deceased? Who, but the living, can initiate the filing of the grievance?

To err is to be human! And, we all must share in this trait; may be the root of the relations problems throughout history. The ignorance necessary can and often is magnified by the "mind sets" common to Homo Sapiens. The old adage that there is a thin line between love and hate, is also true between envy and hate, and jealousy and hate. How many other values may trigger a bias? I offer what I feel is the best example in my time of a bias, hate, madness, insanity, and every negative adjective known to describe a frame of mind and reference. Whether the man was mad or a genius is immaterial for time, history knows the results of these 1930's "dissertations." Adolph Hitler wrote in his *Mein Kampf* the following opinion:

"The Jew has settled down completely; that means, he occupies special quarters in the towns and villages and more and more he forms a special State within the State. He considers trade as well as all money transactions as his very own privilege, which he exploits ruthlessly.

Money transactions and trade have now completely become his monopoly. His usurious rates of interest finally stir up resistance, his otherwise increasing impertinence causes indignation, his riches envy. The cup is filled to overflowing when he draws also the land and the soil into the circle of his mercenary objects and degrades it to the level of goods to be sold or rather to be traded. As he, himself, never tills the soil, but only looks upon it as a property to be exploited, on which the peasant may well remain but only under the most wretched extortion on the part of his present master, the aversion against him finally grows into open hatred. His blood-sucking tyranny becomes so great that riots against him occur. Now one begins to look more and more closely at the stranger and one discovers more and more new repellent features and characteristics in him, till the chasm becomes an insurmountable one.

In times of most bitter distress the wrath against him finally breaks out, and the exploited and ruined masses take up self-defense in order to ward off the scourge of God. They have got to know him in the course of several centuries and they experience his mere existence as the same distress as the plague."

The world now knows what he and his SS fanatics determined to be the answer to his self-determined problem. His actions alone hint more on pure insanity, than genius. Maybe Hitler could be the everlasting example of pure narcissism, at least from a mental aspect. Why would any sane leader kill off the physicists, chemists, mathematicians, bankers, accountants, lawyers, physicians, etc., the very people who would be his direct support in his dream of world domination? If there were individuals that he felt that through position, power, or wealth, whatever, why not have had these few "irritants" conveniently disappear? So easily done in the early and late days of the Gestapo. Gone and no questions answered. So common even here in these United States with a government of by, of, and for the people. The power of gold!

As a young man, my only conflict with any group or faith was to declare war on the 6th street Catholic gang. We, the 4th street Protestants, opposed this group of "different" thinkers and different living style. Some of the false information and mostly ignorance was often too easily accepted as fact. Of course, something to do. These were the dirty thirties and the only thing we all had in common was time. Most of us had a

22 rifle or better (I had a Win 1892 - 25/20) and there were rabbits and squirrels to shoot. (The Environmental Protection Agency came much later to my life.) Our world was our home, street and river. School and vacations, summers off, little work. Maybe some caddying later in the teens. In essence, no heavy discussions on life or economics. We all lived in our own little sheltered neighborhoods.

I remember one daily incident that later shaped and affected my life and all Americans. This was the daily rumble of loaded gondola cars of scrap iron freight, 100 or more cars to a train on both the Northern Pacific and the Great Northern, heading west, to end up "east." All this was handed back to the US in a "refined" form during WWII. Now, who benefited from these millions of dollars of scrap? All this clean up was good for the area. All the old scrap around farms was cleaned up and everywhere places were looking so clean and proper. What a good deal! I don't believe ownership of hide, fur, and scrap yards has changed too greatly in the last sixty years. Traditionally, in the 30's one nationality was always correlated with the hide, fur, junk and "hock shop" business.

This control of a specific area of marketing is still true today. Not necessarily by the American Jew, however. We have hundreds of our new millionaires flexing their muscles and wealth by buying up huge plots of pristine land, then denying access to the local natives and all. America cannot become a country of feudal tracts and remain free. Let the new millionaires build up but not out. Establish a federal law on the private size of property. Something! (And our present gift to womankind President keeps planning and picking at our right to bear arms.) I hope there are a lot of Robin Hoods left in this great country if the day ever comes.

I offer what I believe is one of the finest pieces of draft dodging that ever existed. Whether or not the person planned the sequences himself, was assisted, ordered, or pure happenstance, I don't know. What do you think?

The former democratic national chairman, Robert Strauss, a lawyer by profession, was like so many Americans a private citizen in early 1942 after war was declared. (His age, draft status is unknown.) In 1942 he applied for and accepted a position in the FBI. This was back in the days when most applicants needed either a law or accountant background and degree. He worked as an agent for the Bureau from 1942-1945. In 1945 he resigned from the Bureau and this resignation was within weeks after the final surrender of both combatants. Is this a coincidence?

This has nothing to do with my history, but I offer a simple answer to this problem and actions. Anytime this great country is in trouble and needs our youth to protest and save, the minimum age for all law enforcement positions goes to 35 years of age and all personnel under that will be subject to the draft or the enlistment of their choice. There will be severe penalties for non-conformance.

In the area or field of law enforcement agencies and personnel at any level in these United States today, I have no quarrel. Most are doing a bang-up job with the facilities and appropriations at their disposal. I hope they continue to maintain or even improve their present effectiveness: controlling crime and the criminals. I do not,

however, need them thinking or planning for my welfare, health or both.

I resent the actual comments and inference by some law officers that I, as a citizen, should let them protect me in any and all matters and problems. That I, as a citizen, am incapable of any degree of self-protection. I usually accept the comments - with varying degrees of internal tension - and drop the subject gracefully. Quite often I hear or read, "He was a veteran of _____!" Look what happened.

I would remind the American public that the term "Veteran" is as nebulous as the terms "teacher" or "cop." Or politician! Both terms include the extremes of ability, capability, and their application. Here again we have generalized statements and projections that are applied to all veterans. All veterans when about 7% of the ground troops did all the dirty work for these branches. Men that knew and know what a personal weapon is and was - how to use it - respect and appreciate it - and although slower and older can and will defend themselves, their family and home - if necessary. (Most law enforcement assistance can only help after the problem - in most cases - has been completed. Protection means now!) They don't plan on being dead heroes, in fact they never did or they wouldn't be veterans today.

Why is it that the American public, which includes all levels of law enforcement personnel, are so quick to forget the man of past wars who did the actual dirty work - killing? No veteran ever started a war.

The republic of Israel came about due to the DP problem in Europe after WWII. This problem was a political thorn in the sides of the "winners." What to do? Finally, and our State Department if anyone should know - once again divided a country in half and gave the one half to the DP's, the Israelis. We never seem to learn that you can't divide history, culture, and blood by longitude and latitude. But, we go blindly on each decade.

Today, the finest group of services; air, ground, water is the Israelis. Why? For two simple reasons: 1. They have the highest mean IQ of all the services in the world, and 2. They are fighting for their own homes. What a combination! The 20th Century took hundreds of thousands of KIA from the US but all died on foreign soil. Is there any way we can go back to the days of David and Goliath? Let the damn politicians spill their own blood for a change.

As a veteran of two wards, WWII and Korea, infantry, I would be honored and flattered to be assigned to an Israeli unit. At my present age this would be a waste of paper but fifty years ago I could soldier with anyone - preferably the best.

What the Israelis did in the 1967, Seven Day War with Syria et. al., is now history. I believe they had slightly over 700 KIA's. Some of the women assigned to some units also died. The Israelis learned the hard way that women do not belong on the line. This number of KIA's affected a great many homes and families in such a small service. Was this war preventable? Where did the major powers (behind the scene, of course) stand in the war? What help of any kind did the US offer? And, what help did the American Jew counterpart play in those severe days? I would like to see the statistics for KIA's in all our wars for the American Jew. Once again, however, let

me clarify any and all of these statements and/or questions. To all the KIA's and WIA's in WWI, II, Korea, NAM, of American Jewish nationality my sincere condolence and respect to the families of these deceased.

It is alleged, I read or heard somewhere, that after the Israelis attacked the US Liberty (a spy ship?) with an Exocet missile where 37 men died and over a hundred were wounded, that the news of this incident was brought to President Lyndon Johnson's attention. He was awakened by an aide and was informed. Now, this is alleged, but he supposedly answered in this general way: "I'm not interested in how many were killed or wounded, the Israelis are dear friends of mine and I don't want to jeopardize this relationship."

Thirty-seven dead, over one hundred wounded and he wants a status quo. Bull shit! We were allies in that war and if both sides of an alliance cannot or will not share intentions and tactics, there is nothing!

At the present time we have God's gift to womankind, Clinton, at the helm. The day he put his personal problems on a priority status once over the welfare of this great country, he was through. Like the rank of an officer - we salute the rank - not the person. And, at times this is not easy. Far too many "leaders" today are not governed by welfare and mission, rather their 201 record. In essence, I'm saying that we respect the office and the rank as long as the office and the rank are the first and only responsibility. This should be true for all titular leaders, living or deceased. If at anytime information surfaces that upon investigation proves to be true, that leader no longer deserves any recognition or respect. So, if ex-president Lyndon Johnson actually said that the deaths of 37 men were unimportant to him and his office, he should be disinterred and his bones thrown to the coyotes on his Texas ranch.

Everyone and no one in this great country are equal - I'm as good as anyone, but better than none.

I must close this subject area with some comments on the holocaust. Here again we have the selected politics of the world. How did this happen? Because the "leaders" let it happen. This love/hate, envy/hate, jealousy/hate mental set was found or present at all levels of society - not just the raving SS. (And they were so blinded by their ardor and zeal as to be legally insane. Our line troops had the correct answer for the problem - you shoot rabid dogs, don't you?)

Examples:

1. Our air force had aerial photos of all of Germany from the start of the war. What decision was made on the disposition of these photos. Were these barracks? What troops were these? A front: Why- to my knowledge - were none of the death camps ever bombed? Why?

2. The Catholic church must have known the true reason and use of the camps. Not a word! Could the extermination of a religious competitor be advantageous to the Vatican?

3. Surely the major powers intelligence organizations, OSS (CIA), KGB, Gestapo, and England's M-6 (?) - 007 - etc. - French - SURETE etc. knew of the camps

and the ultimate purpose.

4. Surely the Jewish business or religious hierarchy knew to some degree of the existence of the camps. When thousands - millions of people allow themselves to be shipped like cattle to their own death there had to be silence and trust somewhere. To no avail! What recourse was open to the Jews? No weapons - no leadership. (The "titular" are at it again throughout the world with various forms of gun control. England has had and Australia a severe method of control - nearly everything goes. Wake up America!, and recently Canada.)

5. The world still waits for an answer. Bless the Israeli Jews for tracking down, trying, and killing a lot of the SS psychos. No one else had the balls. Politically incorrect, you know. Most of our commissions, special groups, etc. are composed of selected, manipulated phonies - usually with an Ivy League education and a birth east of the Mississippi.

In my own case I regret probably more than any other mission the fact that we were headed for Dachau early one morning and then diverted south when news was received that elements of the 157 Infantry (45 Division) and our tanks had secured the camp. I never saw a death camp. We liberated Hammelburg, a POW camp, earlier in the month, but that was prisoners of war only. Many died here of malnutrition and lack of health facilities but at least they did not have the daily allocation of death to await and watch.

This is probably not the place in the sequence of thoughts but I want to insure its reading. How many of you have visited a home - usually quite an extravagant home - and seen or been shown a collection of firearms? Beautiful shotguns, rifles, pistols, and three drillings combination. The wood all the best European walnut with checkering and inlays. You've heard the story of I, I, I, as to their source. In 99 out of 100 times you're talking to a phony. This person was or had to be at least a Captain, but most likely a light Colonel or full bird from WWII. I can tell you, without reservation, that he did not personally liberate any of these souvenirs. Enlisted men and junior officers of his command liberated them and some died in the attempt. Here once again along comes the "hero," after the shit is off the fan, and claims his booty.

What actually happened with war souvenirs - esp. weapons - was that each succeeding level of authority would set the number permissible and as this approval moved down the lower echelons, it was subject to change. So if Army said 2, Corps 2, Division 2, etc., it might be canceled at the company level to 0. You just can't win! I think if I had it all to do over, I would shoot half days and loot the other half. This is the only time in my life where gold didn't count for rules - a rifle did. Ha!

CHAPTER 15

POT POURRI

PTSD. I was unable to show or express sympathy or any emotion for years. I could cry (tears) in a good show if an animal suffered or died, but not adults. Children could elicit a positive response. Not until 14 August 86 did I show emotion. A dear neighbor friend died and the tears came. Since then, I've been "normal?" The only exception to the above date lines was in June 1983 when I had watched my wife at Abbott Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis, Minnesota slowly dying of a heart conductivity problem. For six days the PVC's never changed and it finally dawned on me that maybe they wouldn't. She was on a French experimental medication named amidarone or cordarone (today) and on the morning of the seventh day the drug finally corrected the conductivity problem. We celebrated our 51st this year. (1997)

The BATF, with President Clinton's approval or probably insistence, has or will be exacting new security measures for the nation's gun dealers. All these weapons are non-war (semi autos or less). Why these demands now when in the 60's we had cinder block armories 4-8 gauge wire cages to secure M-60's, M-14's, etc. with the ammunition in the same cage? As usual with the "leadership" these last fifty years, we keep getting the cart before the horse. Why is or has this "leadership" all east of the Mississippi, the beginning of our democracy continually chipped away at the Second Amendment? Fear or subversient design? Part of the preached New World Order?

Stand tall you young servicemen and women of today's services. Obey your superiors and complete your assigned tasks. However, always be on the alert for any and all orders which are clearly unconstitutional. An order to fire on a crowd in these United States, destroy private property, break and enter without a warrant, etc. are good examples. You are now the "Golden Boys" of the present administration. You are the final defense for their questionable projections. Please remember and be aware of the fact that in twenty years you will be retired and no longer needed - a burden on our new "leaders." They will seek new youth and fresh blood to insure their status. Your shoes will be our shoes of today. Let the tyrants in their zeal to rule commit their own treason. Then we can use the Constitution to bring them to justice.

The American Red Cross! My father had no positive comments about the organization from WWI and I have none from WWII. Korea was also a different matter. All my time there was spent on the line or immediate reserve so none of the visiting USO units were allowed to come this far forward, not even baseball "heroes" were allowed to visit our positions - too dangerous. Ha! It is my understanding that Joe DiMaggio was to come up for a visit to the 35th Infantry, but it was deemed too dangerous. At the time this unit was anchoring our right flank.

I have had one basic question since WWII in regard to the ARC. To date no one could, would, dared, or tried to answer. I have asked through the years the same question to several Salvation Army officers. Either they were afraid to answer or did

not honestly know the Army's history. They were also of the next generation so had no empirical knowledge. My question involved the ARC actions and participation in WWI and II. In WWI the Salvation Army up and into the trenches to serve hot cocoa and goodies. In WWII the ARC set up in the REAR echelon areas - I do mean rear - to serve coffee and cookies for 5 or 10 francs (all baking and materials probably the courtesy of the USA. Where was the Salvation Army? Why were they not also overseas or allowed overseas? Something smells and once again it is GI Joe who takes it in the chops.

Stories that sex was available for a price were heard quite often but the "line" soldiers did not have a chance to "bid" on the price of flesh. I have heard stories on how some of the ARC women came home quite wealthy. I could care less what a woman does with her body, just make her offer available to all - not the pretty boys - the Carpetbaggers get all the flesh! My question - finally - why was the Salvation Army not allowed overseas in WWII? Politics or conscience or both?

After all these years I know why I went to war. I'm sure many veterans in retrospect have asked themselves the same question. The reasons are legion or are they? Remember we were all young men, impressionable and psychologically blinded by the propaganda spewed out by the government. Buy bonds, kill the Huns, bury the Japs, etc., and then save and protect motherhood, the flag, the country, apple pie, your wife - your sweetheart - on and on. One picture I remember seeing many times enraged all red-blooded Americans - it was supposed to - was the picture of the Chinese baby sitting in the debris, smoke, and fire at the Shanghai railroad station immediately following a bombing attack by the Japanese. This was actually taken in 1936, but the press and films implied WWII. I have commented before on my respect for any veteran who made an amphibious landing - hell, not war. But, there is one picture that is indelible in my mind. It's the picture taken at "D" Day (Omaha Beach?) with men wading ashore. This GI has just reached the sand and taken a step or two and down he goes. He fell like a wet sack. Anytime you see a body fall that limp or relaxed the person is either dead or unconscious. I'll bet K.I.A.

About ten years ago I had my answer. I'll bet a lot of readers will agree. We came back home, courted, schooled, got a job, and marriage. And kids! Most of our wives did not work outside the home. They chose the toughest job of all for a woman - wife and mother. The man worked outside the home for the "bacon." Therefore we did not have time to really play with and enjoy the children, Now, after twenty years or so, school finished, and on their own we've got our grandkids. What a revelation! I have the time, the dollars, you name it. Now I can do everything I couldn't do with our own. That's why I went to two wars. Hopefully none of the grandkids ever have to go.

You would have to meet and visit with my old CO to gain a hint of his philosophy of war. He was capable, fair, but firm in all his dealings with soldiers of the Wehrmacht. (The SS were another matter.) Yet, in the crevices of his mind, a very sentimental, loving man. Maybe he didn't know himself. I last saw him in person in 1987 in Minneapolis. A good time and visit. We exchange Christmas cards, etc. with some comments. His answer to my declaration of "why" was quite revealing. He

wrote back and said, "Can't agree with you more, Chris. Love is the only human value that the more you give the more you have left. Hell, to me, would be anyplace that I was restricted in showing and giving love." The above from one hard-nosed, able SOB. Love him! (He retired from the USAR as a BG).

There were times that one had no choice but to keep going or die. And, if you kept going you could die. What odds! I'm referring to the normal rise and fall of the body's defense or immune system. Colds, gut aches, flu, fever, etc. You didn't just sign out and go home. One instance I remember clearly because it reinforced a theory I have on the body. It was in the winter - I believe before Christmas '44 and I got a raging fever - out of the blue. We were also outside in the snow and cold. So weak I couldn't scratch my ass but go-go-go. I've heard other GI's have done the same as I did - it worked - but why? I took the sulfadiazide tablets out of the first aid pack and swallowed with a lot of water. I knew that without enough water the sulfa could crystallize in the kidney tissue and stop the renal function. I also knew that sulfa probably was worthless with a viral infection. The fever left in hours - I was weak but OK. What part did the mind play in this recovery? I believe it was the crux of the problem. Medical science is or should continue to explore the correlation between the mind and body. Just to check my recall accuracy - weren't the early first aid compresses without any sulfa? Then sulfanilamide powder was added. The GI's wasted or lost this or sulfadiazide was an improvement so it was added. Two tablets with plenty of water. And, why does sulfathiazole (sp.) also come to mind? Early antibiotics that worked. All developed in 1932 by German chemists.

I wonder what the army does today about furnishing cleaning materials and lubricants for the riflemen today. Today the primers are non-corrosive, however, and cleaning isn't as critical. I know that bore cleaner, patches and rods were always available from supply - but supply is never on the line. Wasn't there a small metal jar inside the stock of the M-1? Oil? And, most of our full-auto weapons were open bolt operated. The BAR, M-3, Thompson are all open bolt with massive metal to metal contact. In cold weather the parts drag and no detonation. What's the answer? At least available at the squad level--a bottle of spray of compounds like WD-40, teflon, even kerosene or the like. If a light viscosity lubricant was available, all the weapons would fire in cold weather.

The date and place of the following comments had to be in the late fall in France or somewhere in Germany. All the "actors" were armed and their weapons loaded. There were M-1's, BAR's, carbines, 45's, Springfield's, etc. All in a beer hall packed with young GI's. Some were feeling no pain. Most trying to visit but some boisterous and alcohol talking. French beer could vary widely in its percentage by volume and young men are not good at imbibing. We just think we are! The place had the potential for a military apocalypse. I decided that this was not the place for me and so did the buddies. We got! I don't think any trouble did occur, but ----!

Someone, more than one, whoever, should get a commendation medal or the Legion of Merit. How many of the ETO veterans remember the use of search lights on

an overcast night? They were of little use when it was cloudy or not needed for AA but someone figured out that if you bounded these millions of candle power off an overcast ceiling, the reflected light could be of some security use. I won't deny it would help both sides, but by coordinating the units, we didn't compromise our patrols, etc. This reflected light gave the units covered as much light as a full moon and was probably better because of its diffusion. I wonder where the personnel that manned these search lights are today? Are they alive? They certainly have a good right to file a claim with the VA. Their problems may not be medically tangible but like so many "uses" of cheap GI labor, they have a bitch coming. Why? Because of ozone-03. One could smell the pungent odor whenever the lights were on. Also, the buzzing of the carbon rods was always clear. How many parts were million of ozone are deadly? How many makes one sick or ill? How does prolonged exposure to ozone affect the human body? If you're reading these comments and was part of a searchlight unit, I'd do some considering.

Hitler and the German High Command helped answer a question I had during the war and after. Most of you have seen the "Dirty Dozen." Twelve killers and rapists under the command of a rockhard officer who knows that they are probably on a one-way mission or suicide move. Would they be good - better than commandos or rangers or Seals or any of the Special Units. One would think so. After all, they have proven that they have absolutely no respect for life. Killing came and comes easy for them. Why not utilize this psyche set to the army's advantage? I guess not! In the movie some did show compassion and empathy for their fellow man. Most died but died as free men. Hitler's experience with convicts was not as positive. One of his commanders was asked how they were shaping or had performed in combat and his answer was, My Fuhrer, these men are real scoundrels! A world of meaning here. The comment was based on this unit's actions during the battle of Warsaw during the fall of Poland. Atrocities! Atrocities!

There is a practice today which, although I can accept the thinking behind the action and the pre-training for the act, I cannot accept the fact that some titles or MOS's are more important than others in regard to the life of the serviceman. Quite a sentence! What I'm saying is and will always say is that only God can make a man. Who are we to put a value on his life? Yet we do. We attempt and do rescue pilots downed - losing men in the process - on the condition that their cost of training and current expertise warrants the risk. As the mother or wife of the downed or lost infantryman, ranger, seal or Jeep driver lost in the dark who is more important. You know the answer. All I'm saying is that this rescue action be made available for any and all lost, surrounded, downed, etc. servicemen of any rank or branch.

Everyone takes basic training and then the advanced school starts for the final training. However, some advanced training is geared only to war while some skills are applicable to the civilian market. And, such a paradox that the advanced training only for war also has the highest casualties in war. Where in civilian life - peace - do you see a need for riflemen, machine gunner, AA gunners, etc. Nowhere! Yet the Signal Corps

offers electronic for most of its advanced schools, pilot training from F-16's to DC-9's, etc (with commensurate in salary or more); engineer areas that are easily transferable to civilian status, medical training, logistics, computer expertise, etc. I realize that for some war needs there will never be a civilian or peace time counterpart but for these reasons let's pay the war-time training specialties more salary. If not - why not?

How many, if any, have heard this story of heroism and outstanding control and intelligence? If it is true the army owes the family of the GI a posthumous recognition and a CMH Medal. His actions, at least to me, show the greatest example of self-control I have ever heard of or read. Many acts of heroism are pure reflex or a conditioned reflex, not an act of control. The incident happened before I joined the unit and during an attack and consolidating of the action, three GI's were in a room ready to continue when the unmistakable snap of a grenade fuse was heard. The GI with the grenade knew immediately that it was his. But, where was it? In the outside pocket of his fatigue jacket and his cartridge belt was over the flap. He had four seconds to act. What truly happened in his mind and we'll never know what, but without trying to drop the belt and get the grenade out of the pocket, he ran to the door and stood with the pocket to the hall and pulled the door shut on his left side. (Were there other GI's in the hall?) Time was up and the grenade exploded. He dies in minutes. If true, CMH for his name.

I didn't like grenades and seldom carried them. They weighed 22 ounces. The handle covering the fuse was locked by a cotter pin attached to a pull ring. The back side of the pin was spread to insure a positive lock. Some GI's, thinking they were expediting the use of the grenade in an emergency, would close the spread of the pin and move the end of the exit hole in the handle, this is probably what happened. Really not too bright!

Another example of the wisdom of the CO. I was Sheriff of Taufkirchen at the time and was just leaving for another King Solomon arbitration problem. An elderly man, said he was a farmer, brought a good sized metal box to the mayor's office. The CO and some company officers were there along with visiting brass. He told us that some SS had left the box in his barn several days ago and he didn't want any trouble with the Americans so he brought it in. We opened and here were six Robot military style cameras and six Rolflex 3 x 4 or 4 x 5 cameras. I asked the CO to save me one. No problem! When I came back to the office some time later they were all gone. I'm sure the look on my face indicated my displeasure but the CO just said, I'll get you one. He did by that evening. Who gave up the camera I don't know and I don't care. I had the camera for 52 years and took many, many pictures. It quit about 15 years ago to lubrication needs but a friend was able to correct. Nowhere in the U.S. could I find anyone who would work on the camera. This past summer - 1997 - I sold it to a camera shop in Phoenix.

Put your thinking cap on, all of you GI's that went through France - were stationed in France, or came through France after the war ended. Especially in June (?), July or August 45. How many of you remember the \$17.00 in francs that the French

government paid to supplement our own base pay as an assist to meet the inflation in the country? There also was a liquor ration per company. As per usual the men in the lower echelons of command saw damn few bottles of anything. I believe once there was a bottle of champagne or wine and no one liked the dry taste of the bubbly.

In the summer of 1946, Fargo, ND was experiencing a poliomyelitis epidemic. The temperatures were hovering in the 90's during the day. I was on the Fargo Police Force, twenty-four or five years old, single, and answerable only to myself. Therefore, when a call came to assist the medical personnel put a patient in an iron lung, I volunteered. Another officer joined me. We reported to the "Pest House" as it was called; all highly contagious diseases were housed here. We put on gowns and masks and put this pretty eighteen year old girl with bulbar polio into the lung. She was slippery from perspiration and it was difficult to get into the lung as one had to lift with your arms extended. It was also an example of simple modesty for as sick as this girl was she tried to cover herself. I can tell you that for once in my life I did not notice anything from a sexual overtone. I heard and read the next day that she died. This bothered me more than most deaths I had experienced - before and after. Here I had volunteered to assist and taken the time for a mature humanistic action to no avail. For one of the few times in my life I challenged the Good Lord on his decision. This death was a open affront to my personal efforts. As usual, I got no direct answer but my anger dissipated soon after my challenge.

Another example of the CO's leadership. This incident happened at the POW Camp at Erding. The news (rumors) got around that the motor sergeant had been killed in a truck accident. He had been gone for several days. the news (rumors) were half true - he had been in an accident but hardly injured. He returned within a day after the initial news. Apparently when he returned, his tent had been stripped clean of all of his war souvenirs. He went crying to the old man of this carnage. I didn't know the man and in fact had never met him. As I stated before that as a replacement I only knew my squad and some of the platoon members. Then, the reason for the tent being stripped. He was Jewish. He had more and better loot than most because he had time to look and find. Everyone hated him so I was told. The old man called the company to formation. He accused no one but suggested that maybe some could help recover all the items if given some time. There would be no names asked or taken. So, the company, the company, without a roll call, would take a half hour hike and this would allow anyone who could help to do so. Away we went - back in half hour. The tent was bulging with loot - all thrown in without any control. End of problem. (I found out in 1987 at a reunion that Lt. Alvin Sweitzer, the assault gun leader, was of the Jewish faith. He was a fine soldier, went anyplace with us (infantry), and was respected by all who knew him. I understand he died in a parade some years ago. I salute you, Lt. Sweitzer.

I learned or found an answer to a problem that went unsolved for 46 years - 1951-1997. The problem: why couldn't I get the 82 mm duds to explode? (Chinese mortar rounds.) When I first came up on the line in August 51 there were several Chinese 82 mm mortar duds in front of one position. Would vibration set them off?

Could the weather? I worried about the safety of my men so figured I'd detonate them. I would tie a grenade to a stone or stake and place it alongside the dud, then loosen the pin on the grenade, attach it to a wire, go back behind the sandbags and BANG. The dud would only be moved - none ever exploded. In 97 I got my answer. I knew about sympathetic detonation where all unstable compounds can and will explode with a little help. But, the help has to be of the same pressure or more for the detonation to occur. Oh, there were exceptions, yes! The detonating material in our fragmentation grenade used to a compound called AC Blank. A type of powder like in fireworks. In the 82 mm dud - TNT. The pressure or power of all explosives is measured by the velocity of the air in motion at the time of detonation. AC Blank probably 18,000 FPT - TNT around 24,000 FPS. Enough said!

I had been in Korea a few months and the right leg would hurt - usually at night. I had never seen an X-ray of the fragment so had no way to compare 1951 with 1945. I went back to a MASH for an x-ray. One doctor looked at me like a malingerer - just take the GD plate. They did - no comment - I left. I saw three nurses on duty. They were the most beautiful women in the world. Remember, I hadn't seen a woman for months. No harm in looking!

I had been home a few days in September 45 in uniform. We had no other clothes and none were available - just like cars. An 8th Air Force sergeant came up the street, looked at me, and walked over and hugged me. Wait a minute! Even two men in civilian clothes did not hug each other. Regardless that there was absolutely no connotation of a sexual nature, hugging was for mothers. It turned out that he had been a POW at Moosberg Prison Camp and some of our units had liberated the camp. (I was about 15 miles southwest at the time.) Since I wore a 14 armored patch, he wanted to thank me. We had some beers and a good chat. I can't remember where he was from.

Shortly before Christmas after we (the 27th) had been relieved to make our trek to Koji-Do, we were set up on a river bottom near a MASH unit. The old man (BN CO) okayed a party and dance. (Someone had some booze.) For partners for the dance we sent two of our youngest, most handsome, junior officers over to the MASH unit to get the nurses. The old man of the MASH unit, a full colonel, took his Colt 45 and cocked it and ordered our "boys" out and be gone. I know you wolfhounds - if my girls go to the dance they'll be pregnant in the morning. Out! Out! No girls!

I don't remember the approximately range of the sea gulls that would stay with a departing ship or when they would pick up a ship coming, but it was a thousand miles or more. In the "old" days garbage, toilet and shower material, was thrown or drained overboard enroute. So, there was plenty of food for the gulls. Some days the longitude and latitude would be announced but unless one had a map to transpose on this information was worthless. Just look for the gulls and you knew if you were leaving or coming. If no gulls you were in the "middle."

One personality I can remember oh so clearly was a young GI named Wilbur Briggs. This was during the six months of HSTP at the University of California. Wilbur was a slight-built man who always wore a smile from ear to ear. I-we found out the

nice way - we watched - that he had won second in a jitterbug dancing contest in the State of Maine only years before his being drafted. How that kid could dance. It was like watching graphite in a Timkin bearing. Smooth! He could move five - ten feet and you were not aware of any movement. Of course, the girls loved him. We had a party - authorized - at the Theta Chi House and Wilbur was busy all night. Another guy played a fair trumpet and there were enough musicians to form a band. Dancing - the way to a woman's heart!

How many have heard this story? In Nam, as you know, the enemy came in all sizes, ages, and sex. One careless mistake could mean death later. Anything left or lost could be turned into a way of death. Such was the case with 60 mm mortar rounds. Remember, ours was 60 mm - theirs 61 mm. In one area the units were receiving mortar fire from time to time at night. It was all 60 mm HE (high explosive). Patrols would go out the next day and find the location, but no weapon - no troops, no ammo. So one ranger, I was told this story by a ranger, decided to let our carelessness work for us instead of kill us. He would purposely leave a 60 mm round or two in a conspicuous position. Sure enough - it would disappear. But, there was something wrong with the round. The set back pin had been removed, the shortened safety pin glued into place as if it was still functional and the PD 52 fuse had been weighted with lead. Now when the round went down the barrel, the weighted fuse would slam by inertia into the detonating chain and blam would go the round at the bottom of the tube. A couple of nights later a more muffled, subdued explosion occurred on the perimeter. The next day the patrol found a new excavation with bits of metal, clothing and flesh around the area. The unit never "lost" a mortar again. The Vietnamese are not stupid people!

I should have placed this information in the sequence of the fall of 1950. For about a month or so the letters appeared in a weekly magazine. I thought it was the Saturday Evening Post or Colliers but after spending a day and a half in the local library looking at microfilm, and not finding a hint of the letters, I gave up. The letters are critical to my premise that the academy graduates are a different breed of cats. Possessors of an excellent education, a commission in one of the services of the United States, in excellent physical condition, but, many are infected with the Mirror, Mirror on the Wall Syndrome, that by sight and sound causes them to consider themselves above and beyond the abilities and requirements of the average public milieu. Self-centered and stuffy! Leadership and a concern for the welfare of our the men in their command varies greatly. The excellent show, "From Here to Eternity," portrayed the daily life of a peace-time officer in the "olde" army. Granted that the academy graduates are the core, the basic, the cadre of the services but they must approach their assignments as the "job" for the present not a steppingstone for promotion.

When the NKF hit the ROK army on 20 June 50, we were not ready. Units were under strength and equipment was nonexistent. A lot of good men died. Good men of all ranks and background. Many of the company grade officers were academy graduates on their first assignment. It took a while to stabilize and contain this mess and more men died - including academy graduates. Their widows and mothers greatly

resented this loss of young, prime of life loss, and the letters to this effect began to arrive at the editor's desk for publication.

In essence, the base theme was the loss of these young, potential, future leaders of the services. Who, then, should have been leading the units in the early days? What was the source of this leadership? The widows and mothers suggested that the answer was found in the other sources of commissions: ROTC, OCS, CMTC, Direct, National Guard. After all these officers are only part-time soldiers. Let them hold and die until we can build up to stop and destroy the yellow hordes. Wow!

The rebuttal began! The following months the editors were deluged with mail. Your husband and father of your children is a better man than mine? A better American? Better qualified to live? What are our men? And, and, and. I reveled in this exchange of opinions. My complaints and gripes from WWII and soon to be seen in Korea. Maybe the women of American could insure that equality comes with the man and the training, not from the source of the commission. Maybe!

I missed a courts martial under the title of Army Justice. It was a good one! One CO of a training company at Ft. Leonard Wood was a Captain Frank Knuckles. He had been recalled to EAD and like all of us and was not happy. He left an excellent job at the Merchandise Mart in Chicago. However, he was a good soldier - fair and square. How much planning went into the initial confrontation. I don't know. We could only speculate on the hearsay information available. This draftee, a young Jewish boy from Chicago, decided he was going to get out of the service. What coaching, if any, he received I don't know. But he planned on being court martialed and receive a dishonorable discharge from the service. Money would be no problem and a DD would not affect his future lifestyle or position.

So, one day, starting with his squad leader after receiving an order, he answered with a F___ Y___! The squad leader gave him a second chance to reconsider. Again, F___ Y___! To the platoon sergeant - same exclamation. To the platoon lieutenant - same exclamation. To Captain Knuckles - the same. Only here is where the buck stops. Captain Knuckles tried to reason with him to no avail. You leave me no choice but a courts martial. I believe he received a Special Court assignment.

This is what the kid wanted. He offered no cooperation with the court. He was a perfect asshole. Guilty. Six months in the stockade at hard labor but no mention of a DD. This is not what he had planned. So, in the stockade he started all over again. He wanted a DD. He ended up in solitary with a General Courts Martial pending. Once again he was found guilty and sentenced to serve in Leavenworth for the duration of hostilities. I'll bet he served until late 1953. Then he got his wish - freedom and a DD. He certainly was older and wiser. The good captain tried!

If I ever write another book I would title it: President For a Week! Dream on! From a military standpoint alone, however, if only I were Commander-in-Chief for a week, what would I do? I'd call every general grade officer to report to me - would have studied their 201 file, encouraged any and all subordinate personnel to have commented on any and all negative aspects (whistle blowers - if confirmed, to be

promoted and guaranteed retention for twenty years) and make my decision. (No one would fly from Italy to Fort Carson on an empty C130.) No one. Some would enter as a general - depart as a private or civilian.

I do not profess to have the wisdom to identify all the fraudulent leadership within the officer corps. It is there! And young men will continue to die because efficiency reports are maintained on a mutual share basis. What is the answer? I would offer what I consider a very simple solution. The basic law is already on the books. All we do is broaden the existing law to cover today's complex, perplexing infractions of the original Constitution. Times have changed - people or human behavior has not.) What? We enlarge the coverage on what constitutes treason. Rather than overthrow and/or sedition treason could mean: abuse of monetary system, banking system, communications, transportation, government contracts, pharmaceutical, etc. And instead of the trial lawyers being allowed the luxury of WHY the law was broken have the courts deal swiftly with the WHAT. The penalty to be what the Constitution specified: hanging or firing squad. One question I have with only a superficial knowledge is, why were the Rosenbergs the only ones executed in my lifetime for espionage? Isn't spying, spying? Are there degrees of spying, rape, murder, DWI, etc.? The WHAT not the why! To make it real simple for all: You take a life - you give your life. Just a wee bit pregnant! Ha!

Along this same line I have another question. Time after time one reads of a savings and loan corporation, a stock broker, hustler, con men, telemarketers, etc. arrested, tried and found guilty for fraud, embezzlement, misrepresentation, etc. and sentenced to serve time and fined as part of the punishment. Time after time I've read where in one case the total amount absconded was at least double the amount of the fine levied. The man serves his time and comes home to a fortune. With the officers of the savings and loan corporations they serve the time. We, the taxpayers, pick up the FDIC insurance cost and after a short tour in a federal country club come home to a life style that the average American never sees or will see.

I understand that seventy percent of our Congress in 1997 were lawyers by profession and training. Each year fewer and fewer of their ranks have had any military service. And most who have were acting in a support or rear echelon role. Yet look and listen to the sabers rattle and roll in response to some international problems. Of questionable danger to us, and by their quick fire and brimstone tirades send thousands of your military off to die. Hypocrisy! Maybe a prerequisite for the elected office ought to be a triple requirement: watched a buddy die, watched an enemy die, and killed one or more yourself. I guarantee you that life from then on has a cast on each day.

Leadership wins wars. Lack of leadership kills. Probably no modern army has suffered, real or imagined, a more negative reputation than the Italians. Why? Because in WWII their officer corps was a hodge-podge of nepotism, favoritism, chit calling, and unearned titles. Absolutely no leadership. Plenty of pomp and ceremony and pretty uniforms full of frills but no guts. (At least the "fat boy" and his mistress got their just

reward.)

Now comes the cold war. The government has changed "daily" for years but the military has remembered the fiasco of WWII. (How Ethiopia fought their modern army to a standstill with spears against armor." An American general has been captured and held for ransom by a communist faction. The world refused to deal with terrorists so the general's days are numbered. The Italian equivalent of our SWAT teams make their move. Not a man was lost. The general found and released and the terrorists counted their dead alone. Leadership!

I heard this in the army from a private in late 42 so include in my army experiences. Remember that we came from all over the U.S. and were of varying ages - 18-42 - so backgrounds were night and day different. The soldier had no reason to tell me - really don't remember why - but were probably talking about home-town cops and our juvenile days. I accepted it as face value but since I felt the cops had it coming, I buried it in my memory until now. Most probably all the participants are now deceased or at least eighty years of age or better - no one can get hurt. The Good Lord must agree since he had me wait this long to comment. So, even though there is no statute of limitations on murder, here goes. I would suggest that the Seattle Police Department check their unsolved or still open files on the deaths of at least two of their officers in 40, 41 or 42. They were beaten to death. Both of them had been involved in the arrest and jailing of a young lumberjack who died under strange circumstances in jail. He was a tough kid and probably sassed the two or more. The good book may read that the Lord cried, Vengeance is mine, but history shows us that the act is an every day occurrence. With or without God's blessing! I have no names and only the above brief information. I must have agreed with the action taken to "square" the young death. It has never bothered me. We have rogue soldiers, yes, but the "other side" is also armed. With a rogue policeman only the cop has the weapon. Nothing worse!

In this same area of law enforcement, how many readers have heard, had inferences, read, imagined, or know for a fact that our judicial system was running scared as the war turned in our favor and the end seemed a possibility. Scared shitless because what does the country do with these millions of men soon to be brought home and "dumped" back into civilian living. Especially if the economy is in the doldrums. How would the veterans receive and/or accept another infringement on their life plans and actions. Some, I know, would have been a real problem. Some were and still are today. The government can't make you a "finalist" in life - only when we are needed - and then pull the plug when you're not. And the titular take over again! Luckily the economy was such that the veterans either on the GI Bill, new job, new wife, car (if lucky), with a few exceptions, did fit into the milieu.

Looking back on my adjustment - probably a bit rocky - I felt so strongly about one war story that I decided to write. The story of Command Kelly and his arming of the 60 mm mortar rounds by banging the base on a window sill to release the set-back pin and in sequence the safety pin warranted a letter to the suggestion office of the

service. This I wrote. I made the mistake of not keeping a copy so when the "answer" arrived, I got so pissed off - I just quit. I had mentioned in my letter that I knew the weight of each round prohibited carrying, that the odds of being in a second floor or higher window with a round was nil, etc., etc. but how much would it cost per round to include a threaded plug in line with the set-back pin and include a stamped screw driver on the round so it could be armed manually. This "gentleman" who answered had probably never seen a fuse or much less used one, but he was positive the idea had no merit. Even today I believe it does. And don't preach safety to me - when death is trying to hug you, you haven't got anything to lose.

Why is the infantry the last to gain? Today there is a controversy on the newly adapted F-18. We need to update our weapons system, no argument here, but with the pros and cons 180 degrees opposite what is the taxpayer and serviceman to believe. Such as been the case with basic weapons for the infantry through the years. Always the last for less. Yet no one knows total war like the guy on the ground. All the comments will lead up to and include NATO and our involvement and participation. This farce will continue as long as the non-veteran was Hawks, saber-rattling politicians decide the future safety and status of this great country. Let's not forget the high percentage of P (potential) leaders in the Pentagon. "Leaders" who won't make a decision unless some regulation or SP (Special Order) gives them the authority and direction. All hand-picked heroes!

Let's go back briefly in history and compare our "NATO" decisions. In the frontier - Indian wars our troops had trap-door Springfields - single shot - 45/70 cartridges. The Indians, Winchester M73 - 44/40 cartridges. A lever action. Two-three-five armed shots to our one. Then in 1898 the Spanish American War. Our troops the Krag-Jorgensen, a Danish model in 30/40 caliber. A fine, old, mild cartridge. The Spanish used a 7/57 Mauser. Still a popular caliber and cartridge today. Then in 1903 we adapted the 1903 Springfield in caliber 10/06. (The 30 is the caliber 30/100 of an inch and the 06 the year the rifle was adapted. The 30/06 cartridge, after modifications, is still one of the finest most versatile cartridge available today. The rifle was made at the Springfield and Rock Island Amories. Hence the nomenclature. Britain started to develop the Enfield to replace the Mach 303's but the pending war stopped the manufacture. Something may be better but if you don't have it you're behind the eight ball if war comes.

There was also a Johnson semi-auto that came out in the 30's. A good rifle with some excellent advantages but with the war clouds looming - not enough time. The M-1 Garand was adopted and issued about 1943 to replace the Springfield. This was in caliber 30/06. After WWII work started on new weapons. Out came the short-lived M-14. Also a M-2 carbine. Both had a selector lever for semi or auto fire. Then NATO! Immediately this great country began to acquiesce to the minor powers. We furnish the men, the equipment and the money and everyone has an equal say. Come on!

My point! As mean size goes with the world's nationalities and people the U.S. is on the high side. We are larger than most other ethnic groups. Therefore, we could

handle the 06 cartridge. But the M-1, M-14, etc. were too heavy and recoiled too much for many of our NATO partners. Instead of them using the best they could we had to redesign a new cartridge. Smaller, lighter but same caliber. Possible only because of improved chemistry of smokeless powder. The 308 came into acceptance. But this was still too much so again we changed - at a cost of millions - and how many lives to the 5.56 (223) caliber and the new M-16 rifle. There were prototypes submitted but politics once again won out. The Stoner system is as good as any but failed. Why? Armalite and Colt submitted similar designs but Colt was selected. After many modifications we have the M-16 with a 68 gr. NATO bullet. Twist on the barrel has been changed many times from 12-10-9 and now 7 inches. Is the M-16 the rifle for all seasons?

This basic concern for the future of our troops and country brings to mind another fallacy of the political heroes. Will we rue the day of the Nuremberg trials? If we ever lose a big one, I guarantee you we will. The Order of Battle works both ways. It can expedite the identification of the losers, as well as lionize the victors. The politicians of the world couldn't wait to humiliate, punish, and destroy the top echelon of the Axis world. A proud people whose cause or causes were destroyed by the insanity of their leaders but like any national group, they followed the leader. (In America: Woodstock, Pope's visit, mob fawning over Hollywood, President of US, etc.) I swear that some people - too many - will stand in line for anything that might give them a vicarious lift.

No wonder then that Hitler chose and insisted on the railroad car used at Versailles in 1918 to accept - demand - the surrender of the German Imperial Army. When you rub a proud man's face in it - he'll get even. (Proud for nation not Herr Hitler!) And why not pride - it took the world to lick 'em in both wars. When will our carpetbaggers and politicians realize that the answer to war criminals lies with the decision of the line troops not the pretty heroes. After all what a man earns he should be able to keep. The Israelis ignored world opinion and went after the Nazi war criminals. I don't believe they even apologized for their actions. Why should they? They wanted justice for the holocaust - they got it!

Remember Spam? It's still on the market so the public demand must justify its continuance. I haven't eaten any since WWII but not because it was lousy as some GI's relate but it is a processed meat made from scraps and organ bits with too much fat, water and cholesterol. I don't need any of the above at my age. Actually Spam's reputation wasn't fair. I had some that was quite palatable - it was prepared correctly. When cooked in a field kitchen tray, the fat liquefied in the tray. Lots v. pots! Now the difference from here on was the conscience or pride of the cook. Some let the Spam simmer in its own "juices," a good cook poured or basted the fat up and out of the tray. This way the meat dried and when served didn't look or taste like a lard covered morsel on a cold mess kit.

I want to go on record at this time (28 Sep 98) that if I make any money on this book I will use whatever it costs to explore a negative decision I received in 1991 in regard to medication I requested for my wife at Ellsworth Air Force Base here in Rapid City, South Dakota. I want to digress a minute before we get into the sordid story.

At the time of my request the CO at Ellsworth was a Colonel - 06. Today we have a Brigadier General - 07. Either rank is way down the line on authority and any decision outside of the base. They - the CO's - all subject to the whims and wishes of the DOD, DOA, or Pentagon "rulers." In WWII many units were on the same status as MINORITIES AND ETHNIC GROUPS.

In 1990-91 or earlier, I had enrolled my wife as a dependent of a retiree at the EAFB near Rapid City. She had been examined and prescribed some medicine from time to time. The doctor was a major and we both liked and respected each other. However, like all service doctor4s subject to transfer or separation, this is what happened. We lost him and the subsequent changes were not agreeable with my wife and she ceased going to the Base for medical checks.

In was in 1991, after my wife's heart problems in '83, that I tried to obtain the only drug that would help her condition: Amindarone – renamed Cardarone. Each tablet was over \$2.00 each. The major had agreed and had requested the pharmacy to order and secure the drug. It was refused by the pharmaceutical committee as "...too expensive."

Let me digress: At the time of my request, the CO at EAFB was an O6 – a colonel. Today, we have an 07 – Brig. General. Neither really have much weight nor say in the major discussions of the services at that rank and both must "play" the game to insure their own careers. Back off if ordered or implied. Since a base is part of the overall service TOE, if can fall under the description what we call in the Army, "Bastard Outfits." Always commanded by an 06 or 07. (Low on the overall rank scale.) Common sense should tell you that any unit of a size commanded by an 06 or 07 was at the mercy of a higher headquarters. They were and often they were "used." Unfair assignments – over worked, etc. the sad part of the common situation is that it's the men in the unit(s) who are abused and used. Yet, the Constitution states equality for all. With the above comments as an explanation or excuse, I do not fault the Pharmacy Management Group at Ellsworth for the negative decision to stick the Cordarone HCL – 200 mg. The cost to the local EAFB Pharmacy would have been a little over \$900/year.

I let the request drop on receipt of the negative answer of 20 Aug 91. At that time, I was angered and hurt. No medicine for my wife at \$900/year, but \$600 toilet seats were in. What values?

Now the crux to all of the above comments is this: If I make any money from publishing this book, I will, with the help of a registered pharmacists, review the pharmaceutical listings of all equivalent bases, posts, stations, ports, etc. in all of the services for the Cordarone of its today equivalent listing. If I find it available at just one – any service – and that listing is for the dependents of a rank 05 or above, DOD and I are going to have a legal accounting. In no way will I, (or you) should I, or can I accept this type of discrimination when it involves the health and welfare of my family. Rank should have no hearing or any medical decision. But! Sadly!

CHAPTER 16

ARMY JUSTICE

Millions of American men and women have raised their right hand and repeated the Oath of Allegiance to be sworn into one of the services of the United States. How many truly understood what this contract with the government meant? In World War II, when the draft included ages 18-42 (at first), and a percentage of these men could not read or write, much less sign their name, how many understood the words, much less the meaning? Of course, ignorance of the law is no excuse. Today we have a common ploy called lapse of memory.

Is the Oath of Allegiance really that complicated? There is one area that I have discussed and argued is quite ambiguous or most certainly subjective. An area that could be clarified in minutes by a change in regulations. I'm referring to the two worlds with a conjunction: foreign and domestic. A foreign threat should be able to be defined and interpreted, but what constitutes a domestic threat? Would these mass paranoid killings of school children and fast food patrons meet this threat definition? If so, some actions are available. If not, why not? With so many court decisions today based on technicalities, shouldn't I be held to my original oath?

Unless a commissioned officer resigns his commission, he is subject to recall. Recall as simple as individual orders mailed to his residence by registered or certified mail. The point I want to stress here is that the officer, even when retired, is subject to the Oath of Allegiance.,

What would happen then to me or any similar retired officer if I inadvertently stumbled onto or into a situation where some psycho is shooting or hopefully about to shoot up a classroom, playground, etc.? I have and have had for years a permit to carry a concealed weapon. I seldom do, but I legally can. I stumble into such a scene, I see that I can take the psycho out without harming any of the kids or customers. So, I splatter his sick brains all over the concrete or walls.

A dear, dear friend (a lawyer) tells me that I'm in trouble. With his interpretation, maybe, yes. I can't see it that way for two reasons: 1. As a citizen I had to stop the carnage; 2. As an officer under oath I must act. Hypothetical, yes, and I hope I'm never in such a situation but here in the midwest with the right jury, I'm sure I'd walk.

Now I offer to the Department of the Army and all the services an easy answer to eliminating any retiree from getting into such a scenario. Simply have the oath apply to only those on EAD (Extended Active Duty) and drawing full pay and allowances. Simple?

Do you read the Oath in the same way? I, name, do solemnly swear, or affirm that I will defend and protect the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to them; that I will obey all orders of the President of the United States and the officers appointed over me,

according to the regulations and the Uniform Code of Justice; and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office which I am about to assume. So help me, God.

There have been many changes in the Court Martial System since World War II. All were hopefully made to increase and insure more fairness and accuracy to the process. This is debatable!

Basically the types of Courts available hasn't changed. A new, non-judicial approach to correction called Article 15 has been added. This addition gives the CO (Commanding Officer) a quicker and less involved approach to infractions. His decision and those of the offender in agreement are not recorded in the permanent file of the service member. Restriction, fines, and reduction in rank can be applied. The rule of thumb...and a good one...is that if a CO can promote a soldier, he can reduce the rank of that soldier. I believe today that a CO of a company can promote up through E4.

I had my first exposure to army justice in July, 1939. I attended a month of training at Ft. Lincoln, North Dakota in the CMTC (Citizens Military Training Camp). The active army consisted of a heavy machine gun company and a headquarters company. Pay was \$21.00 a month and leave time was spent in Bismarck, the nearest town. Most infractions were drunk and disorderly and AWOL. Both infractions received a summary court with a probable fine and restriction to quarters or camp area.

This month of duty at seventeen years of age and the two years of ROTC in 1939-41 are probably the reason I was picked (ordered) to be a guard at the General Court Martial at Camp White in the fall of 1942. The CO of the 361st Regiment...91st Division...Colonel R. B. Broadlow (sp.) was probably responsible for my presence. He had a fetish (right word)...so I heard...about any soldier in his unit who had attended CMTC or ROTC. His son was commissioned from this training (so I heard) and anyone who had this background was special. He was a fine, old gentleman.

Anyway, I got orders to report to a certain building at a time-place for guard duty. I did. Rather than write a book about the incident, let's condense the trial.

The accused, a soldier in his early twenties, was charged with desertion (a death penalty in time of war). He had been drafted in the 1940 draft and ordered to Camp Roberts, CA for training. He did not like the service. He hated it! He was from the Los Angeles area and wanted only to stay home. So, time after time he had been AWOL...restricted to company area...and when entitled to his next pass...AWOL again.

He was tried in a Special Court and found guilty in mid-1940. He was given a DD (Dishonorable Discharge) and discharged from the service. The court berated him unmercifully. "You are an insult to the uniform; you aren't fit to be an American; don't ever show your face again, etc." The soldier could care less. He was going home.

So, when he received greetings in 1942, he was aghast. This can't be! Why do they want me again? Etc. But, he did report for induction and ended up at Camp White, Oregon for basic training.

The AWOL's started again, the time absent increased and finally he was gone, gone, gone. I believe it was 93 days later (90 max) that he was apprehended in LA in

civilian clothes. He was arrested and brought back to Camp White for trial.

(All of the above I remember because it was brought out by the prosecutor.) The defense said very little. In fact, was in agreement with the sequence of actions. Why? Pending!

With the summation phase of the trial the defense finally spoke up. About time! And I thought the defense won...it won big...who can destroy these facts?

What the defense argued was that the soldier was dishonorably discharged in 1940. He was told at that time that he was a disgrace as a citizen, a person, a human being, etc. The U.S. Army does not want anyone as disgraceful as you, etc.

The Court left the room but reconvened in a short time. Good or bad? The soldier and defense attorney stood to hear the decision. Guilty on all counts. Ten years at hard labor. (He probably was out in 1945 after the war ended.) Then the court alluded to the defense argument on the DD.

In 1942, shortly after war was declared, President Roosevelt reviewed the Court Martial System and automatically reinstated all dishonorable discharges except those for heinous crimes. Ten years at hard labor. Ignorance of the law is no excuse!

I thought, boy! Don't screw up! How many in the practice of law knew this?

A preface before I relate my next exposure to army justice...mine!

I have not and will not be mentioning names in this book. When I do, the comments will always be positive.

Fifty-four years ago I had the pleasure and privilege of serving with two very fine men...soldiers...the CO, Alex R. Rhodes, Capt. and Walter Ambo, First Sergeant. I don't remember any of Captain Rhodes' background, but Sgt. Ambo was from Poughkeepsie, New York. I will write more about these two soldiers but for now, take my word for it, they were soldiers, fair and square.

I had been transferred to company headquarters pending orders to either OCS or the ASTP Program. I wanted out of Camp White. I was stale and there was nothing pending (rumors) on our status.

Company headquarters can be a "dumping" ground for the misfits. Many of the "eight balls" quartered here until orders or a decision came. I was part of a gripe session...getting nowhere...no one had had a pass out of camp in six months, and the Captain (Rhodes) heard me. He called me in and commented that if I preferred the private's conversation, I might as well be a private. Orders would be cut on our return to camp as we were in the field on tactical training at the time.

That afternoon I get a telegram from a former girl friend. She was coming from Seattle to Los Angeles and had a bus stop from 1800-2400 in Medford. Could I meet her?

Captain Rhodes took my request for a pass (the first in the company) to regimental headquarters and got approval. I rode in on the mess truck, changed clothes, caught a bus and got to Medford in time to meet the bus.

We had dinner and were in a club with dancing. Captain Rhodes and other company officers arrived, were introduced, danced with the lady. At 2400 she caught

the bus going south.

The next day I was ordered to the orderly room. I reported to Captain Rhodes. "I met your girl. Got any plans?" "Nothing definite." "Have you cut your stripes off as yet?" "No!" "Did you learn anything yesterday?" "Yes, Sir!." "Well, let's let the stripes ride for now...but watch it!" "Yes, Sir!" (From sergeant to private is quite a drop...\$78.00 to \$50.00 a month.)

This is not in sequence but I must comment of a General Court Martial in World War II. The trial of Eddie Slovik for desertion. He was found guilty and executed by a firing squad. I have not seen nor read the transcript of the trial and all comments are based on hearsay. But, I have grave misgivings about justice. Some questions and comments.

Private Slovik left his unit (?) and went to the rear. How far back? He did not change his uniform. He did not leave the theater of operations. Was his assigned unit an infantry unit? What did his squad, platoon sergeants and platoon leader think of his absence? Did anyone die because of his leaving? And, and, and! The point I'm trying to make is that was his absence truly desertion? I've got a true story from Korea that the army wouldn't touch due to race.

The rest of the time in Camp White was uneventful and boring. I wanted out. It seemed that we were going nowhere. So, I put in for OCS and took the test for ASTP (Officer's Candidate School and Army Specialized Training Program). Whatever came first! ASTP did and I left Camp White in May, '43.

ASTP was very informal. A change from active duty and easy..easy...except going to school was boring. Our only infractions were missing bed check now and then, a few hours AWOL on Monday morning. We had a young second lieutenant in charge of our unit. He was either very ignorant or trying too hard to be liked because we would cry, perform and plead our case and always we got "this is your last time" answer. I remember one ex-paratrooper that would choke me up with his act.

I don't remember any other incidents until September, '44. I had taken a break to private from sergeant again due to a notice posted on the bulletin board.. We were unassigned, in limbo, and once again stale. The notice stated that all privates and PFC's would draw overshoes and other cold gear. Now, not even the army, as screwed up as it was, would send a man to the South Pacific in winter gear. Surely! I was right.

Within days after the break I was in Camp Shanks in New York. This was a POE camp (Port of Embarkation). It was in a woody area, with fences and barbed wire. Tight security. A buddy and I got a twenty-four hour pass to go to Philadelphia where his mother lived. We went. That Saturday night, I can still remember, we spent at Leo Lawler's Swing Bar at 26th and Woodland in South Philly.

We enjoyed ourselves too much and returned to Camp Shanks too late. All traffic, vehicle and foot, was one way. In! The camp was on alert. All were moving out. This we did and boarded the Ile De France in New York for our trip overseas.

On reporting in that morning, all personnel who were late (AWOL) had to report to the orderly office. We waited in line to plead our cause. I remember sergeants and

corporals being fined for their actions. How could you fine two dumb privates? We won an Oscar for our performance...no fine.

Overseas I went. To war! Probably the biggest change in my life. You become a team player to survive. You are in awe of many facets of authority and power. There is no time for levity at first. then, as time and experience slowly erase the daily threat of mortality, you can return to be yourself.

I didn't get into real trouble for the duration of war. One area of concern, however, for the powers that be was the pending problem of fraternization.

A couple of incidents here when the war ended.

One of the last towns our unit secured was Taufkerchen (sp.). This town was southeast of Munich near the Austrian border. In the days immediately before and ending of the war, thousands of German troops, Wehrmacht and SS, gave up or were captured and now were held in a field outside of the town. Intelligence troops had moved in to screen the POW's. After about a week the entire camp was moved to Erding into a new facility.

The town of Taufkerchen was off limits due to a stupid prank of some GI or GI's breaking into a 2,000 gallon vat of beer for a drink. I had been ordered to be the "sheriff" of the town with a Jeep and two unit interpreters. One spoke German and the other polish as there were a lot of Polish DP women in the area.

The plot thickens! About dusk one evening a frightened, disheveled, pretty girl came to the depot building we used as our headquarters. Two U.S. soldiers were in their house drinking and bothering them. No, they had not touched them.

I took my two GI interpreters, German and Polish, and went into town with the girl. Nothing! And the other two girls in the house didn't know where they could have gone. Back to the depot.

About 2100 another girl of the three is back. Same complaint. Back we go into town by way of the tracks. Nothing! Back to the depot. I'm getting a bit pissed off at this inconvenience. Are the girls pulling our legs or is someone making a monkey out of us? Also, this second time a bird colonel from the intelligence unit was present when the girls came. He made no comment at that time.

At nearly midnight back came one of the girls. Scared! The men hadn't touched them but were getting bolder and louder. The Colonel tells me to get those SOB's and don't come back till you do.

In we go again. This time I have only my Jeep driver. We go by Jeep and take a different route and park away from the house. We had no way of knowing if the men heard us. We quietly get to the house and the girls point to the basement. Down we go and here are the two GI's hiding in the dark, feeling no pain.

"Get your ass outside!" No argument. They both had carbines and I recognize were in my squad which the assistant squad leader was in command of due to my being sheriff.

"Get in the Jeep, asshole." One turned to me and said, "Watch, I got a carbine, too." I was carrying a Thompson 28 Army Model without a sling. The blackout lights

were behind him so I said, "Lift the barrel if you want to try." A pause...he got in the Jeep. All the men in the squad had only been with us for 30-40 days. All the original were KIA or WIA. These replacements had been Air Force trainees in England up until a month ago and when the war finally turned in our favor were sent to the continent as replacements. They were bitter. Tough shit! You're here!

The colonel preferred charges of drunk and disorderly. No rape. I made it clear that I saw, heard, and knew of nothing more than just a couple of dumb drunks. And the girls had confirmed the "no touch."

They got two weeks on a woodpile at Erding and worked from evening meal until dark. They both thanked me for my comments at the court-martial.

A couple of days later I was coming back to camp at 0910 or so. Curfew was 0900. I had been calling on a "friend."

I heard the Jeep coming and stepped off the road. Then I recognized the driver to be our XO. I stepped out and waved him down, saluted and asked for a ride. I got in and he proceeds to give me the third degree of time after curfew and how fraternization is forbidden. I told him that I didn't need the lecture and only stopped him to catch a ride.

He brought me to company headquarters. A quick summary court with him in charge and one week as supervising NCO on the woodpile. I reported the next night. We all had a good laugh on how fate works.

All men have experienced the Tom Sawyer Painting the Fence Syndrome. I'm no different. So, shortly after reporting that first night, I got tired of watching the men split and I took my shirt off and grabbed an axe.

I'm chopping away and up drives the XO. I report and salute by the numbers. He asked what in the hell did I think I was doing? "I beg your pardon, Sir!" "You're chopping without your shirt on, Sergeant." "Yes, Sir!" Yah! If someone else comes along and you report to them, you'll tell them Lt. S. put you here. Then I'm in trouble." I looked him in the eye and said, "We're not all pricks, Sir." He blushed, turned on his heels and left. I never saw him again at the woodpile. No one had any respect for the man, but that's another story.

I want to close this chapter with an AP story following the Grenada invasion. Is this a uniform code of military justice? Hardly! And yet, in the 55 years I've been affiliated with the service, there's been little change. Rank is still rank, the departments still favor the general grade officers and the Commanders-in-Chief haven't ever had the guts to call their pompous bluff. Except one. God bless you, President Harry Truman.

Here's the article. Do you agree?

PUNISHED SOLDIERS SAY DISPARITY IN TREATMENT WAS UNJUST.

Two soldiers who were court-martialed for smuggling Soviet rifles in the United States from Grenada say their dismissals from the service cannot be justified, given the way an admiral was merely "cautioned."

The two said Monday they were hopeful their sentences will be reconsidered, but the Army

said its punishment was by the book and had nothing to do with what the Navy did.

"I'm more upset at the fact that he got away with it, not that he took them (the rifles)," said former Staff Sgt. Allen Cassatt, one of five Army personnel who were court-martialed and ordered out of the service for bringing back Soviet AK-47 automatic rifles from Grenada following the U.S. invasion of the Caribbean island in October 1983.

"I'm sorry to see the admiral publicized this way," former Army Capt. John Dorsz said of ViCe Adm. Joseph Metcalf III, the invasion commander who was only cautioned after U.S. Customs agents found 24 AK-47s in his airplane.

Dorsz, who also tried to bring back Soviet weapons from Grenada, served a prison sentence.

"But he did the same as I. He also deprived the U.S. government of those weapons. He, too, committed conspiracy, larceny and conduct unbecoming an officer."

Metcalf said he had been bringing the weapons back as souvenirs, and in explaining that action, the Navy has said the Marines were explicitly warned not to bring back weapons and did so anyway. The Navy said Metcalf was unaware of the regulations and voluntarily handed over the rifles to Customs agents.

Prior to all service members being assigned their social security number as their service number, how did six digits instead of seven in your service number make you a better officer? An officer above the uniform code that the rest of us lived by? If only I was President for a Day.....

Although there was no court involved, there was an incident in 1951 where all participants were under oath. I guess you could call it a medical hearing or evaluation.

I received orders to appear at a hearing in building such and such on a specified date. The hearing was being held to evaluate the status of one of the draftees in basic training. And, since he was listed in my platoon, I had to attend.

We need a clarification here. I did not know the soldier by sight or name. All training in basic training was by the committee system. I was in the weapons committee and all training hours were spent in instruction. I had never had a platoon fall in or had I inspected the barracks.

To acquaint myself with the problem, I had the first soldier show me the man's bunk. I took off the bedding, sheets, and mattress cover for a look. Yes. There was a urine problem.....voluntary or involuntary. Succeeding stains of urine were quite apparent on the mattress.

I reported to the hearing. There were three officers there and the enlisted man. I wondered why in the hell we were together. If I remember correctly, one officer was medical corps...a captain...and the other two were engineer branch with a major and pot-bellied captain.

I was sworn in, the questions started. I explained my status as platoon leader and the fact that I had never met or spoken with the trainee. I described my actions in the barracks of the trainee in preparation for the hearing. Some questions of clarification on my background, etc. Actually, nothing had been accomplished at this time. I knew nothing of the data that are available to the three officers.

About this time, captain pot-belly with a pompous flourish turns to me and asks, "If this man were in my unit at Fort Benning, Georgia, and the unit was slated for overseas assignment of a combat nature, would you or would you not want him in your command.?"

I answered immediately with, "I can't answer that question unless I knew whether or not the enuresis problem is psychological or physical or this man is just playing games with the service to avoid duty."

Captain pot belly blanched, paused, and then, "That will be all, Lieutenant."

I understand the man received a medical discharge. A lot of the men in that training cycle were sent to Korea and a lot got chopped up. Where is the justice in this if a man can force himself to sleep in his own urine...he lives, but a true citizen gets himself zeroed?

I landed in Korea in August, 1951. I was assigned to the first platoon of "G" company of the 24th Infantry Regiment. This was the last black unit in the U.S. Army. The day before I reported, the outpost has been hit by the Chinese and North Koreans with heavy losses on both sides. One squad leader, a Corporal Ford from Chicago, had lost a couple of buddies and wanted nothing more than to get even. I'm prefacing all this to show that as a stranger, a white officer, I had friends in this unit. Any time I would move, he would ask where I was going.

I got my first patrol. We left at 0500 as a platoon with all personnel notified. After daybreak, we got pinned down with 51 machine gun and mortar fire. I had about 6 WIA., no KIA's. When it was all over I find that one man had been absent...AWOL...in combat?

I had him report to me. He claimed no one told him, that he had overslept, etc. He was one lying SOB, but I couldn't prove it.

Time for the next patrol. A night reconnaissance. I had this soldier report to me with his squad leader. "Do you understand?" "Yes, Sir!" At 2400 he was nowhere to be found. I don't believe we had casualties that night but in the morning I took him to company headquarters. "I want general charges preferred against this man and I'll sign...desertion, cowardice, etc." The platoon Sergeant and Corporal Ford spoke up with agreement.

Whether or not the CO knew that integration of the 24th was pending on 1 October 51, I don't know. I do know that to my knowledge nothing was ever done to initiate a general court. Probably for the best because if the unit had been together for another month and this excuse for a man had tried bugging out a third time, I'd have shot him myself...if I could get to him before Corporal Ford and his peers.

The CO went on to a staff job prior to integration. He was commissioned from one of the elite academies. A six digit number?

I was real busy in the summer of 1966. I was CO of the 247th Chemical Company and the unit had been assigned for two weeks of summer camp training at Pine Bluff Arsenal, Arkansas. The main body of troops (33) and the XO had flown down to the camp by way of Denver and my first soldier and I drove my car down.

I had problems as soon as I arrived. One member of the unit was once again flexing his muscles. This man hated authority, hated the army, and blamed me for his assignment to the unit as an obligated reservist. What had apparently happened was the army computers had retained his name correctly as obligated and assigned him to the 247th while other reservists from his active duty unit were unassigned and walking "free." on the streets of Rapid City. I had tried and tried to get him to understand that I was charged with insuring his attendance and would order him to 45 days active duty if his attendance fell below 90%. He hated anything military.

The first sergeant had approached me about the problem. The unit had just received and the men issued the new squared "Castro" fatigue cap. He, the soldier, had written or printed on the bill in permanent ink his nickname.

I tried to reason with him in obtaining a new cap. He could buy one at the PX, or sign a statement of charges. No way, Jose! He was adamant in his position. NO, NO, No! I offered to buy him the cap. (He had said earlier, no money. I knew, however, he had spent quite a sum for drinks at the Denver Airport on the way down.) No way did he want my help. So, I told him that he left me no choice. I completed, he signed (with a flourish) an Article 15 and he was out \$29.00. This, of course, did not enhance our relationship.

The next day, the S__ hit the fan. Big time problems. I will elaborate more in this area in the chapter on reserve training, but the men were on two weeks active duty to repair and renew cluster bomb casings left over from Korea for Viet Nam use. These were in igloos out in the "boonies." Other varied munitions were also stored here.

What these two individuals did was carry a case of M-16 grenades from a shelter and hid it behind a tree. What they didn't know was two other men had observed their actions. One was a unit member, the other a civil service worker. The unit member told the sergeant in charge and the civil service worker left the area. To where? Whatever, but three men were now aware of the incident and the two made no move to return during that duty day so I had to assume they fully intended to keep.

(During the hearings and actions taken for the incident, the reason came out. Both had been to a wedding that spring of a SDAN6 friend and the groom's car had been tied to smoke grenades so that forward motion pulled the safety pins and down the street went the bride and groom with various hues of pretty smoke following the car. There was one big catch to this theft, however, M-16's are white phosphorus grenades. Deadly with vicious burns and the gas is poisonous. Their use would have meant a very, very short painful honeymoon.)

The men were both short-time obligated reservists and one was a real con man while the other an easy-going follower. They had been civilians on the streets of Rapid City only three days before. (I heard later that on the "con" man's return to Rapid City that the Treasury Department picked him up for questioning on some government checks.)

I reported to the CO of the post. I had pegged him as a fair and square officer after reporting to him earlier. He told me that the Department of the Army, the

Attorney General of the US, the FBI would all be investigating the incident and he would get back to me. In a couple of days he called me back to his office and informed me that all of the agencies had decided it was purely an Army matter and that I should prefer General Charges for violation of the National Defense Act.

"With no disrespect, Sir, I have to refuse that approach. These men are not soldiers. They were walking the streets of Rapid City just days ago. I will not be the Army's hatchet man. I have twenty good years of service so you can cut orders and order me home and into retirement." He asked what I thought was fair. I answered that an Article 15 to the maximum, with a permanent black ball on any federal employment be the fairest. A short pause and I got the go ahead.

I will soldier with anyone, anywhere, but I know-knew zilch about jurisprudence in the military. The colonel offered me the assistance of an E6 in his headquarters. The man was a lifesaver. We worked our tails off for several days, had the hearing, applied the penalty and quit. I was satisfied, the men knew they had had a break and the Colonel pleased that everything had been wrapped up and completed during OUR allotted time.

The "boys" wrecked all my plans with their goof-offs. I had to handle two Article 15's and one took some time. So, I never did get to go on the moccasin snake hunt as planned. I just can't win! I have killed prairie rattlesnakes while hunting in Western South Dakota, but not the same.

Two short comments and this phase is ended. I was very, very disappointed that the incident took most of the time in the two week period. The day before the act this same E6, who also was the game warden on the post, had offered me a hunt for water moccasins. He had been out the weekend we arrived and using riot gun and nine chill killed over fifty. The post was overrun with the snakes and this would have been my first snake hunt.

I heard later that on review of the case, the Attorney General declared the lifetime penalty of federal employment was unconstitutional. Also, the incident was cited for several years following 1966 at summer duty posts to the reservists...keep your nose clean, hands off, use common sense, etc.

In 1967 I was back at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin with my old reserve unit from the 50's...the 409th Infantry. The unit had planned a special training on crew served weapons that summer and the S3 had called to see if I could help. With pleasure!

I was assigned only to the S3 of the regiment and had no assigned troop duty. So, wherever I went all anyone knew...officers or enlisted..was there's that old major.

One noon I was back in a GP tent (general purpose), there were two tied together and mostly storage in the back had with no illumination. I was standing there in the dark when a young lieutenant and a sergeant got into it. "You will!" "I won't!" "Stand at attention when I talk to you! Now, you will!" "I won't! I don't remember the exact words by the lieutenant, but the sergeant replied with a "F_ you!"

I left out the early discussions of the two which led to the overt insubordination.

It appears that the sergeant had been a member of this unit physically but had moved prior to the dates for camp. He was now over 50 miles from the unit headquarters.

Also, there was no equivalent unit within 50 miles for a new assignment. So, he was entitled to transfer to standby reserve. The point of conflict was that he had received orders prior to his move and had reported so he was still under the jurisdiction of the original unit.

I walked out of the dark end of the tent. The sergeant saw me and saluted. I asked him if he had a moment, that I had heard the entire confrontation, and could I make a few comments. "Yes, Sir!" "Sergeant, you are at Camp McCoy as your unit orders stated, you are on active duty for training, and you're wearing the uniform of the United States Army."

The kid broke...tears in eyes. I left.

Later that day the CO of the unit called me. I had known him as a new...brand new...second lieutenant. With him was the young lieutenant. I liked him. Showed great promise. The CO asked what should he do? I told him that since nothing had really been damaged except some "feathers" that since he, the sergeant, had taken up some of the valuable training time with his problem, and your time is certainly worth as much as his, try this weekend for a restriction.

I understand that the reservist sergeant jumped at the restriction. I told the lieutenant later that I was proud of him. He had walked away in anger. A lot of commissioned officers can't or couldn't do this.

CHAPTER 17

ARMY ADDENDUM

Not too many hundreds of years ago in the days of the lords and ladies - feudal England - the closest group and the most important and respected were the knights. The soldiers! Without their support and sacrifice the king or lord usually enjoyed a short-lived reign. Today I might ask, what has time wrought? Everyone knows of the status of the services today. How the P & P boys insure the give-away contracts for unneeded and unwanted equipment. How the trained pilots are leaving the services in droves. Not because of the larger salaries alone but because they are used, abused and unappreciated. But, the greatest fault is with the lies and denial of the current "leaders" in regard to the "tomorrow's" of all servicemen. The life-time thanks for a job well done and all the perks available: health care, family care, etc. All these losses while Congress grants itself midnight raises, super retirement, while forcing the citizenry to social security, and personal recovery of their general campaign funds. And, most never served a day in any service.

Who is revered and respected today? Not the servicemen. Today we have the entertainers, the jokesters, the clowns, the performers, the musicians, "the ladies of the court," holding the limelight on the world stage. Salaries in the millions per year are all too common. Hundred of thousands of acres are being purchased and then closed to the public. Isn't this shades of Sherwood Forest? I won't live to see it but a revolution is in the making. Money alone cannot force a free man to accept the bondage of the wealthy. The answer - easy! Let the wealthy keep their gold but all "castles" must build up, not out, and all previously open land be available for the free. (Of course, if our current president has his way, there won't be a rifle in any home to use for hunting. In this area let's exchange the numbers on the current amendments 1 and 2. Just reverse so the Right to Bear Arms is #1 and free speech #2. Why? Common sense! You may need a weapon to insure your right to be adverse to the key powers that be.

One more area of concern - leadership and the orders originating from the top. I can't argue that he that has the gold makes the rules but if the orders emanating from the "top" strike a discord in your heart - you know they're wrong or illegal - refuse and let the "leader" do his own damn work. (could Mi Lai be an example of the above comments?) I ask that all servicemen, law enforcement personnel, anyone under the control of an agency or group to examine any and all orders that you might question. Remember, while you are young and in their employ, you are of use to them. They need you. Someday after father time arrives you will no longer be an asset or a necessity to the "leader." Watch the promises dissipate quickly.

As the Bible is to the Christian Faith, the AR's and SR's are to the military. A guide, and only a guide, in directing and controlling the behavior of the "charges." Written by man and subject to the frailties of man. Therefore, no attempt at control or understanding of human behavior can ever be exact. And, never, never finite.

Interpretation of any and all these written "rules" should be approached with caution. In life there is an exception to everything - maybe rare, but possible. Quoting or using these rules without any flexibility is the mark of a fool or a coward. I have seen and dealt with many cowards in my active duty days. Men who did not have the guts to make an exception to a rule because they could not find a loophole (their interpretation) in the law. Keeping this weakness and the politics of the services in mind I'll describe some personal exceptions. How could they happen? Ha!

Now, according to AR's once one is retired, one stays retired. You could be recalled as a consultant or in very, very rare cases recalled to EAD in same rank position. Never could there be a justification for a recall just to be back on EAD. And the mechanics of such an act are - or supposed to be arduous and complex. Not in the case of Edwin Mease!

Everyone has a breaking point. Although there may be a great difference in the reasons for the anger and frustration, the cause or causes are quite similar - one has had it. Maybe I'm luckier than most for my breaking point has a name: Edwin Mease III, Counselor to the President - Attorney General of the United States, (Ronald Reagan's Attorney General).

In principle, I was in the same situation in the spring of 1974. I did, however, not have the advantage of a "high-ranking" reserve officer(s) social setting. My requests were all correspondence to the CO, USAR, St. Louis, Missouri and to Senator George McGovern - to no avail.

All return correspondence referred to the same paragraphs, pages and AR's - education was part of promotion. (Education only indicates that the scholar has some degree of ability.) I countered that two wars, WWII and Korea, two CIB's and Purple Heart should be worth course work (theory) at C & GS to no avail. Actually, my current assignment from 1967 to 1974 prohibited me from course work. This is another story!

Now it appears that paragraphs, pages and AR's be damned. Mr. Mease will receive "constructive credit" and receive his promotion to 06-Colonel. With this farce of interpreting and applying regulations to fit any individual, the regular army - any of the services - can rightfully be apprehensive about the reserve promotional policies.

In essence - Mr. Mease of his volition, in cohort with others, or as a recipient for a favor decided that his retired rank of LTC (05) wasn't good enough and he wanted the prestige of "full colonel (06). At this time he had been retired from the USAR. He had failed to meet the educational requirements. Now once one is retired it is usually impossible to change the status. Somehow Mr. Mease was able to effect a return to the active USAR. (I might add that Mr. Mease's position was that of Presidential Counselor for President Ronald Reaga.) Anyhow he returned to active reserve. Once again, he was unable to complete the educational requirements - C and GS course at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He did, however, gain permission to another course of study for constructive credit in lieu of completing the C & GS. This course, however, he never attended. Instead, the Director of Selective Service requested he be granted credit by

virtue of his position as an aide to the President. This was granted and Mr. Mease was promoted to full colonel. Within the year he was again retired from the active ASAR. The difference in retirement pay certainly won't break this great country but the morale of many other USAR officers was shattered. Another exception to a clear-cut regulation only because of name or position. (Remember that I felt two wars, combat, should suffice as a trade for the same C & GS requirement. If you'd like to read the entire sordid mess, ask for Vol. 130, No. 41. dtd 2 April 84 of the Congressional Record. This I received from Les Aspin, Representative from Wisconsin, dated 8 May 84. This was a personal letter to me and signed by Mr. Aspen. (If any member of his family would like this letter, please request.)

Guard officers in North Dakota had a taste of this hocus-pocus about 15-20 years ago. Many were approaching the magic twenty years of service and then retirement. Someone came up with a democratic idea or suggestion. If all field grade officers would retire on their 20th anniversary, it would give other younger officers a chance at promotion in the spots vacated by the retirees. Sounded good! Sounded fair! So on reaching the twenty years many of the officers in grades major and lieutenant colonel retired. In a few months it appeared that somehow there were some exceptions to this voluntary action. Some colonels in the headquarters were granted a stay of three years - with, of course, pay and credit. In small print in the AR's this was possible for certain officers doing an exceptional job - performance - to remain. There were a lot of words on this, to no avail.

I never met Mr. Aspin but I appreciated his help on my inquiry of Mr. Mease. It was understandable then that he was appointed Secretary of Defense by President Clinton. I don't remember his branch of service, but I know it wasn't infantry. This fact causes severe problems in judgment in decisions as Secretary of DOD. I felt Mr. Aspin was a fair and dedicated man, but there is no teacher like combat.

Mr. Aspin was involved in committing troops in Somalia. I'm sure he had plenty of advice prior to the final action and I'm sure that much of this advice was garnered from the P officers (potential) in the Pentagon. Eighteen men died and their bodies mutilated by women and children in the attack area. Their faces on TV showed the frenzy, hate and delight of the moment. These men died because Mr. Aspin either was denied the armor support necessary in the action, due to cost or ignorance, or the "pretty boys" couldn't see the need. (I ask someone to show me where cost was ever a factor - IF - the right someone wanted or needed it. The taxpayers were dunned \$45,000,000 for President Clinton's recent trip to China. And how much do his vacations cost?) or was it closer to 70,000,000. Remember civilian entourages cost money!

We went to Somalia on a humane mission; to help the starving people. It turned into a terrorist mess. Our retaliation for this gleeful dragging and mutilating of our ranger's bodies - nothing. When will this great country realize that the days of the gentlemen's war are long gone? War is now total. Where everyone can die. WWII taught us this. How short are our memories? What we should have done is cordoned

off one square mile of that city, backed up whatever the safety distance is, I don't know how accurate B-52's or B-1's are, and leveled the entire area; terrorists, soldiers, women, kids, dogs, everything living. We cannot go on apologizing for our military actions. Who apologized for the Rangers? Remember that the Katyn Forest and Lidice were at the beginning of total war - no justification but uniformed troops did the slaughter. (SS) Maybe if more politicians were to die in every action they incur and more had a prerequisite of combat experience so they would empirically be qualified, we would have less war and less killings. Congress somehow must share in the horror of war with its citizenry.

Please bear with me from now on as there may be little continuity of thought or relationship in the various subject areas discussed!

In the 1930's, the army recognized proficiency and ability in one area: rifle marksmanship. Whether this recognition and reward (extra pay \$5.00 per month) for earning an expert rating with Springfield rifle was only in the 30's, through the 20's during WWI or prior, I don't know. I do know that \$5.00 added to \$21.00 per month, nearly a 25% increase and welcome. It also set the soldier apart from the average "doughboy." He earned it and was respected for it, because everyone had an equal chance at gaining the 88% total necessary for the rating. Not too many did.

In WWII someone attempted to reestablish a similar recognition, but the rating was based on gaining an expert classification in all infantry weapons. That is: Springfield in the early years, M-1, carbine, Browning machine guns, heavy and light, Colt 45 APC, BAR, bazooka, 60-81 mortar, etc. You can see that the requirements were much more restrictive due to the number and variety of weapons. In the crew served weapons, I believe one only had to qualify for expert if that was part of your MOS. I'm still waiting for mine. Company clerks are human and do forget or overlook their entries. Actually, I feel the Expert Infantry Badge (worth \$5.00 per month) is more difficult to obtain than the CIB (Combat Infantry Badge.) That badge was awarded for thirty days or more in a combat area regardless of one's MOS.

All of you have read in articles or obituaries of a veteran who is credited for two or three wars. I can guarantee you that he may have been in the infantry in the first war, possible in the second, hardly in the third. Yet, here we have a veteran who reads as if his entire life was one of pure and true dedication. Like many veterans in WWII, Korea, Nam, etc., he may have had 20-30 years prior to retirement and never got his feet wet or cold, missed a meal, nor even shot at or used his rifle, yet, a three war veteran. I earned my CIB's (second award) as a private and as a second lieutenant.

Medals are an extension of the reward and recognition process. Here again, what is the percentage of politics, bull shit, self adoration, out and out fraud in their presentation? How many times do you see staff officers, 07's and up, also 06's, with ribbons for combat bravery? Too many and too often. Now when you look, also look for the Purple Heart ribbon. Why? Because if a man is wearing the Bronze or Silver Star ribbon, the DSC or DSM and even the CMH, been in two and three wars, the odds against him not being wounded are very slim. I certainly am not alone in this opinion

as through the years I have read many correlated comments from other veterans. I have saved one clipping I have from thirty years ago or more. It was part of an article by an Anton Myrer, published by the Dell Publishing Co., New York, NY in circa 1968. He writes: *There aren't enough medals struck since the beginning of time to reward the bravery and suffering of the past four years. Many men have done courageous things that have never been rewarded, and bushel baskets full of medals have been handed out to staff officers for no reason other than favoritism or propinquity! Amen!*

I received a Bronze Star in 1985 or '86. Congress in its generosity probably wanted to gain some votes. I had received a Bronze Star ribbon for the Unit CO - his? - on leaving the unit about 1 June 45. Ye olde point system! Some USAAF men went home with a new wife and family because of their four years in England and two points per month. Twenty-four times 4 equals 96. Then with the good conduct, etc., they soon had 100 or more. All this without ever dirtying their issue weapon's barrel.

In the early 70's one of our current senators was running for office for the first time on the Democratic ticket. The polls show or indicated he was doing quite well, so, President Nixon, with help and guidance, by request, tries to insure the Republican candidate's election by high lighting the candidate's background and name with the citation of the CMH. Now the man had been shot down and a prisoner at the Hanoi Hilton for some years. He had been released at the end of hostilities. The citation was quite flowery. Now I ask, was he that outstanding a pilot? Were his missions more dangerous and exacting than most? Were others in his squadron cited, was he extremely active as a POW risking his life, etc.? My point is, why did it take a political action to recall all the man's bravery and dedication? Maybe he was deserving, but, if so, why wasn't the award issued in that time frame?

I have heard several times in past years that the Third Infantry Division is the most issuing and citing division in the army. Audie Murphy was in the Third. He was one of the most decorated or *the* most decorated soldier at that time in WWII. But I ask, were there others in his unit recognized for the same or similar actions?

I've soldiered with some good men and officers and the days of Sergeant York, etc. are few. I remember very clearly a conversation I had with a S/Sgt. at Ft. Benning in 1951. He had been in the Third Division in WWII and the same unit as Audie Murphy. I asked him where he was during the action in which Audie won the CMH? His answer, without any sign of bitterness or contempt, within 50 feet, but I wasn't standing on a burning half-track.

The same sergeant or another S/Sgt. at the same time or place in '51 had comments on the 1948 Berlin Wall and air lift. He felt the same as many line soldiers, not the politicians, that we should have moved that day and called their bluff. Here we had the T-34's and the M-48's tanks or whatever eyeball to eyeball. Through the GI's scopes they see that the Russians were zeroed on the hulls of our tanks. Now, whoever got the first round off had the immediate advantage; like a street fighter. So, our boys lined up our 90's on the axis of the bores of the T-34's. If we got the first round off, they would get nothing off since their tube (barrel) and most likely breach would be

inoperable. Casualties?

Let's get to a new area for a while. To all of you who have personally killed another human being, wrong uniform, seen our and their dead, ever wondered how it is that fate decides who goes and who stays? All of you I'm sure. And I'm sure you've wondered why it seemed that the decent guy, the good guy, gets it right off. And the slob, coward, prick never gets scratched. I did! But I was lucky! I got an answer to death that I feel is applicable to any situation. I got it from a young Catholic chaplain in '44. I want to share it with you.

WHY?

In WWII there was a young soldier named Robert Ray Heath, Jr. He did not smoke, drink, use profanity, look at or covet the indigenous woman. A good soldier and a perfect example of Christian life, living and ethics. He had just received a letter from his wife alluding to the fact that the war was nearly over (April '45 - we lost 45 men that month) and he would be coming home soon to begin anew their life together, start a family and finish college. He died instantaneously from a sniper's bullet a few days after receiving this letter.

The first chaplain to make it up to the line after things had calmed down a bit was a young Catholic chaplain. I was waiting and hoping he would be the chaplain to show. No one could justify Bob's death. I had argued with him about faith, symbolism, etc., as stupid youth do. Okay, Mister Man of the Cloth, why Bob? You knew him, you knew his lifestyle. Why? Why? The chaplain looked at me for maybe ten seconds, maybe longer, and then he spoke, "Did you ever stop to think, Chris, that - MAYBE HE WAS READY?"

I concluded from this answer that maybe God has a mission for each of us and until that mission is completed, we remain on earth - not eternity.

Many years ago when I was first contemplating this book I wrote comments on religion. Here are a few: To the atheist I say that I have talked to (not with) God a few times in my life. I have made some rash promises and, to my knowledge, he has never tried to collect. I have even been sacrilegious by referring to him as, "Joe."

If heaven is the ultimate utopia for Christians, why is it we all drag our feet to get there? I believe each one of us has a programmed purpose, subject to change, and until that purpose is fulfilled and completed, barring accidents and death due to our stupidity, we remain here on earth.

With the active phase of the Reserve and national Guard members we have always had the distinct dichotomy in the assignments, schooling, active duty, promotions, etc. Both are loaded with political freedom and suppression, but from different sources. Technically speaking, both have a politician for a CO but one is more distant and intangible than a governor of a state. All are composed of good, basic, dedicated American men and today, women. But they certainly are different in their roles and assignments. It's from a promotion status that I feel is not compatible between the two entitles. Rapid City has more retired 05-6-7's than Ft. Benning, Sill, and Riley together. But, not one of the ID blue cards reads SDANG. This would be the

same in any state. The credit for their service is given to the USAR. Why? Why not show the true source of their years of commitment? Most had never served a day on an active status in the USAR. If the National Guard is recognized as a viable organization during one's active membership, why shouldn't it be recognized as a viable organization for one's retirement?

A trend today and yesterday is and has been the selective recognition of "heroes" who have died in the service of their country. Flags are brought to half mast, draped coffins, drum roll, third of the 3rd in charge of the cemetery services, etc. All for honoring and lionizing the deceased. Maybe I'm old fashioned but death is final to us all, but the cause can certainly vary. A combat death is the purest form of dedication a citizen can offer and all other deaths, just as unfortunate, are degrees of the basic death. Recently we had two security men die in a shutout in the Capitol. We had 11 die in a terrorist bombing. All received full honors and ceremonies after being flown home in a serviceable USAF plane. (Live troops are frequently flown in contract planes with the pilots and condition of the aircraft of a questionable status.) In 1985 a Major Arthur D. Nicholson was shot and killed in the Russian zone in Germany. Killed by a Russian private on guard duty. His remains were flown home to a half mast, flag-draped ceremonies. He died in the line of duty but isn't or wasn't his death just another combat death? OR A COLD WAR KIA?

Maybe I should use another analogy to express what I'm trying to say. All these recent deaths were treated as if they were the first and only deaths in defense of these United States. Hardly! We make heroes of our astronauts and the NASA program. In the Grenada campaign there were approximately 7,000 officers and men involved. For their involvement they received 8612 medals. (An unpopular or political war?) In all cases there were support, medical personnel, electronics, etc., in other words, they were not alone. All their successes must be shared with the supporting personnel. Heroism - what is it? Now for analogy. In the early days of our westward expansion many of the pioneer women stopped on their trek and delivered a child. Some died - both died. There was no help - nothing. Now today if everything works out the women deliver the babies in a hospital, beds, doctors, nurses, equipment - CS if needed. The birth was similar only as an act of nature, the babies are babies, but to me the true hero is the pioneer mother. She did it alone.

Most of today's heroes die with full stomachs, in clean clothes, clean bodies, dry and comfortable, probably instantaneously - no pain or suffering - not like the combat GI. And, they are all drawing a much larger salary for their work. Please treat all "heroes" alike, please!

I believe I read or heard of a survey that was conducted following WWII. Someone, either civilian or military had questioned the use of the GIs issued weapon during the war. The hypothesis or rumor was that a large number of GIs never fired or failed to fire their rifles at any time during the war. If I remember the results of the survey the fact indicated that the hypothesis merited consideration. Here again I question the "base of consideration" for all citations. If wars are won by killing the

enemy, are personal kills ever a consideration? Granted that to throw one's self on a grenade to save a buddy indicated a type of courage but the life saved was one of ours. Must we resort to the early method of proof - scalps - for proof of kill to gain recognition? (A bit facetious!)

How many GI's died because they refused or failed to use their rifle. In peace time this refusal is quite common in training because to fire is to clean. Today we have the non-corrosive primer but in WWII and Korea we had the Frankfort Arsenal primer of fulminate of mercury - extremely corrosive. Maybe it was because of the average American soldier's love and respect of children. But if a child is trying to kill you, is he a child by definition? A character actor of TV and screen - according to what I read - was bayoneted by a Hitler Jugend because he could not bring himself to shoot a young person. No way, Jose! He earned the Silver Star later, but was it from shooting?

I have read most of the Brotherhood of War books by W.E.B. Griffin. On p. 102 of Book 1, he writes: Front-line troops of any army were more prone to commit summary executions than the service or supply troops who followed them into the area. From the Battalion history: this comment: the prisoner he had brought back will never be able to tell his folks what happened then, thanks to the third platoon. In Grenada there was a story of how two civilians - at least in civilian clothes - candidly mentioned how they had shot two GI's. If this had been WWII or Korea, they would have died "there." Why must the United Serviceman be the only serviceman to be held to the fantasies of the Geneva Convention? Both the Geneva Convention dictates and the United Nation's nonsense are pure nebulous bull shit for the front-line soldier. The courts martial of the CO of the line troops at Dachau is an excellent example for the above comments. What do pot-bellied politicians and leeches know and understand of human behavior living with the threat of minute by minute death?

I have many fond memories of Fort Benning, Georgia. Not the weather, the tarpaper shacks, the humidity, etc., but the precise military courtesy. I would bet that the only time in Fort Benning's history that military courtesy was strained, not totally lacking, were the confrontations between the bitter, recalled, company-grade officers of the ORC or NG and the regular army - especially the academy graduates. I'll never forget the time when a 1LT-ORC ordered a beer at the same time as a regular captain and the captain questioned his timing. Some words and the two matched ID's. The 1LT's dated 1943 or so while the captain's was 46 or 47. They parted after their voices had risen in anger with the 1LT stating: "Fuck you, sonny!" Fine!

How many of you remember the wild, wild or mad, mad minute? One minute for \$40,000 - at 1950 prices. Quite spectacular and impressive and at the time one-sided. No one could live through that much firepower. All the weapons available to an infantry regiment firing for one minute. Later in combat one learned that the enemy had the same weapons - some better. Looking back, however, it dawned on me later that this \$40,000 Barnum and Bailey was never really for us - the troops - but for visiting VIP's for political show. We were just invited because we happened to be attending a refresher course and were at Benning at the time. Thanks again, USA, for your true and

dedicated concern. Ha!

Also, any of you who were at Benning should remember the marksmanship committees and demonstrations. These guys - most E7-8's could shoot. One demo I remember clearly was when one sergeant took a prone position with an M-1 - laid his clips alongside the rifle, aimed, and started firing at a one inch bullseye at 25 yards. He fired something like 48 rounds of 30/06 in 60 seconds. The group was within an inch and a half. Good shooting. Now this man was also on the Benning marksmanship rifle team and had been for several years. Now it was the spring of '51 and the Korean war was nearly a year old. We were on our way to Korea at the end of this refresher course month. But, not the sergeant. He would stay and train troops. I ask, why should a man that good not be assigned to the war - he would be an asset, wouldn't he? But such is life with the politics of the active army. It's odd that in the many showers I've taken throughout the world I could never tell the rank or background of the showeree. (Unless he was wearing his ring.)

In researching some areas for this book I discovered a correlation that I wonder how many others might have noticed. The "rho" factor of top generals - now all past - whose first name was George. George, George S. George A Marshall, Patton, Custer. How different the personalities of each and their role in history. Wars need a variety of personalities with different philosophies and attitudes to win but no one should ever be considered irreplaceable and the final measure of any top leader's actions should always include the disposition of his command when the "fan stops." Hammelburg for one general and the Little Big Horn for another surely modified their success stories. When the casualty rate is equal to the percentage involved in all ranks, I'll consider success in war truly a success.

My maternal grandfather was in the service during the Civil War for six years. I guess since I know he was assigned to the 1st or 9th Maine Regiment I could find out what battles he is credited with but that is not critical for my comments. I have visited some Civil War battlefields, Gettysburg and Antietam. How sad! Tactics change with ordinance but surely someone should or could have used something different from the shoulder to shoulder - guaranteed death tactics of both sides during this chapter of our history. And now, once again, our elected representatives sit on their hands and watch this hallowed ground destroyed like a cancer by the intrusion of the quick food franchises. I will never go back.

Now this trend on politically correct history for the politicians, apologizing for the truth, attempts at diluting true facts, etc. are the trends. Two examples - attempted for foiled, thank God, are the Enola Gray's involvement in WWII with the atom bomb and the various desecration of our Stars and Stripes in the name of art. I offer a brief answer to the problem.

We'll leave civil law alone - friction and misunderstandings, torts, etc. between two or more people. But, with criminal law we'll establish five or whatever number of stages of severity of which all would fall under the act of treason. Punishment would be severe with no exceptions - NONE. Sentencing would range from ten years to death.

Death would not include any consideration of the convicted's welfare. I would prefer a firing squad but we have too many squeamish in Congress and the courts for this to be a reality. Yet, aren't most of our "Hawks" at that level quick to bomb or attack areas - questionable - in recent years in retaliation. Mostly they talk too much. Colonel Mohmmar Ghadafi felt the bite of the tiger!

One change the courts must make is this practice today of concentrating on the "why" of the defendant rather than the "what." He or she were arrested and tried for the "what." The "why" is luxury that only if there is time will society and the court consider and explore. Since psychiatry is still to varying degrees a pseudo science, why take the time.

An example of what I'm trying to say would be the arrest of three men - all white or all black but not mixed within the three count - who were arrested and now being tried for armed robbery. The trials are in different states. Each man is 35 years of age, high school graduate, married with two children, etc. But each has a different "why" for his actions. One needs money to pay for medicine and hospital bills for one of his children, one had lost everything in gambling and slots, the other needed the money for drugs. Would they all get the same time or length of sentence? Would all have received the same charge? Should they? From a "what" standpoint - YES! And then, we always have the plea bargaining. Complete strangers weighing the pros and cons of one's life.

Some general comments:

The "plum" of the USAR or NG for years has been an active duty assignment to the Selective Service System. I'm sure a check would reveal that political favoritism not a CIB was a base for consideration.

Veterans seeking work: *U.S. News Report* 11 June 73 - No trouble for the army driver, navy electrician, etc. but "nobody wants" an infantryman only experience.

A local coach - started basketball in high school and continued playing ball while in the service.

There is a difference between an enlisted and drafted serviceman. One enlists for a job to do and one is drafted for a job to get done.

Field Marshal Montgomery, the Commander of the British 8th Army in WWII, stated years ago that, "My war experience led me to believe that the staff officers must be servants to the troops, and that a good staff officer must serve his commander and the troops but himself be anonymous."

There's a big difference between serving and soldiering! There are far too many officers who may have the potential but never offered the performance.

Where was the world during the reign of Pol Pot and the killing fields of Cambodia? We knew and yet -----! Yet the world swore, probably sincere, that never in the history of man would we allow another holocaust. In today's world it appears that unless a cause is monetarily beneficial the cause and concern soon dies in the minds.

In 1941 Charles A. Lindbergh charged in a speech in Des Moines, Iowa that three

elements in the United States were trying to push the United States into WWII. The British, the Jewish, and the Roosevelt administration. I ask, why did Hitler welcome Mr. Lindbergh to Germany, show him and let him inspect all facets of the Luftwaffe, and then allow him to leave? Should we have listened? Maybe!

Throughout the years the services have tried to correct - clean up - the military justice mess. For a while it looked as if it might be changing. A new Article 15, none judicial was added and one third of a general court could be enlisted. But lately - sad! Our current Commander in Chief walks scot free on how many known and admitted adulteries, yet a single first lieutenant is drummed out for one act - is an order to not cohabit legal? After WWII we had an attempt at non-fraternization - the biggest offenders were the framers of the order. Orders must be sensible.

Then we have had the courts martials for possession of war souvenirs 0 AK47's. Vice Admiral Metcalf brings home a dozen or more from Grenada and he is cautioned and later promoted while several army enlisted are court martialed and discharged. Why should the rules of justice be different between the services? (also marines and also hard labor?)

The one that really gets me is the two star USAF that flies home from Italy in a 130 or so alone and then soon after gets a third star. AT least the way I heard and read it.

There are more notes and comments but some would repetitious in principle so let's close out the comments on the army.

I'm sure that in the crypts of my mind there may be pertinent facts for this history but maybe they are supposed to remain in that area of "fog" we all experience. The truth is fleeting and memories fickle with the American public. Heroism and valor like appreciation are dimmed with the passage of time. But for myself I feel really blessed that for once in my life, the ride through the switchyards in the Boston area, I was truly a HERO FOR A DAY.

I have a fifty year-old question for the USA: What do I get for shooting at, and a dozen - two dozen men in a different uniform fell? The world is still a mess!

THE SILVER STAR

General Patton is credited with – supposed to have said – in relation to KIA's and dying for one's country, stay alive, let another dumb SOB die for his country. If deaths win wars, this statement would correlate positively with to body count in war. War, I'm afraid, is far too complex to be terminated by KIA's alone. Therefore, would not the soldier who stayed alive and caused KIA's in the enemy's ranks be more of an asset than the KIA's – either side – who get called "home"?

I would enjoy reading a study which compared the awards for valor granted to the KIA's, WIA's, and the living. Would posthumous wards earn the greatest percentage? If so, why? To throw oneself on a grenade, for example, certainly exhibits the love for a friend or buddy, but does it contribute to an earlier armistice? Would not a sniper with a dozen kills have contributed more? Must death be the ultimate proof of devotion? Maybe, because death simply is the measurement of devotion it receives the greater recognition of valor. Whatever! What I am trying to say is that the living in causing deaths, although not as final or dramatic, are also entitled to a review of their "causes" for awards of valor. They also earned the consideration.

The United States Government and all the Services were aware of one flaring problem in the WWII era. A problem that was corrected later – when – certainly not in the Korean War – but is now part of the TO&E of a standard division. I'm referring to the infantry replacements in WWII. They were necessary, welcomed with reservations, forced to prove themselves, but for sometime in the transfer period, nothing but a number – especially the privates. Many were just out of basic training; many during the last months of the war from other services, some with rank, but all certified ready for combat and/or death. If they made it, some were promoted. (If any one lasts long enough, a private can, theoretically, make general – if he's the only one left!).

How many of these replacements were awarded medals of valor? Some of them did a better job and were better soldiers than the original cadre. Some did not live long enough to leave a name - certified basically trained! There is no training that qualifies one for war itself. Only combat grants the strong life and the weak death. Exceptions, yes, but true leadership somehow protects the leader with an icon of life. His life insures life for his men.

I was an infantry replacement. By circumstance, quite a unique replacement. I had been promoted to buck sergeant three times and drew private's pay and allowances four times. My knowledge of some weapons was greater than most cadre instructors. I had had two years of ROTC – 1939-1940 – and one year of CMTC in 1939. But, I wore glasses! Corrected to Snellen 20/20 – but I wore glasses.

One area that I doubt the top echelons of any size units, the S2's and G2's ever considered is that as a replacement, you are assigned to a tiny world called a squad. Oh, you have a platoon leader and sergeant, but you never work with the other squads. You see the CO – maybe – the XO – probably, more but names and faces are never to be part of your exposure. The original squad, section, platoon trained together in the

states. They played together, established lasting friendships, shared their secrets, and were a person to you, not just a number. But, now as a replacement, you were “substituting” for a buddy of the original. The squad members have had one to two years together and one to two years to earn rank. They are still privates. Why? You have earned and lost rank. Now, you watch daily the inability of some of these men; men who will share their lives with you – and hopefully, protect and save – little trust – little respect.

One does not know if some of the squad members can march, do the manual of arms, stand, retreat, pass on review, etc. Thankfully, your first combat commitment alleviates all the worries and concerns. They did well and so did you. You’re in!

In Korea as a company grade office replacement, you became a replacement for a replacement. All had a set tour-time date and most were covering their asses until the ETD (estimated time of departure). Here the men suffered. They knew that your responsibility was in a time frame. Faces and names came and went so later memories include few of either.

History is replete with a variety of affidavits and descriptions of proof of valor. Most are accurate and honest. However, there are some instances which, I feel, are an insult to our integrity and all soldiery. For example two are: (1) General (Brevet) George Custer, and (2) The Battle of Wounded Knee. There were CMH’s awarded in each. The general – so enamored with himself – was a perfect example of a vain and glorious narcissus. His eccentricity – long hair and leather attire – was excused or overlooked due to his tactical history in the Civil War. He split and lost his entire command at the Battle of the Big Horn.

At the Battle of Wounded Knee, the result of the recognized valor left women and children dead. Soldiers died caught in their own cross fire. Soldiers who in these times possessed perfect eyesight, hearing, and teeth, but little else. Trained to follow, without thought, the academy trained Sam Brown Belts.

In WWII there was the symbolism of a pair of pearl-handled Colt revolvers. How in any stretch of one’s imagination did these contribute to our history? I do defend, however, any commander who is astute enough to realize that the men in his command can carry any weapons which they choose, as long as they are proficient in its use. Here again – isn’t killing the basis assignment in any war? Valor usually means death; not always killing. Killing doesn’t always receive valor, but it ends wars.

Will the day ever come in the United States Army when the line soldiers have some control with their own destiny? Until it does, young men and women will be dying as they have to date. Politicians, “power people,” and generals start the wars and the citizenry die as the recipients. Since 1939, when I had my first exposure to CMTC and ROTC, two areas of control were prevalent, and they still are in place causing deaths early in every war. The two are: (1) this continual pressure and reorganization for the sportsmanship mind set in war, and (2) the forced compliance with the terms of the Geneva Convention.

We are probably the only nation which has truly tried to comply. Only after infractions and violations causing injury and death occur do we “shelf” the Convention rules? With sportsmanship, we somehow have to snap the “off switch” during war time. Only one team can and will win – why not the US using our own rules?

Leadership and motherhood are closely correlated. Leadership starts on the assignment of a command; motherhood on the birth of a child. All the literature and directives ever written do not, cannon, and make either situation a workable fact. Too often in the former, propinquity caused the command assignment. Time in grade or educational background has never been a true source of leadership. Many general officers played the political game and their leadership consisted of war maps in an air conditioned trailer with the non-service 4F's in Washington, DC, heading the show.

Enough! Let's get to the accounts of combat which will reinforce my premise for recognition of actions.

LIST OF BATTLE

SHLEITHAL: My first unit assignment. Now part of the first squad, 3rd platoon. “C” Company 19A1B. Unit was on outpost duty north of the city. Patrols from both sides were busy. One little firefight – no one hurt – extent of my combat. Had a “turkey shoot” on withdrawal.

GOETZENBRUCK: Cold and snow. About 10°F. We reached and passed through the town in the early morning. Proceed 3-4-5 K's to near Bitche. I was wearing the new shoe pacs – my feet were solid blisters. Our squad was ordered to patrol. I was #1 – scout and the other replacements #5 – BAR. We were on a mountain path – barely started – when an 88 hit to our right front. Soon another about half the distance. (Some Kraut FO was watching). Fire for effect! The 88's put four or more right on the path. Nine were standing – now 4 or 5 stood up. The #5 – BAR – killed. Was the Good Lord telling me something? I did go up to the top of the hill and looked at Bitche. Ordered to pull out. Came down so fast that after hitting a trip wire, I was 20-30 feet down. Back to town.

I fired only one round while here. It was that night – Germans had surrounded the town – a flashlight shining in the woods about 50-100 yards away. I snapped a shot – Springfield – light dropped. Did I or didn't I? Other areas of the town bore the brunt of the attacks. The next morning, two Germans were dug in behind a dirt mound in the snow. No threat – could be hit any time. One of our sergeants crawled out and had them surrender. I thought he was nuts. He received a battlefield commission and retired as a MG. If he received an award for the above action, it was wrong. Another sergeant did when meeting and controlling three POW's about 50 feet to my left. A mortar round hit right in the middle of the force. At least an 82 or 120. The battalion history relates attack after attack for several days. Only Althorn and Lt. Sweitzer, assault gun company, a patrol that was canceled do I remember. Here again was the Good Lord trying - ? A Kraut MG opened up when the patrol was along side the

assault gun. The gun was traversing from left to right. The snow was flying. We lay helplessly and watched the impact come closer. It stopped about 10 feet or so to our left?

HATTEN: Never fired a round! The company tried to attack from south of Hatten initially. Forward platoon was pinned down by MG and mortar. 88's through barrages at rear elements. Lots of tree bursts. Saw my first and legitimate PTSD. It was a PRE instead of POST for this kid. In the middle of a barrage he walked slowly to the rear. Upright. Never flinched, cadence 60-70. The shrapnel was singing. I understand he was reassigned to division duty.

The company withdrew and west and north. Late in the PW the company attacked from the west and made it. Some casualties and one was the CO. We were met by the troops holding the west end. 13 Jan.

In the AM an M-18TD painted white stopped by. The sergeant was a jovial bloche, the first I'd seen. He had just destroyed a SP. Never saw him again. Coming into Hatten on second attack direction many of our tanks were flanked and destroyed or disabled. I understand some of the KIA's were not recovered from the tanks until the big push in March.

Don't remember much of the first day – 14 Jan. That night buddy and I were on guard duty in a barn near the house Headquarters. Artillery and mortars on both side busy. About an hour before dawn a firefight down the street. Running and heavy feet noise. Remember it was cold, 10°F? – snow. A German patrol of four stopped behind a small building to my front. I sat down, rested the BAR, and fired. Klunk! Nothing. Cold and poor lubrication! Unless the Army today furnishes Teflon or graphite for lubrication, no open-bolt actions belong in the infantry arsenal. The patrol went elsewhere!? Thank God!

Shortly after daylight a mortar barrage started to our right flank. I walked toward the barn and "fire for effect" – hit the roof. I dived into a stall as someone kicked me in the right thigh. Shell fragment. The buddy had jumped into a stall on his back. A shell fragment had penetrated his belts, jacket, pants, etc. and just broke the skin on his back. Lucky!

The medics didn't get to the house until early PM. Outside, the shelling had intensified. I could hobble faster that they could carry a stretcher, do I hobbled. Got out that night on a halftrack ambulance.

Three to four weeks of white sheets, pretty faces, empathetic doctors. Also learned the hard way that I cannot take Codeine Sulfate. Extremely constipating! But all good things must end.

The battalion history states that "C moved and billeted at Landersheim, France. It was here I reported after leaving the hospital. The company was once again up to strength – TO&E, fillers and equipment received and in place.

PFAFFENHUFFEN and **LA WALCK:** Around 20 Feb; the company left the reserve and moved to Ettendorf. As reserve company, we furnished all patrols. At 0100 on 20 Feb, I went on a recon-listening patrol. We were in the middle of no place. All

the right sounds seemed tempered. A mortar cough and one could hear the “hiss” of the round overhead. Was it for us? Had we been seen or heard?

I don't remember ever staying in reserve. The squad was in the last row of houses in La Walck. On 25 Feb, “C” Company was assigned a night attack on the German held town of Bitschoffen. That same day we had a VIP visit the area. Name: Henry Cabot Lodge IV. We attacked the night of 26 Feb. A mess! Several KIA's and some WIA's. One man fell on a Shu mine. I never fired a round. I met my first Maguis on 25 Feb. We didn't make any points, but at least didn't fire at each other. Company pulled out on 10 Mar.

SCHWEIGHAUSEN: On the Moder River. Not much here. Did fire some rounds, hopefully to help a downed patrol across the river. The Germans were on and around the ruins of an old factory. I tried my theory on the BAR at 550 cycles. No way! I braced myself, got ready, and a few rounds out the window, some up the wall and the rest up the ceiling – I ended up on my back. I probably weighed 165-170 pounds at the time. Here 11-17 March. The big push into German was on the map.

We moved out along the first route of the battalion on Dec '44. Hazy to me. I remember going through Schleital. The family where we stayed waved from the street. Into Germany through friendly units. History says incident happened near Silz, Germany. A valley covered with the destruction of supply items. I'll never forget the cries of wounded horses.

ROHRBACK: This short introduction is a must. Wars being man against man. As in hunting, the hunter and the hunted play a game of match my wits. One base axiom, the base axiom of success is: MOVEMENT. Look for any signs of life of an enemy, if waiting death, by movement. However slight, it means danger and death. The US Army does not emphasize this enough in their basic training.

The CO was a truck or two ahead as we approached Rohrbach. I spotted several areas of movement to our left front and caught the CO's attention. He waved us to the right. We dismounted and attacked the town. A German AT gun was in front of the house we approached. (The history claims it was an 88 and did fire on us, no way! A 47 or 77 at most, and not manned and no ammo around).

We cleared the house and I moved to the left towards the attached barn. The movement began to take shape. Germans in groups of one-two-three stood up and began running toward the rise to clear the hill. I grabbed a wood barrel for a rest and started. I had a BAR and eight magazines of ammo. 8x20 = 160 rounds. I would sight – touch one round carefully and follow with a 2-3 short burst. I dropped them or they fell to avoid. I fired the full 160 rounds in the next few minutes. The BAR performed flawlessly. When I quit there was nothing up or running. How many lives did I save in stopping 12-18-24 soldiers from getting over the hill into the Siegfried Line? Waiting for us to come?

Next to my position and covered by another GI was a cellar. Cries, screams, etc. were coming from below. As long as the buddy could cover me, I was in no danger. Some GI's would have chucked grenades.

They company tried to continue the attack over the rise but heavy fire forced us to pull back. The tree bursts from the artillery and 20 mm was like a blanket of flying razor blades. The squad leader was seriously WIA. I never saw him again.

From here on until the end of the war on 8 May, events and episodes of actions are either crystal clear or a complete blank. A comparison of the combat act was in the battalion history really doesn't indicate that much difference in the intensity of the attack. Why then the blanks? Did fatigue, lack of sleep, complete exhaustion, what cause the catatonic areas? Catatonia of the mind not the voluntary movements of the body. In the last month of the war when General George S. Patton was receiving all the accolades (some rightfully) what damage – temporary or permanent – did his troops receive?

HERXHEIM: A complete blank. I remember leaving the track on the first attempt about 1500 to attack, but tree bursts were too heavy. Two fire fights in two towns according to the battalion history. My recollection became clear in the early PM south of Gernersheim. "C" Company in reserve.

GERMERSHEIM: Didn't fire a round. (Did blow the lock and hatch off a door to get in and out of the street). An ammo dump blew up stopping the lead company and we, as reserve, pulled up and through. Many buildings on fire but after clearing we held a large one on main street? It was the next morning that a company of about 80 men gave up to our platoon leader, Lt. Lingle. Our success was a short duration. All units pulled out and north to continue the attack.

The battalion – now an organized task force crossed the Rhine River south of Worms. The next four "episodes" are as clear as yesterday's actions.

LOHR: Why the route into Lohr was chosen, I'll probably never know. It was not for armor. On the left was a hill at least 500 meters high and on the right were heavy woods. Nearly into town, the column was stopped. A road block? Heavy MG and sniper fire began. MG reached the tracks. The armor ½" or 3/8" held. I remember one mummy sleeping bay, feathers shredded. In a matter of minutes the squad leader and assistant were killed. The squad leader died instantaneously – an 8 mm under the nose. The assistant was hit laterally through both lungs.

We started moving. Near the entrance to town was a street lower to my left. Below was a SP waiting to put me up an exhaust tube. It was not manner. I had the 50 pointed to the left flank. Out of nowhere, two Germans made a break for a house. (Where did they come from?). They entered the area of impact of the 50, I toughed of a couple of bursts, bricks, dust, flesh, death. (Several times in the next month, soldiers would make a break and run). So often we hadn't even seen them or were aware of their being. Movement kills!

The building on the right after we got into town was a telephone exchange. The lower floor was solid glass batteries for power. I broke a couple. We, the squad, dismounted and started clearing down the street. Me eyes caught movement – I turned – here running towards us was a GI (his fatigue jacket hood was flopping) hit by WP. Where? He looked ghostly! A couple helped, but?

We held the town for the night. We, the squad, were in a lumber yard. I was not the squad leader. From private to S/Sgt in minutes. What a price for promotion!

The history alludes to several intense firefights the next day? I "come to" on a road out of town. A slight hill was to our left front and we received MG and sniper fire. Artillery and all gone. Very poor tactics for the Germans. Yes. Excellent observation and coverage, but no way out if enemy has superior support.

Another squad leader and I crossed over to a group of houses. We were on the second floor and I peered out a window and jumped back. The casing disappeared. A sniper and I had met eye-to-eye. Seconds later the sniper makes a run for it. I let off one round (carbine) and hit him in the left hip or thigh and down he goes and carbine "stovepipes." I cleared, but the sniper had crawled 15-20 feet and was closing behind a barn. I raked the barn for several feet or so – 12 inches high.

(I must interject here out of pure obligation. If any one involved ever reads the following, please contact me. I believe it was in this area that I found a KIA of the 4th Armored. He was lying face up and had been hit in the heart. Dead – no pain. His dog tags read: ROY HICKOCK (SP), NEW JERSEY).

GERMUNDEN: We spread out in an attack in an open, flat field. City about 1000 m ahead. P 47's flew over at several hundred feet with 50's roaring and then dropped 250 pounders on the far side of the river. Made it. Just before dark the platoon leader takes me and a kid named Anderson for a look at blown bridge. I tied a large rope around my waist and Anderson goes down. No problem – no nothing until we're walking back to the buildings. A German MG "wakes up" and burrup. Tracers are about two feet to my left and knee high. The Lt. and Anderson gone – I'm dragging the rope. I drop the rope, jump over the bullet stream. Not a scratch. Why the dumb SOB didn't just free traverse???

We cross the river the next morning in rubber boats. Once again, a sleeper German MGunner. A railroad bridge had one box car with sand bags at the door on the bridge. Another damn fool! Sure excellent field of fire, but no way out. He opened up on the last boat – out tank swung – boom – gone. I heard one WIA.

CLEARED TOWN: Some KIA's and WIA's. Some POW's for an hour or so. Elements of 3ID came in from the north. Sleep in fairly firm hotel – feather-tick mattresses.

The next morning on the move again. A road block a few miles out. The road curved in the north. At the junction was a battery of 105's. What caliber or mm were the standard German howitzers? A heavy area of trees surrounded the road before clearing. As I looked north out of the edge, I saw movement. Tanks jockeying for position. Tanks behind parked alongside farm house and barns. I believe two and one tank retriever – ours captured 4th AD tanks. I called back and got two M-18's (Don't know where they came from.) The Lieutenant looked the situation over – got back in the m-18's – up – bang – back – other up – bang – twice and two burning tanks. Beautiful! How many lives did I save by eliminating a possible flanking of our column on the way to Hammelburg? I gave away most of our cigarettes and tobacco. Little

compensation for the hundreds of smiling, happy, free faces – man’s inhumanity to man.

Go, go, go. Little Sleep. KIA’s and WIA’s and miles.

BADKISSINGEN: An open city. Unique in any war. The battalion history mentions the name only. A large hospital was in the city – wounded of both sides – so a kilometer? Ring was extended around the city to insure no more casualties and damage.

Somewhere during the continual movement through there was another “movement” episode. On the Autobahn during a halt, two Germans made a run for an overpass. Where they came from and why and where they were going is unknown. They didn’t make it. I had the 50 centered on the pedestrian overpass and when they reached the spot – a burst. Concrete and ricochets spattered some of ours, but I don’t believe any WIA’s.

RASCH: Name means nothing. Here tankers in trouble. Our platoon approached through a lumber yard. Our tanks opened up and pinned me down in a slight depression. Covered with saw dust! The platoon leader laughing at the sight. Sent a kid. I got a noon ahead – I was tired – bang, bang, bang. A carbine. Kid said two words: “Hit, leg!” He died on a kitchen table. Tanker lieutenant playing infantry. Happens in every war.

DORLBACK: We had been above this town on the day before. I took a couple down the hill and remember the large, white two-story house that the engineers had occupied that night.

We retook the town the next morning. Some prisoners. A tank took a shot – HE – at some running up a ravine. Later on a short patrol, I got hit in the face with a piece of stomach or lung, hanging on a tree; a direct hit. Here is where two of our “heroes” killed two POW’s. Used the POW’s own pistols – 7.76mm and wanted to see if it would kill. I made the cheap shit SOB’s burn the two.

Also inspected the house where the engineers had been the night before. Dumb shits – all in one house. M-1’s were all over the place. I checked the KIA – a T/Sgt? – he had been shot under the left arm.

PYRBAUM: Get here about an hour before sunset. Plowed field to our front. One big house and barn separated a short distance from the main house. Platoon leader, Lt. Lingle, says “Let’s go in Chris.” So, we go. One tank – the lieutenant who had shot the new filler – volunteered to cover. I put men in the barn and second story as lookouts. To our right is a large wood pile. One of the guys hollers down – “Company!”

Two Germans are coming down a draw to the woodpile. An AM64U and Panzerfaust. After the tank, they come around in front of the pile, the tank turret whirs – the Germans pull back and start to run back up the ravine. I shoot and one drops. There must have been more behind the woodpile as we got orders to pull back and the tank got hit in the track and was disabled. (Another officer went out after we returned and fired all the tank ammo into the town.) The tank lieutenant was hit seriously in the leg and ankle. I never saw him again. On the way back I was the last man – I hear a

meowing sound. Plop, rumble, rumble, and what, something kicks me in the right ankle. A dud!

BEILNGRIES: (My error. After all these years it was the town below.)

PAULUSHOFFEN: A town on a hill. Roadblock kept other company out. We were on a flat area with a blown bridge down on the small river. Luckily, there was little support by artillery or mortars because we were exposed. Nothing for an hour or so. I took the squad and with my volunteer CO – a Canadian Flight Lieutenant who was liberated at Hammelburg, we crossed. Still no orders. It was 15-1600. Finally, the Canadian CO says, "Let's go!" We go! My squad only! Once again, pure luck!

I supposed I could have been court martialed, but I'm sure the Canadian CO would have taken the blame. We made it. One thousand yards or so at a run with dust and ricochets flying. The dumb Krauts had placed their MG's on the hill so all MG was plunging fire. All missed. One KIA in the company – a lieutenant – I'll bet he was walking when hit.

A Kraut stood up only paces away as I'm gasping for breath – bang, bang – down he goes. The Canadian with an M-1. (He later changed for an M-3 grease gun – didn't like the carbine. Too heavy.) Another Kraut makes a break. I got him. Went up – turned him over – and got the Sauer 7.65 for the Canadian. (The Canadian had been hit in the cheek by SS troops parachuting down after his plane was hit. He just wanted to get even – all Germans were SS. Not so.) CLARIFICATION: The Canadian had been hit in the cheek with a rifle butt from an SS soldier. Some disqualification!

The CO and rest of company arrived. Up a hill we go. A large house – three stories and barn. We're looking down and two men stop at a window of the house below. Now dust or darker. Could have hit them with a burst – not sure – so they lived? Were Krauts? We clear and plan to stay. Orders to pull back. We do. Hill strafed in early AM and TOT at dawn. We come back to fire and ????? – no enemy.

Shortly after dawn the next morning we came back to town and moved out. I'm clearing a house with a barn attached. Like a T. Two of us go in the front – two on either side of the barn. I'm nearly to the barn door and I hear screams and shots. Open! Here is the Canadian – two hysterical women and two dead Krauts. He shot both. Rank be damned! I blew my top and cussed him up and down either side. He just smiled. We can't have this in any war. Why surrender to get killed? I think in all, he killed 9 POW's. He out-ranked our CO, Capt. Jack Dewitt – time in grade – 1 Feb 45 – so the Battalion CO came (finally) and ordered him into a Jeep and out.

TOWN?: Town was in a valley. As we approached, some traffic tried to get out on the other side. One civilian car made it. I tried with the 50 to lead and probably came close, but the car got up and out!

TOWN?: A road block. Near the end of the war. Two young women in the house were scared shitless. "Have you eggs and milk?" Yes, they fixed them. We had been careless. Ahem. "Good morning soldiers!" A Wehrmacht Hauptman in full uniform stood in the doorway. "I'd like to surrender!" He spoke excellent English. "Have a cigarette, Sr." I took his Luger – ejected the chambered round and ejected the

rounds from the magazine. I handed it back to him. He knew then we could trust each other.

I have never killed for the joy of killing, except in civilian life with prairie dog shooting. I will not apologize for killing. A perfect shot is always satisfying. I like me best!

How many lives did I save by killing? How did this killing contribute to an end?

I'll close with a redundant comment: One I have made time and time again in critiquing active and reserve troops – when a man is asked to fall in or mount up to possibly go to his death, he at least deserves to know the town and place or area of where he's going. Not the big picture of the armies and corps, but the big picture of the squad section, platoon and company. It's big to them.

At the squad and platoon level as a S/Sgt and 2LT, I never lost a man; KIA or WIA that wasn't with in 50 feet of me when hit.

It is now the 4th of September, 2003. I started saving, recording, checking, etc., all the pertinent information for my book in the early 1980's. I retired in 1985 and started work on this book that year.

It was fun and also a challenge to insure authenticity and the truth. And, if you try your luck, don't quit once you've started (you're at the end here anyway). It can be done... writing your own book. The only place I feel that I quit was in the final editing of this book. I and friends would read through it time and time again for corrections. We'd run a final print and find more. There has to be something to an old proverb that is one looks long enough it will disappear.

I alluded to valor recognition several times throughout this book. I believe the reader can sense my bitterness. Too many recipients weren't really deserving. In most cases the awards were from propinquity, rank, "scratching rank," or in today's wording; politically correct.

Our war in Iraq codified my bitterness into the comments under the "Silver Star Medal." A medal, I feel, I earned several times in WWII. But, since I was an infantry replacement in both WWII and Korea, my status was always looked upon as temporary in the eyes of the receiving unit.

After I read how some of the recent awards were received, I actually became nauseated at times. For example: (1) A B-1 bomber (coincidentally, from my local base) drops its munitions on a house supposedly harboring top Iraqi leaders – the Air Medal, another B-1 with the same mission, but no one of importance in the house – just a mission, and (2) a National Guard Maintenance Company gets lost in a night convoy and becomes surrounded and attacked; there are 11 KIA's, many POW's and some injured in vehicular accidents (as usual, the CO is not injured) – Medals: A Silver Star for firing his rifle, Bronze Stars for many, Purple Hears for those wounded (which is correct), but for one service woman's continual lionizing, there is talk of top medals, a homecoming fit for a war winner.

I mailed the above Silver Star article to my WWII CO. He, like all of us, is now in his twilight years. His recollection of the events I listed was not an exact correlation

with mine. Time can make a hazy change of the fact.

He also, true to his military demeanor, "followed the book" on my request. The "book" quotes two affidavits are needed for consideration. True, but how?!

I wrote him back following receipt of his letter in which he stated he couldn't help me, but would if I could furnish names, etc. (After fifty plus years, I don't know if this is possible; not many of us alive). I started the letter as follows: " ONE MORE TIME." Sixty years Jack, in our courting days while at a dance with a good big band, we would shout and request, "One More Time!"

In essence what I wrote to him was that as an O7 (Brigadier General) his word should be above question. He does not need any affidavits. His honesty and integrity are above question. Even as an O4 (Major), I'll stand up to the President of the US (Command-in-Chief) when I'm right.

I have no hard feelings about this inability to find anyone alive to substantiate the circumstances. I still feel that facts speak for themselves. I still love and respect the man – After all, I am alive today because I received free rein to do my soldiering.

Since all veterans of all wars or eras are lumped under the same title, a one-on-one, contract with the government specific service is the answer. A contract which would read: On enlistment or draft, I offer you my service etc., etc. and for this you will offer me training, schooling, the right to compete for rank, etc. If I am injured, I will receive care. At the end of the tour – war, I am guaranteed rights? Care? Whatever, so help me God. Such a contract would insure that both parties would receive the benefits of the contract until the demise of the service person.

GLOSSARY

- AA or AAA Anti-Aircraft or Anti-Aircraft Artillery
- AP Armor Piercing
- AR.....Army Regulation
- AGCTArmy Ground Classification Test Score of 0-160 Possible IQ
- AGFArmy Ground Forces
- APC Armored Personnel Carrier
- AST..... Army Specialist Technician
- ASTPArmy Specialized Training Program Started
June 43 – March 44. Three Quarters. Plan was to train men for commissioned post-war occupation.
- BAR Browning Automatic Rifle
WWI Model has safety, semi-automatic & full, Later WWII models had safety, slow automatic & full automatic, slow = 350 rpm, full = 550 rpm.
- BATF – ATF..... Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms
- BOACBrach Officers Advanced Course
- BOBC..... Branch Officers Basic Course
BOBC on completion qualified graduate to rank of Major 04, BOAC qualified graduate to rank of General 010.
- BOQ..... Bachelor Officer Quarters
Married or not. A room in the Officer Barracks on Post.
- C & GSCommand & General Staff School
A top level course for Field Graduate Officers. Rank Major or above. The war college was at the same level. A prestigious selection.
- C3 & C4..... Types of new family of exotic explosives
- GCFChinese Communist Forces
- CIA Central Intelligence Agency
- CIB..... Combat Infantry Badge
Presented and earned after 30 days of enemy action.
- CIDCounter Intelligence Department
A unit within an Army group.
- CMTC.....Citizens Military Training Course
Started in the late 1920's and 1930's to train junior officers. A four years course titled Basic-Red-White-Blue. On completion graduate commissioned a 2Lt – Second Lieutenant.
- CO.....Commanding Officer
- CQ..... Charge of Quarters
An enlisted NCO who managed the company headquarters form retreat to reveille. His counterpart was the OD – Officer of the Day.

CS.....	An irritant disabling gas
	In the same class as CN – tear gas
CWS.....	Chemical Warfare Service
CAMP SHANKS.....	A hush-hush DOE in upper New York in WWII
COURT MARTIAL	Army Justice System
	Four Levels: Article 15 non-judicial, Summary, Special, General.
DD or DOD	Department of Defense
DP	Displaced Person
	A real problem at the end of WWII. Prisoners, slave labor.
EAD.....	Extended Active Duty
	Duty lasting over 30 days.
E1-9.....	The enlisted ranks, Private to Sergeant Major
ETA.....	Estimated Time of Arrival
ETO	European Theater of Operations
ENFIELD 1917	Rifle introduced during WWI
	Augmented the Springfield 03. In 30-06 caliber. Some in British 303.
EXO	See XO below
FA	Field Artillery or Frankfort Arsenal
FDC	Fire Direction Control or Center
FEC or FECOM.....	Far East Command
FF	Free French
	The Maquis. A guerrilla fighter in the French Underground during WWII.
	Tough, mean, no-quarter sub's.
FO.....	Forward Observer
G12345	General staff which supported the CO of Army Corps, or Division Level.
	1 = Administrative
	2 = Intelligence
	3 = Plans & Training
	4 = Service & Support
	5 = ? New
GI.....	Government Issue
GP TENT	General Purpose Tent
	A large tent – 15x 20, used in rear echelon for cover & weather protection.
HE.....	High Explosive. Mostly TNT
IG	Inspector General
	The officer or unit in the service which investigates all cases of violations of Army regulations, fraud, cruelty, favoritism, any, all forms of poor leadership, etc.
KIA.....	Killed in Action
KGB.....	Russian Secret Service. Equivalent to the FBI
KP	Kitchen Police

- Personnel assigned each day to assist in the mess hall in meal preparation etc.
Work either in the kitchen or in dining area – Dining Room Orderlies.
- M1 or M2 Designation for Rifle or MB ammunition.
1 = bullet weight of 173 grains
2 = bullet weight of 153 grains
All copper jacketed with lead core. Other types were tracers, armor piercing, and blanks.
- M3 A stamped parts 45 caliber machine gun
MAUSER MP Machine pistol in 9mm – 7.62 v. Chinese 45 cal.
Called Broom handles because of use of wood stock included
- MASH Mobil Army Surgical Hospital
MLR Main Line of Resistance
MOS Military Occupational Specialty
Job description for all of services duties. In WWII 745 was Infantryman v. 1542 was Platoon Leader. Today with computers the job code is 5 digits.
- MP Military Police
MUTA4 Multiple Unit Training Assembly
Started in 1960's – Units met eight hours on Saturday and Sunday. Received one point credit towards retirement and one day's pay for each four hour block.
Greatly increased quality of training.
- MORTAR In the USA we have three types of calibers:
60 mm, 81 mm, 4.2 inches. Most of the world has 61, 82, 120 – so they can shoot ours – not too accurately, but we can not shoot theirs.
- MASKED CLEARANCE Insuring that there is no obstacle in front of mortar shell arc
MAX ORDINANCE Highest point of mortar arc when fired
Low flying planes could be hit.
- MG34-40 German or Wehrmacht's two base machine gun.
34 was first – had cycle rate of 8-900 rounds per minute. The 40 – later and cheaper had a rate of 1200 rpm.
- NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NKF North Korean Forces
NSLI Standard life insurance policy in WWII - \$10,000 maximum
OD Olive Drab
Code for clothing colors in WWII. 33 was color of standard uniform, 43 color was color of field jackets, 51, a pretty deep green for officers uniforms. A few others colors, but numbers ???. Today work uniforms are mostly camouflage type for either wooded or desert use.
- ORC Organized Reserve Corps.
In effect from WWI to WWII. Now USAR.
- OSS Office of Strategic Services, WWII's equivalent to today's CIA
- PD52 Point Detonating Fuse

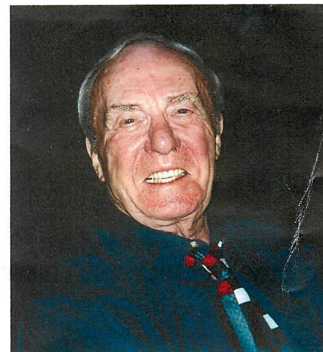
- On 60 & 81 mortars. Now time armed in flight. In WWII ready when cleared the mortar tube.
- PFC.....Private First Class
- POE..... Port of Embarkation – One leaves the U.S.
- POI..... Port of Imbarkation – One entering or returning to U.S.
- POW.....Prisoner of War
- The government needs to clarify the status of all POW's due the great differences in hardship endured. Time, area, captor's location, etc. Should all be considered.
- PT.....Physical Training
- PTSD.....Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Today's answer to WWI's "Shell shocked". WWII's "Battle Fatigue." Subject to extreme abuse due to fact that psychiatry is not a true science.
- QM.....Quartermaster
- RI..... Rock island – One of our oldest arsenals
- ROTC..... Recruit Offices Training Corps.
- SA.....Springfield Arsenal. Another old U.S. government arsenal
- SASE..... Self-Addressed-Stamped envelope
- SCHMEISSER MP40.....A German WWII 9mm sub-machine gun – fast cycle rate
- SDNAG..... South Dakota National Guard
- SGLI..... Serviceman's Group Life Insurance
- A group term policy of a maximum of \$100,000 – no cash value.
- SNELLEN..... Standard Form chart for eye measurement acuity
- Results stated always as 20/value. Normal vision is 20/20. 20/200 or greater is base for degrees of blindness.
- SPAM.....A WWII processed canned meat
- Contents could be fixed to be quite palatable if fat drained off.
- SOP.....Standard Operating Procedure
- The way things are done in the military – or should be. Regulations Area Guide.
- SPRINGFIELD.....Base rifle in WWI & early WWII
- 30-06 caliber. Extremely accurate, WWII caused some modification and metallurgical changes.
- SR.....Special Regulations
- SS.....Schutzstaffel, German special troops in WWII
- The SS was meant to be the blonde, Nordic, "supreme race" types.
- SA..... Sturmangeilungen, Hitler's first body guard group
- First set of bodyguards for Hitler, mostly street thugs and brawlers. The SS superseded the SA in 1935. German Word was Schutzstaffel for "Protection Squad." The Waffen SS meant the Weapons Force. After 1943 men were recruited by drafting into the units.
- SURETE..... The French equivalent of our FBI
- TDY.....Temporary Duty

- Duty assigned for a period of time to service personnel other than their main post of base assignment.
- TNTTri-Nitro-Toulene
An old and established explosive. Oily to touch, but quite stable.
- TO&ETable of Organization * Equipment
The control chart of bible for all units in the services. Determine number of personnel, type, duties, v. what is issued to make the unit workable.
- TRTransportation Request
All shipments or personnel and/or equipment require a ticket to load. Troop trains in WWII would have thousands of tickets.
- USA United States of America or Army
USAAF..... United States Army Air Force
USAF..... United States Air Force
In late WWII the Air Force gained a separate command.
- VA.....Veterans Administration
VAMC..... Veterans Administration Medical Center
VIP..... Very Important Person
VOCO.....Verbal Orders Commanding Officer
An excellent example of superior leadership. A granted leave of three day maximum by a commanding officer to a unit. No loss of regular leave (30 days/year) usually had a maximum of 50 mile radius from post or base.
- WAC.....Women’s Army Corps.
WAACWomen’s Auxiliary Army Corps.
WASWechsler Adult Scale
A recognized intelligence test measurement.
- WIA Wounded In Action
WP White Phosphorous
XO or EXO..... Executive officer
Second in command of a unit. Usually handled administrative duties.
- ZI..... Zone of Interior, USA
ZULUBase of all time centered at 0 degrees latitude in Greenwich, England, GMT.

ADDENDUM



*In Celebration of the Life of
+ Keith Christensen +
February 4, 2011 – 11:00 a.m.
South Canyon Lutheran Church
Rapid City, South Dakota*



September 20, 1921 – January 28, 2011

It is with extreme sadness to lose my best friend, father figure, surrogate father to my children, and a man who stood for honesty, Americanism, and blessed friendship.

I was happy, however, to have been requested by Keith in his final days to promise to speak at his "Celebration of Life." I was honored to so. The celebration was extremely well-attended which certainly spoke of his life relationships. Many hours after the service people continued to gather at the church to share stories about how this man intervened in their lives to help them get through some of life's difficulties, sharing stories of experiences of how this man ALWAYS had a comment on how to better meet and overcome these life struggles.

The irony in Keith's passing is that he passed quietly and without pain at the VA located in Sturgis SD. My son (a WWII buff) and I visited Keith. On our last visit, and because Keith was never able to receive the Silver Star mainly because those above him who should/could have seen this through were too old to remember his actions in WWII, died, or were diagnosed with Alzheimer's.

To this end, I procured a genuine Silver Star, ribbon and lapel pins and presented them to him with my sad son to my side. His last and only words with eyes upon me, were *"Thank's son!"*. That was tough.

We will miss your daily unannounced knocks at the front door. You always bringing your famous ginger cookies, apple cobblers, and mint candies. And, after an hour or two over cups of freshly brewed coffee, always leaving with the words: *"James, now don't eat all these but share them with your family!"*

Silver Star Medal

Criteria: Awarded for gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States not justifying a higher award. It may be awarded to any person who, while serving in any capacity with the U.S Armed Forces, distinguishes him or herself by extraordinary heroism involving one of the following actions: in action against an enemy of the United States; while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party. The required gallantry, while of a lesser degree than that required for award of the Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross or Air Force Cross, must nevertheless have been performed with marked distinction. Soldiers who received a citation for gallantry in action during World War I may apply to have the citation converted to the Silver Star Medal. The Silver Star Medal is the third highest military decoration that can be awarded to a member of the United States Armed Forces.

Attachments: Bronze Oak Leaf Device, Silver Oak Leaf Device.



May God bless your sweet and honest soul. Rest in eternal peace for you fought for peace your entire life!

Jim "Whiz" White
Rapid City South Dakota

PHONETIC ALPHABET

PRE – 1945

Able
Baker
Charlie
Dog
Easy
Fox
George
How
Item
Jig
King
Love
Mike
Nan
Oboe
Peter
Queen
Roger
Sugar
Tare
Uncle
Victor
William
X-Ray
Yoke
Zebra

POST – 1945 (NATO)

Alpha
Bravo
Charlie
Delta
Echo
Foxtrot
Golf
Hotel
India
Juliet
Kilo
Lima
Mike
November
Oscar
Papa
Quebec
Romeo
Sierra
Tango
Uniform
Victor
Whiskey
X-Ray
Yankee
Zulu