



602 ENGINEER CAMOUFLAGE BATTALION  
UNITED STATES ARMY

December 10, 2022



In marking my own 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, I am posting the complete *1993 History of the 602<sup>nd</sup> Engineer Camouflage Battalion* of the United States Army, in which my late father, Captain Martin J. Damgaard was both S-2 and S-3. He retired a Lieutenant Colonel (res) and devoted his post WWII career to the Army (Corps of Engineers and Army Materiel Command)—he often said to me, “never refer to it as the Engineer Corps because it is the difference between a bottle of beer and a beer bottle.” He retired in 1973 and was inducted into the

Army in November 1941. He was proud of his service and throughout my upbringing only ever spoke with fondness and respect for his fellow soldiers. Growing up, I knew two of his fellow “camoufleurs”, John Hopkins and Anthony Mondello. Mr. Hopkins attended dad’s funeral at the National Cemetery in Bushnell, Florida in 1994. The battalion itself disbanded after the war, and upon his return from Europe and moving into reserve status, my father was employed still by the Army as a civil servant engineer, retiring as a GS-15.

I was proud of my father, and am glad to have found in his papers, this document which was compiled for a battalion reunion. The Latin phrase *Ingenium Superat Vires* translates to English as “genius overcomes strength” but I think my dad referred to it as “moxie over muscle.” This was the creed of the work of camouflage. Dad authored the original and official history of the battalion in 1946, which is also posted on my website, [drneildamgaard.com](http://drneildamgaard.com). These two documents join my own book *Defiance at Cairo* which tells my parents’ story and includes many of dad’s wartime letters to mom, completing a three-work coverage of the 602<sup>nd</sup>. I hope my dad would have approved. My wish is to honor him and give notice of the faithful and resourceful service which he and his fellow engineers rendered to our country in the greatest national crisis of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although he would have been quick to exhort me “don’t toot your own horn,” I hope this serves as one humble gesture to illustrate the Fifth Commandment albeit posthumously.

Rev. Dr. Neil C. Damgaard, ThM, DMin

Roanoke, Virginia

# THE '602"



**50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

**AUGUST 7, 1993**

**STEVENS POINT, WISCONSIN**

**BEST WESTERN ROYALE**

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# MEMORIAL LIST

Dean Acker	Elwin D. Gould	William L. Mitchum
Clayton Anderson	Edwin Hakkinen	Raymond G. Mosher
Oscar Anderson	Cecil H. Hall	Albert J. Navickas
Roy Anglada	John L. Haas, Jr.	Joseph C. Nejd
Earl Ayotte	Raymond J. Hasse	Clement J. O'Neill
Alfred B. Belanger	Theodore Hebert	Joseph B. O'Neill
Emmett Bilinski	William R. Hemmila	Carl E. Peterson
Howard Boltz	John Heroux	Harold J. Pickard
James Borro	Norman Hogan	Grant H. Plett
Richard Brady	Robert Huffman	Alexander Prusi
Doug Breuning	Kenneth Hutchens	Theodore Racine
Herbert Bublitz	Jesse J. Jensen	Terence P. Reichert
Donald H. Buffington	Russell Jensen	Steve F. Romania
Albert T. Carpenter	Elmer A. Kaestner	Robert W. Ryan
George Carr	Donald Karis	Maurice J. Saari
Lamar Coffin	Robert E. Kearney	Paul Salmi
Cletus Coshenet	Robert J. Kelly	Fred S. Selsor
Dominic Cuozzo	Charles Kolar	William Sherman
Carl Czaplinski	Jacques R. Koppen	Arnold Skorzewski
H. Allan Davis	Loren M. Kurtz	Donald F. Snider
Robert Diamond	John D. LaCosse	Robert J. Sowle
LaVern Dickman	Sterling LaFond	Frank Spose
William T. Doran	Leo LaPointe	Sidney Steele
Elvin Drehmel	Raymond LaPorte	Edward A. Sulma
Clayton H. Ellis	Edward T. LaTour	Joseph Tappy
Donald L. Erickson	Taisto E. Maki	Eugene Taylor
Donald Evanson	Martin Maata	Kent Tiffany
Dean R. Flick	Arthur L. Markle	Joseph M. Thompson
William Stanton Forbes	James A. McIntyre	James Thornton
Bryce E. Fraser	Donald J. McMahan	Harold R. Todd
Mario Frassetto	Clarence Menor	Richard L. Tomczak
John P. Fritsch, Jr.	Sylvester Michalko	Leonard Trepanier
Evan Garrison	Casimer H. Mikos	Charles Updegrove
Howard Giesler	John Mills	Joseph D. Violante
Alfred Gobert	Robert Miltonberger	Leonard J. Welenc
William Goldberg	Charles Minor	William J. Winkka

Above is 1992 List.

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To be added to 1993 List:

Harlan Braun  
Norman Dahl  
Joseph Simons

## A LITTLE BACKGROUND

In addition to the letters from the individuals, we include two general accounts, one, "CAMOUFLAGE - About the '602'", and the other, Operational History. There is some overlap in these two accounts, being written at different times and for different purposes, the first being directed more to the overall concept of camouflage, plus the identity of the '602', and the second, to the detailed make-up and operation of the unit.

1943, in Camp Warner, North Carolina, near the city of Durham, where we were stationed for about a year, until January, 1944.

The 602 was born in camouflage, grew up in camouflage, and graduated in camouflage. Now, 45 years later, someone asks, "What is camouflage?" That is a very interesting question and it gives the 602 a chance to tell about itself.

Camouflage is an old and ancient practice. No one wants to say just where and when it started.

Likewise no one knows where the name came from, for sure, although everybody believes it is derived from the French. There are various word roots in French that indicate the source of the meaning of the word, but even with that information it has not been officially established how the specific form of the word came about.

There are two main aspects of camouflage - hiding and deceiving. The practice is used of course most in war where it is wanted that the enemy not know where you are or what you're doing.

In the hiding phase, it is simply a matter of making yourself invisible, and in deception it is a matter of making the enemy believe that you are somebody else, or something else, or that a wholly different thing is happening.

Among the most prominent events involving camouflage are the two World War campaigns in Italy. In the case of the first, it was deception, and with the second it was hiding.

The Trojan story is well known - in the Trojan War of about 1100 B.C., the Greeks were attacking the city of Troy, which was walled by a wall, without success, and they thought up the idea of the wooden horse in which a number of men were concealed, and it was a gift to the city who received it as a peace offering. They hid it into the enclosing wall, and once it was in there, the men came out and opened the gates in the wall and let the enemy

## CAMOUFLAGE

### About the "602"

The "602," officially known as the 602 Engineers Camouflage Battalion, was formed in January-February, 1943, in Camp Butner, North Carolina, near the city of Durham, where we were stationed for about a year, until January, 1944.

The 602 was born in camouflage, grew up in camouflage, and graduated in camouflage. Now, 40 years later, someone asks, "What is camouflage?" That is a very interesting question and it gives the 602 a chance to tell about itself.

Camouflage is an old and ancient practice. No one wants to say just where and when it started.

Likewise no one knows where the name came from, for sure, although everybody believes it is derived from the French. There are various stem words in French that indicate the source of the meaning of the word, but even with that information it has not been actually established how the specific form of the word came about.

There are two main aspects of camouflage - hiding and deceiving. The practice is used of course most in war where it is desired that the enemy not know where you are or what you're doing. In the hiding phase, it is simply a matter of making yourself invisible, and in deception it is a matter of making the enemy believe that you are somebody else, or something else, or that an entirely different thing is happening.

Among the oldest prominent events involving camouflage are the Trojan Horse and Hannibal's campaign in Italy. In the case of the Trojan Horse it was deception, and with Hannibal it was hiding.

The Trojan Horse is well known - in the Trojan War of about 1200 B.C., the Greeks were attacking the city of Troy, which was surrounded by a wall, without success, and they thought up the idea of the wooden horse in which a number of men were concealed, and gave it as a gift to the city who received it on good terms. They took it into the enclosing wall, and once it was in there, the men jumped out and opened the gates in the wall and let the enemy

soldiers in.

Hannibal was involved in a long series of military campaigns in Italy, around 200 B.C. He had elephants among his facilities, and in marching into Italy, in crossing the Alps, he used white sheets to cover the elephants to make them blend in with the snow, or hide them, and thus keep his movements secret.

Such acts continued of course throughout the years, and in modern times, another incident is of particular interest - in the American Civil War, a southern general set up logs in his camp to appear as a cannon. The northern troops saw them and estimated the great "strength" of their artillery, and decided not to attack them.

All of these were incidents of camouflage, although not known by that name. It is believed the word came into being in the first World War. During and since that time, the practice has grown into quite a science and many of its phases were highly developed and refined, but it is believed that it did not reach great heights until the second World War when many of the techniques and uses were highly developed (which the 602 is very proud of!!!).

After finishing basic training, the 602, as well as other camouflage battalions, were given special camouflage training and field work, to prepare them for the main duties of instruction and inspection.

A part of the camouflage training had to do with nets, which were used for many different purposes, principally for covering and hiding. One of the most well-known of the nets was the "Flat Top" which was a large fish net of probably 40 by 50 feet, having squares of about two inches on edge, into which garlands were woven. These flat tops were used most often over the kitchen, vehicles, ammunition dumps, etc. In flat tops, the garlands were usually put in in a random pattern, merely breaking up the shape of the things under it.

In other instances that nets would have different shapes and patterns of garlands. For example, a net may be put in vertical position, and the garlands placed in specific patterns to represent trees, and other forms, and for this reason, garlands or selected colors were used, most commonly black, olive drab and grey.

Among the specific events that the 602 was involved in, was trip of a part of the battalion from our own station at Camp Butner, to Camp Pickett in Virginia, to work with the 45th Division. No one knew what the direct program was, but later events showed that the 45th Division was involved in an invasion in the Mediterranean. Our work involved deceptive painting and interruption of outline of vehicles and other equipment, and other techniques to render the mission less conspicuous.

After completing our training in the U.S., the 602 went to England and spent about six months there, arriving about the middle of January 1944, with some of the battalion landing on the continent on D-Day, and the remainder going over in July of that year.

In England our principal occupation was to conduct classes and demonstrations, for the American troops, at the stations where they were located. The classes included lectures, demonstrations of handling vehicles and equipment according to the terrain, and relative to buildings; also designing nets for different purposes, as well as painting, including coloring, outline disruption, etc. The battalion also provided materials to the troops, including charts, terrain maps, physical models, and other training aids.

The battalion was also occupied in seeing to it that the troops - the American troops - obtained necessary materials for their camouflage activities. These efforts included facilitating the movements of nets, garlands, pain, etc., or in other words the logistics of providing the materials to the troops.

A big instance of deception was performed in England on the Channel coast, near the city of Weymouth. At this location there



was a testing area where the U.S. troops had put up models of a German installation, and the Allied Naval forces off shore bombarded them, to test the effectiveness of the bombardment, for use in actual activity. After each bombardment, the installation was re-built, and then it was bombarded again. At a later time, the 602 was called down to that location and our objective was to put up dummy or phony installations, instead of the real installations. The real installations in some instances included pillboxes having concrete walls four feet thick, but the dummy installations were made of sticks and burlap. We were kept in the dark as to the purpose of this venture, but as it turned out, it was getting near D-Day, and this actual testing operation was to be terminated, but in order to confuse the enemy it was made to appear that the testing was continuing.

As a general routine the Germans (and Allies as well) sent over flights during the night and took pictures by infrared photography. In this case, if no further activity was done in the testing grounds the Germans would know that from the pictures, and that of course was the reason for our activity in putting up dummy installations, to make it appear that the testing was continuing.

The activities of the 602 progressed to the point of actually making the supplies. This occurred in England to an extent, but reached great proportions on the continent, and in the field in actual wartime activities in the face of the enemy.

On the continent, the 602 actually set up "factories" or production departments, for turning out materials for use in camouflage operations. We set up physical equipment, including cutting machines, and dipping tanks in which the garlands, or garland material, were dipped for painting them. Sheets of burlap of about 42 inch width were obtained, and these were cut into strips of about 2 inches wide to make the garlands. About 700,000 such garlands were made by our own small unit. The organization also obtained great quantities of paint for the troops.

Among the many activities on the continent we were involved in, was pattern-painting tanks and other vehicles, with the typical camouflage points of black, olive drab, and grey. Irregular patterns were utilized to render them less conspicuous and unidentifiable. This program went on for a number of weeks and the number of vehicles that were thus painted by our own battalion numbered in the thousands.

The 602 was active in slack times as well as the busy, reaching Luxembourg just before the Bulge. An installation there involved a net over a parking lot half as big as a football field. At one side was a sheer wall (a stone mountain) with spires rising up, and the net was hung at one side on those spires and at the other side on light posts at the curb of the street. What happened to that installation? The Bulge then broke loose, and after we drove the enemy back out of the area, it was nowhere to be seen.

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It was a great experience - we learned camouflage, and we believe we added something to it, and when you ask, "Did you 602 really win the war?" .... that is a big question, but we certainly did a big part.

Paul Gallagher

February 1985

## OPERATIONAL HISTORY

### EDITOR'S NOTE

The following is a synopsis of a rather complete history of the 602, written by Martin J. Damgaard. Damgaard was a professional army man, with both the thoroughness of his own character, and the spirit of the army. He had the advantage of having access to the details, and then wrote this history for the benefit of the 602 men. This history was written some time ago, not long after World War II ended.

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The organization was officially known as 602nd Army Engineer Camouflage Battalion.

It was organized on January 28, 1943 at Camp Butner, N.C. and the personnel of the organization were taken from Selective Service.

The Battalion set sail in early January 1944 on the Mauretania, and 12 days after leaving New York, arrived at Liverpool, England on January 19, 1944. The Battalion then went to Camp Foxley, in Herefordshire on the same day. The Battalion became operational immediately upon establishing itself in the ETO. The functions of the Battalion were instruction, camouflage inspections, construction of camouflage installations, manufacture of camouflage material, and experimental work to solve unusual problems of concealment.

The Battalion was made up of a Headquarters Company, and four letter companies, Companies, A, B, C, D.

The Battalion was small relative to most other units, and in operation, a letter company was assigned to a Corps, and one Platoon of the supported a division in that Corps.

In our organization a line platoon of a letter company consisted of 11 men and one officer and one platoon, as noted, was attached to a division. The period of January 19 to February 14, in 1944, was spent in preparation, producing charts, terrain maps, models, and other training aids.

In January of 1944, the Battalion was attached to the VIII Corps. In the period of February 15 to June 3, a total of 440 Camouflage Refresher Courses were conducted by units of the Bat-

talion. The Battalion conducted classes for instructing the personnel of the unit to which they were attached, such as division, regiment, battalion, etc. This instruction program included typically, methods for concealment for kitchens, camouflage discipline on the mess line, minimizing of smoke. When possible, demonstrations at an actual kitchen site were performed

Instructions were given in not only kitchen procedure, but in all other phases. These included for example, concealment of artillery guns, etc.

A great factor in the exercise of camouflage is deceit. For example gun emplacements, motor pools, must be placed at certain locations according to their function, but care must be taken not to give them away to the enemy. For example, at Folkstone and Dover, on the Channel Coast were AA gun pits and living quarters that had been vacated. To cure the problem, such spots were covered with nets, referred to as flat tops. These areas were previously known to the enemy, through photography, and it was now desired that they appear operational, and the nets were placed in such position to give that impression, deceiving the enemy.

In concealing of objects, and putting up deceiving installations, various items and techniques were used, including drapes, wire mesh and materials that are found locally, such as logs to imitate cannons.

The organization played a big part in the manufacture of materials used in camouflage. Particularly garlands for weaving in the nets were in great demand. These were made of burlap, and cut from large sheets, and in one spurt of effort in the program, bundled over 700,000 garlands in a period of two weeks.

The training course including making models for demonstrating to the school Three-dimensional terrain models were made, 6 feet square, in full color and fully textured on a base of burlap. Accessories for the map were fitted with hooks to facilitate their instant attachment to any part of the model. The accessories consisted of scaled pieces representing pyramidal tents, buildings, vehicles, artillery, armor and landing craft. Practical work in the field that followed these lectures showed the effects of a much better understanding of camouflage techniques.

A part of the Battalion really was introduced to hell fire and brimstone. The Third Platoon, Company C, landed on D-Day, June 6, 1944.

A platoon of Company D landed on June 11, and the remainder of Company D. landed on June 30. The remainder of the Battalion landed on D+33, or July 9, 1944.

The Battalion spread out with all of the American forces, from landing on Omaha and Utah Beaches, being attached to corresponding units of the combat troops. They were active throughout the whole campaign, continuing the same program, instructing, inspection of installations and manufacturing items for use in camouflage installations. The Battalion was deeply involved in the Battle of the Bulge.

[Editor's note: The incidents involved in the Battle of the Bulge are best told in the individual letters from the men.]

In the normal operation of the Battalion, the Battalion Headquarters would be positioned at various locations, and each of the companies would be at other locations. The following is a list of those locations of Battalion headquarters:

Camp Butner, N.C.  
Camp Kilmer, N.J.  
Camp Foxley, England  
Tyntesfield Camp, England  
Marshalling Area, England  
Osmandville, France  
St. Lo., France  
St. Aubin du Bois, France  
Bagnoles, France  
Blevy, France  
Meudon, France  
Huy, Belgium  
Verviers, Belgium  
Tirlemont, Belgium  
Mariweiler, Germany  
Oberdrees, Germany  
Bad Godesburg, Germany  
Wildungen, Germany  
Weimar, Germany  
Ulm, Germany  
Kronan, Germany (Heidelberg)

The following are the campaigns that the organization was involved in:

Normandy  
Northern France  
Rhineland  
Ardennes  
Central Europe

The following losses occurred in the Battalion:

Wounded	-11
Taken Prisoner	- 1

## CAMP BUTNER

The name "Butner" was ingrained in all of us. For the great majority of us of the 602, our only contact with the military was in Camp Butner, and Butner means to us an army camp.

However, after the war was over with, many of the camps were liquidated, or put to other uses.

An interesting thing occurred in connection with Camp Butner, though. It is now a separate town. See the following account concerning Butner.

When World War II started, Butner did not exist. Construction began on Camp Butner on June 15, 1942, on Grand County farmland seized from its owners by the federal government.

The camp would accommodate 40,000 U.S. Army troops, most from the 70th Light Infantry Division. The camp included a hospital to treat wounded troops and an army prisoner-of-war compound.

The army abandoned the post in 1945, leaving behind a federal, paid fire department to provide security for the old camp.

In 1947, the state purchased the camp for \$1. The old camp became the site of one of the state's largest mental institutions. The members of the fire department became city employees.

Some years later, state employees made the site provided housing and more institutions moved up on the old army base. As Butner became more of a town, the fire department members continued as law enforcement officers.

Today, Butner has 4,000 residents, and inmates at the mental institution number more than 1,500.

The institution includes John Umstead Hospital, two mental training centers, a state-run substance abuse center. The state has also the housing for residents and a number of facilities have located in Butner as well. Still, the state owns more than 70 percent of the town.

The town of Butner is unincorporated and there is no elected municipal government. John Umstead Hospital, a division of the state Department of Human Resources, functions as city hall.

Unincorporated provides water and sewage service and even collects taxes on city-owned property to private citizens.

The old fire department is now known as the Butner Department of Public Safety. All employees wear tan hats, trousers and police caps. The officers are not cops, but state employees of the Department of Crime Control and Public Safety.

Property taxes, 30 cents per \$100 valuation, are a great deal for residents and industry. In nearby Grandview, property taxes are 60 cents per \$100.

The grid of old Camp Butner still remains the town. The streets are laid out in a grid pattern with military precision and named and numbered with typical military lack of imagination.

Butner, N.C., is the Raleigh correspondent for Frederick's newspaper.

## Butner: Army base turned state town is unique in the United States

Town officials meet in a mental institution, all the firefighters double as police officers, half the residents sit behind bars and the entrances to the town are called gates one, two and three.

What movie is this?

It's no Hollywood quirk. Welcome to Butner.

"It's the only place like it in the country," said Graham Wilson of the state Department of Crime Control and Public Safety.

When World War II started, Butner did not exist.

Construction began on Camp Butner on June 15, 1942, on Granville County farmland seized from its owners by the federal government.

The camp would eventually house 40,000 U.S. Army troops, most from the old 78th Lightning Division. The camp included a hospital to treat wounded troops and an enemy prisoner of war compound.

The army abandoned the post in 1945, leaving behind a federally paid fire department to provide security for the old camp.

In 1947, the state purchased the camp for \$1. The old camp became the site of one of the state's largest mental institutions. The members of the fire department became state employees.

Butner grew.

State employees moved into state provided housing and more institutions opened up on the old army base. As Butner became more of a town, the fire department members doubled as law enforcement officers.

Today, Butner has 4,000 residents, and inmates at the various institutions number more than 3,000.

The institutions include John Umstead Hospital, two federal prisons training schools and a state run substance abuse center. The state has sold the housing to residents and a number of industries have located in Butner as well. Still, the state owns more than 70 percent of the town.

The town of Butner is unincorporated and there is no elected municipal government. John Umstead Hospital, a division of the state Department of Human Resources, functions as city hall.

Umstead provides water and sewage service and even sells lots of state owned property to private citizens.

The old fire department is now known as the Butner Department of Public Safety. All employees wear two hats, firefighter and police officer. The officers are not town, but state employees of the Department of Crime Control and Public Safety.

Property taxes, 20 cents per \$100 valuation, are a great deal for residents and industry. In nearby Creedmoor, property taxes are 80 cents per \$100.

The ghost of old Camp Butner still haunts the town. The streets are laid out in a grid pattern with military precision and named and numbered with typical military lack of imagination.

*Fetzer Mills Jr. is the Raleigh correspondent for Freedom Newspapers.*



## THE LETTERS

Here are the letters themselves.

We can enjoy the men's own words, and the way they lived the events - and remind us of the way we all got through the affair.

The letters are arranged alphabetically.

"C" Company Headquarters Platoon and one other line platoon in Waberg, Germany when the Germans started their march. We heard they were on the move toward us.

"C" Company 3 platoon was staying in a large house in Waberg. The house has a large garage on one side that we in the motor pool used to service and repair equipment. This garage had a hydraulic lift that we managed to get working. Just before the German march we had a 3/4 ton weapons carrier with a 40mm universal mounted on its hull. We were waiting for the parts. This truck could not be used until we got the parts and installed them. This was with just a jeep and a 2 1/2 ton supply truck.

When we got up this one morning, a 105 artillery outfit that was right behind us, had pulled out during the night, so we knew something was wrong. Two of our officers had a party the night before and were still in the bag the next morning so that left it up to Tech Sgt. Forbes. God bless him. He was Ken Zittler, jeep driver. Back to Battalion Headquarters for help. How we got through and back again, nobody knows, but we did. By the time the Germans had gone around us and committed the Helmsleyford error. This happened about 12 to 15 miles from us.

While Kenny had gone for help, I knew we were going to lose crack on the point, so I took a hammer to the carburetor, vibrator and all the valve stems which were of the rigid type. I stuck a cross bar through the radiator in a couple of places. The Germans didn't use that truck for a while.

I honestly believe if it had not been for St. Forbes and Kenny that the whole bunch of us would have been lost.

As this happened right at Christmas, a lot of the fellows left no packages they had received from home.

I don't know who made the decision to load out of the truck equipment and supplies rather than use it. I think it was a bad decision. Sgt. Forbes did not do this.

PAULIE AMEEN  
Co. "C"

As you all know, the "Battle of the Bulge" happened during the holiday season of 1944-1945.

"C" Company Headquarters Platoon and one other line platoon were in Waimes, Germany when the Germans started their march. We had heard they were on the move toward us.

"C" Company 2 platoon was staying in a large house in Waimes. This house had a large garage on one side that we in the motor pool used to service and repair equipment. This garage had a hydraulic hoist that we managed to get working. Just before the German march, we had a 3/4 ton weapons carrier with a thrown universal joint up on the hoist. We were waiting for the parts. This truck could not be used until we got the parts and installed them. This left us with just a jeep and a 2½ ton supply truck.

When we got up this one morning, a 105 artillery outfit that was right behind us, had pulled out during the night, so we knew something was wrong. Two of our officers had a party the night before and were still in the bag the next morning so that left it all up to Tech Sgt. Forbes. God Bless him. He sent Ken Zeitler, our jeep driver, back to Battalion Headquarters for help. How Kenny got through and back again, nobody knows, but he did. By this time, the Germans had gone around us and committed the Malmedy Massacre. This happened about 12 to 15 miles from us.

While Kenny had gone for help, I knew we were going to lose the truck on the hoist, so I took a hammer to the carburetor, distributor and all the valve stems which were of the rigid type. I also stuck a crow bar through the radiator in a couple of places, so the Germans didn't use that truck for awhile.

I honestly believe if it had not been for St. Forbes and Kenny Zeitler, the whole bunch of us would have been lost.

As this happened right at Christmas, a lot of the fellows left behind packages they had received from home.

I don't know who made the decision to load our 2½ ton truck with equipment and supplies rather than men, but I think it was a very bad decision. Sgt. Forbes did not do this.

BILL BUCKLEY  
COMPANY A

How many remember our departure from the USA aboard the Mauretania and our collision with the freighter as we left New York? We returned to port to have tons and tons of concrete poured into the hole in the bow---- good beginning!!! Then, our arrival in the Liverpool area, only to remain at sea because it was too foggy to enter the dock area.

Our LT. Cornelius was a large man, and as we entered the compartment of the local train, loaded with full field equipment, we had to push him in.

Then there was Camp Foxley near Hereford. The camp was to become a hospital and was not completed, so we heated it with oil drum heaters and with the damp weather, the concrete walls and floors were anything but warm.

I remember the early breakfast in the fog, feeling our way, post to post --- along with the British double summertime, which was two hours ahead of Greenwich time.

We boarded the LST at night with a bare minimum amount of light due to the blackout. We stayed in port two days because the tide was not right on the other side of the channel, so we had time to waste. Of course we found some supplies, such as tobacco plug. I think I raised the channel a couple inches by spitting. And the Vienna sausages..... I ate so many I can't stand them yet today.

Upon landing in France in the evening, we traveled only a short distance to bed down in a field and were told to dig in. Something was wrong, however, when we found everything slippery and discovered in the morning that we were in a cow pasture. The fresh cow manure was slippery as well as smelly. Worse still, we had been directed to the wrong area.

Company A then went to join the 3rd Army led by Gen. Patton. We were in the midst of the St. Lo engagement and were directly under the largest ever bombardment of a city.

After the fall of St. Lo, we were kept busy moving every couple days. We slept in pup tents until Sept. when it became too wet to sleep outdoors, so we took over abandoned houses.

BILL BUCKLEY  
Page Two

In early December 1944, we moved to a small city south of Nancy, France, where we established our headquarters. We were there when the Battle of the Bulge began. I don't know how well prepared the quartermaster was for snow warfare, but we, in the 3rd Army, scoured the countryside for any white material we could find. We traveled many miles in search of material and then had to find factories to sew the white capes, so we were very busy.

Since the General Headquarters did not want Gen. Patton near Berlin, Company A went south toward Nurenburg, Regensburg and a short distance into Austria.

I was washing my Jeep in the Danube river when a truck drove by with the men shouting "The German have surrendered". We immediately moved rearward and became the complete 602nd again.

CALVIN BITTERS  
COMPANY D  
UTAH BEACH

I was the 2 1/2 ton truck driver in Company D. We had only one such truck and it was in headquarters platoon. This truck and trailer carried the kitchen, tools and the blessed K-rations.

My worst experience was when the D-day Invasion started on June 6th. We were stationed in a camp near South Hampton, England, and on D-day morning they moved half of headquarters platoon, and half of the first platoon to the dock in South Hampton. We were loaded on a Liberty ship and moved out into the English Channel---we were on our way to France. The rest of the company would follow. We sat out there for about four days. We were attached to the 9th Armored Division. They had half-tracks and Jeeps on the ship with us. The only officer along with us was the 1st Lt. of the first platoon. His name was Lt. Raymond Teubner, others were Mess Sgt. Jim Borro, T. Sgt. Franklin Bennett and Supply Sgt. C.G. Lemley. Few of us knew anything about camouflaging because we were in Headquarters and hadn't had much field experience.

While we were on the Liberty ship, the Germans shelled us day and night. "WE DIDN'T GET MUCH SLEEP." I was standing near the anchor when it went down; it seemed like it took an hour. THE WATER WAS DEEP !!!!

On the fifth day we were loaded onto a landing craft. I was watching them swing my truck over the side. I thought sure it would fall in to the channel. Then came the crawl down the rope ladder to the landing craft. The first time the landing craft got close to the shore, the German shells were getting close to the boat and all the men took off for shore. There was only Lt. Teubner left to go on shore with me. The landing craft had to pull into shore three or four times before it was our turn to get off. There were half-tracks, Jeeps, 2 1/2 ton trucks from the 9th division before our truck. Every time the shells hit close to the boat they would pull out and into a different spot. When we left the landing craft we went through about 4 feet of water. It sure took a long time to get to shore because we were in the lowest gear we had, and all 6

wheels pulling. That sure felt good when we hit solid ground!!! I never did like water anyway!!!

The first night we slept on the beach; there was about an 8 or 10 foot wall along the breakwater. The next day we went over the wall. Since most of us didn't know anything about camouflaging, the 7th Corp. had us doing other things, they kept us busy. The rest of the company came about the end of June.

Another experience I had when the war ended, we moved to Ulm, Germany. We had our trucks parked in a large warehouse where there were LARGE KEGS OF WINE!! We would drink the wine instead of water. The more we drank the better it tasted. I lost a couple of days and I was sick for a week. To this day I can't drink wine.

The very best part of the war was landing back in the States at Boston on my daughter's second birthday, September 19th 1945.

FABIAN BRAULT

I was always the leader for getting everyone in trouble, but never got any extra stripes. Harlan Braun and I heard some music one evening, it was a dance and it was for the Colored boys, but we stayed until the end and had a great time. Of course we never drank.

It sure is great to see all you guys at the reunions. I hope we have a few left yet.

How are you anyway? Like most people from WWII, I'm getting old. Margie is still with me, thank God. She runs things, and is pretty as ever. Our family is scattered mostly to the west. We have several grandchildren. I have major health problems, but am keeping up the good fight.

Best to all 303 comrades. I'm sure sorry I'm not up to joining you for the 50th. It would be great to trade stories and have a few.

Peace and God bless!  
Jim

JIM DILLON

Greetings Paul,

After a couple of months I've found the courage to write you. You bring up a subject from the olden days, I presume by surrender, you mean our "heroic" rescue of all those arms from that tiny German village that I wandered into with the platoon near the end of the conflict in Germany. I recall now that I ordered the citizens to deliver any weapons they had to the 3/4 ton in the square. They were more frightened than we were, I suppose, so they did as directed. One German soldier and the towns people carried all types of arms pistols, rifles, shotguns, etc. to the truck. Quite a haul! Wonder someone didn't take a pot shot at us. Somehow we got back to the rest of the U.S. Army with our prizes that night. I've never told this story to anyone since. I'm just lucky to be alive. Someone must be talking now.

How are you anyway? Like most people from WWII, I'm getting older. Margie is still with me, thank God. She runs things, and is as pretty as ever. Our family is scattered mostly to the west. We do have several grandchildren. I have major health problems, but am keeping up the good fight.

Best to all 602 comrades. I'm sure sorry I'm not up to joining all of you for the 50th. It would be great to trade stories and have a few.

Peace and God bless!

Jim



DARWIN FERRIS  
COMPANY C

The following is one of the experiences I most remember during my tour with the army from 2/24/43 to 11/03/45. This is written by memory only, so there is liable to be many mistakes in dates, names and places. It takes place sometime in September, 1944.

During General Patton Spearhead to Paris and beyond (before he ran out of gas).

We were bivouacked outside of a small town, possibly Vire, I believe. Our next move was near a small town called Igny, just outside of Paris.

At that time, I was in Headquarters platoon, and I am not sure how many of the four line platoons were with us, but I am almost sure all four were.

Not having much to do, and waiting for Patton to establish where the front would be, we had been visiting Paris several afternoons and evenings.

The following day, due to Patton's tremendous spearhead, we were to move 80 miles north of Paris toward Belgium. We knew this was the last chance we would ever see Paris, probably in our lifetime.

At this time, the order had been issued from Supreme Headquarters, all towns were off limits to American troops: meaning if you weren't in town on business, you could be picked up and court marshalled. General Patton had a different interpretation. Even though he was under General Eisenhower's orders, he stated that if men took a town, they could enjoy a town also. We decided we would have one last fling!

I don't remember who all went besides myself, but I know it included the sergeant of the guard, several privates of the guards, Bisson (Company Clerk), and my friend, Al Gobert. We threw some five gallon gas cans in the back of the 3/4 ton weapons carrier, and figured if we were caught, we would tell them we were looking for gas.

On our way near the Seine River (at an intersection), we

collided with a Frenchman on a bicycle. The Gendarmes were there shortly and took over, so we did not spend much time there. I do recall, he did not revive while we were there, and I often wondered how he recovered. We drove around Paris looking over the points of interest such as the Eifel Tower, Arc de Triumphe, Champs-Elysees and Cathedral of Notre Dame. We sort of split up and were socializing in the downtown area, drinking at the sidewalk cafe and proceeding to get pretty well under way. At this time, there wasn't any electricity in the city and all the cafes, etc. were lighted mostly by candles. I recall Gobert, Bisson and I being in this one cafe, looking out of the window and seeing a 6 X 6 Army truck with some G.I.'s in the rear (and several military police in spotless uniforms). We knew we had it, and I recall Gobert's remark "I think we are going to have to shoot our way out of here!". We found out later that these M.P.s were flown in that day from duty in London, and you can imagine how chicken \_ \_ \_ \_ they were. Anyhow, there wasn't any way of talking our way out of this deal! We were loaded in the back of the 6 X 6, and carted off to a building that was formerly the Gestapo Headquarters, and used by the military police.

They took down all pertinent information, told us we would be court marshalled in the morning, and we would be sleeping on the floor. There was an arch leading into the next room; which we found out later was a series of rooms and halls under the city.

When we checked in our rifles, Gobert was carrying a German Hauser, and the M.P. (apparently not seeing one before) asked him what kind of rifle he was carrying. His answer was, "It's not a \_ \_ \_ Damn M.P. ". That didn't help our case! I think there were 15-20 G.I.'s that had been picked up, all sitting at the arch entrance to the underground rooms. We visited for a while with the other troops then wandered through the series of halls and rooms (in the dark). Lo and behold, we came across a room with bunks, all made up with sheets!

DARWIN FERRIS  
Page Three

Early the next morning, we were all called into the large room with the M.P.'s. All of Patton's 3rd army men were let go, and all of the 1st Army men were given a summary court-martial, including Gobert, Bisson, and myself. We were wondering what would happen next with our outfit moving 80 miles north of Paris, and they not knowing where we were, and we not knowing where they moved to. Next thing we knew, a truck had arrived to take us back to our new bivouac area, 80 miles north of Paris.

When we arrived, the first to greet me was Lt. Coclough. I was informed that all troops who were in Paris the night before, were to be in formation at 18.00. He also informed me, that if he had anything to do with it, anybody with rank would be busted. We told the troops (who were on guard duty the night before) not to show up! Captain Fletcher addressed us, and gave us a reaming. To his surprise, about 1/3 to 1/2 of the company was in Paris. He said it was too bad, that only a few of the unfortunate were caught. Several months later, I received a \$50.00 deduct in pay for the court-martial.

Best regards,  
Darwin Ferris

BOB FOX

Dear Paul,

In the spring of '45 when the company was near Remagen, the Captain heard of a winery across the river (maybe behind the lines). The captain took a 2 1/2 and some men- found the place and returned loaded to the top (plus) with booze and wine. The booze was then given out - one batch of wine per man per day and one bottle of booze per squad. I remember this so well because Bezotte and Sahi had to load and unload that darn truck whenever we moved. As time went by, the job got lighter and when we reached Weimar, there was only about 10 cases of wine and booze left. At the end of the first week the rate of drinking was way down. At Weimar they couldn't give it away.

One evening early after we got the stuff, about a week, you had a bottle of cognac and none of your squad wanted any of it. You got me and we stood under a corrugated awning roof at a filling station next to the house. We started to kill it about the time we got an Air Raid. They were after the bridge and we were safe from that. But the flash from the nearby 90's rained down like hail. It was not safe to leave the cover. To make a long story short, we killed the booze and just kept at it until the raids ended. Paul, you were the guy who shared his booze which the platoon didn't want.

Best memory,

Bob Fox

PAUL GALLAGHER

THINGS THAT HAPPENED IN THE WAR

The celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the "GREAT 602" is a good place to hear of the stories about various things that happened here and there. The war would not be real if there weren't some scrapes or close calls. And we would not enjoy these reunions without some stories. I would like to add to those stories.

Well, I had a close one, and I don't know how it could be any closer, and I could still be walking around. The incident concerned the German airplanes that came over to inspect our areas. We all knew about "Bed Check Charlie" - the planes that came over at 11:00 p.m. It was traditional in the military that the men had to be in by that hour, and a "bed check" was always made at that time. So the German planes that came over at that time got to be known as Bed Check Charlie.

The Germans didn't have many planes left, that late in the war, so those that they did have were sent over after dark to check on allied troops, by photographing the areas.

They also dropped anti-personnel bombs on our troops, or at least on those areas where they thought there would be troops. Such places as settlements and crossroads were prime targets.

This one night, in Normandy, we stopped at a road intersection. By "we" I meant B Co., 3d Platoon. We put up in an orchard and proceeded to dig in. I was always afraid of missiles, everything that was thrown - bullets, fragments, and what not. The foxhole was wonderful protection, of course, because it protected you against things flying across the ground, but it was still possible for things to drop into a foxhole, even though the chances were slight, and you could be injured in that way, just as completely as if you were lying on top of the ground. So I made a fancy foxhole. I dug it the same as any other foxhole, but I covered it up, with branches, twigs, tar paper, and everything I could find, and then covered that with dirt. I didn't cover it completely, obviously, because I had to get in and out, so I left

a hole at one end so I could get in and out.

I felt safe, and comfortable, thinking that any fragments flying over the ground would not hit me. Well ... Bed Check Charlie did come over, and they did drop anti-personnel bombs in our orchard. One of them had my name on it - it fell on top of my foxhole, exactly on top of it, but on the cover or roof that I made. It missed the hole at the end by about a foot or a foot and a half.

The bomb shattered, and the shrapnel scattered sideways, flying through my clothes and other things that I laid on the ground around the foxhole.

Those anti-personnel bombs were designed not to penetrate into the ground, but to detonate above the ground so the shrapnel would scatter sideways, and hit more of the troops and cause more injuries. For that reason, the bomb didn't penetrate through my cover, and I was spared. The surface of the roof was blown somewhat, as if it were scraped, but that was the closest it came to hitting me.

How close can one get. I was grateful. I have been reminded of it many times since then, and I continued to be grateful, and I am yet grateful today.

That night was a nightmare, loud explosions everywhere. While I was spared, a couple of others got hit. Mike Michalko and Joe Kaszuba were hit with small pieces, and we took them to the hospital. On the way there, we saw an Allied ammo depot that was hit. It appeared to be a quarter mile long and as wide as a football field, and the flames were leaping literally sky high. It looked like what hell must be like. It left an impression on me. It emphasized my gratitude - I am here.

JOHN H. HOPKINS

Martin Damgaard has put the needle to me to send my greetings to our old WWII outfit on their 50th anniversary. I am writing you because I cannot find my 602ed File with the information regarding this year's reunion. I understand that he has been providing information concerning my activities in recent years most of which is probably greatly exaggerated. As already reported, upon retiring from the Engineer Labs in 1973, I took up consulting in military camouflage and deception mostly with the Brunswick Corporation although with occasional contacts with the USAF, Corps of Engineers Labs in Vicksburg, Mississippi. I retired from all of that a couple of years ago.

1943 was a special year for me. In addition to the 602ed 50ths, this 1993 is also my 50th wedding anniversary and graduation from college both of which my wife Fran and I attended. One at Ohio University and a fine party in Northern Virginia. I'm sorry that it has been impossible for me to attend any of the 602ed reunions, and for this year I'm all partied out at this point but I wish you all the best.

For what it's worth, I am President of the Local Retired Officers Club for the second year and treasurer of the Lions Club for the umpteenth year so I'm hanging in there. Hope you all are doing the same. We did lose one of the old timers in camouflage this year. Col Humphreys, who was Chief of the Camouflage Branch at the Ft. Belvoir Labs for many years and after retirement joined the Reserve Officers Association Staff in Washington. You may remember his column in the ROA magazine.

Please pass on my congratulations to those attending the reunion and, while not physically joining you, consider me there in spirit.

ROBERT JARRETT

Induction February 2, 1943 was quite an experience. Nothing like it in civilian life. All of your buddies to be were total strangers, but you soon got to know them. Then some left for OCS and some were transferred to other units. Then some new ones came into our outfit. Some with pull (connections).

I didn't expect to win the war by myself but I didn't think I would need so much help! There was a much larger operation than I could imagine as a young lad of only eighteen years old.

After basic, we bivouacked in the mountains and while there, Henry Koponen found a 7 foot rattlesnake which Lt. Nord and I captured alive! Never again!

After 11 months of training, we were shipped to Camp Kilmer and loaded on the Frederick Likes cement tub. This is where I prayed as hard as anywhere in the war. Finally, they took us off and what a blessing. Two weeks later we loaded upon the English Mauretania and landed at Liverpool. Spent six months in England. This is where we learned to speak to the public and found it was much easier than I thought.

We loaded up on a LST at South Hampton and landed at Normandy. That night I found out how quick I could dig a fox hole.

After the Armada at St. Lo, we made our break through and our Platoon wound up in the Brest Peninsula and were cut off by the German Panzer tanks but the English Typhoons knocked out the tanks and saved our butts!!

Latter, our platoon wound up in Luxembourg before the bulge took place. There is where I got my first deer and four cock pheasants.

When the bulge took place, our platoon leader, Lt. Warren H. Nord was captured. His truck driver Henry Koponen barely escaped. I never saw Nord again until 1991.

The war ended that coming spring and our entire Company was reunited. What a joy that was after all that time of separation.

We were shipped back to the States and discharged in October of 1945.



ROBERT JARRETT  
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Of all my experiences, the most valuable is the friendship of all those that I got to know while in the service.

How many remember the banana we got on after New Years in New York Harbor. I was on guard duty on the ship, top side; boy was it cold, 2 to 3 shift. I was in the radio room warming up when a call came in and the ship wasn't going to sail because they couldn't get steam on one of the boilers. Were we lucky! Remember all the stuff that was put in the garbage when we got back to camp.

I also was on guard on the Mauretania. It was the sun deck in one of the stables, a nice place and warm. It was a much nicer place to sleep than in the hammock down below the water line. I remember the collision we had in the harbor with a tug, one day after we were to start out. I remember also the ice cold salt water showers we had and the two meals a day. We had oatmeal in one tub, and sausage and franks in the other tub.

I had a chance to go to a wedding in France. One of our cooks married a French girl. There were two weddings, one before the war, and one in the church. That's really making it legal. Then parade through town, and then picture taking, supper and dance that night. There was certainly enough of everything to eat. After midnight and toward morning, one of the fellows said let's go, I got a key. He woke the newbrides up and they got dumped out of bed, mattress and all. They never got the quilt from the groom, he sure held on.

There are a lot of things that happened, e.g., little things like giving charges in England, to different units, like 101st, that was sent to Africa and Italy.

Going across the Channel, climbing the hill, seeing all the houses in a row, you know that this is it - it's no joke.

We were supposed to check a certain unit, and we had the break through in St. Lo. They had to bulldoze the highway through town.

KARLO J. JUHOLA  
Co 'A'

Paul asked me to write something that happen, while I was in the 602. I left all my notebooks and maps in my duffle bag and my memory is not the best, so I will just write what comes to my mind. Talking about my duffle bag, I would not want to be the one to open it at Camp Bowie, Texas, where it was supposed to go.

I had the job of serving the service line on ship coming home. It got kind of annoying, after you got everything cleaned up. Clothes got kind of damp and every day they went into the duffle bag.

How many remember the banana we got on after New Years in New York harbor. I was on guard duty on the ship, top side; boy was it cold, 2 to 6 shift. I was in the radio room warming up when a call came in and the ship wasn't going to sail because they couldn't raise steam on one of the boilers. Were we lucky! Remember all the stuff that was put in the garbage when we got back to camp.

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I had a chance to go to a wedding in France. One of our cooks married a French girl. There were two weddings, one before the Mayor, and one in the church. That's really making it legal. Then a parade through town, and then picture taking, supper and dance that night. There was certainly enough of everything to eat. After midnight and toward morning, one of the fellows said let's go, I got a key. We woke the newlyweds up and they got dumped out of bed, mattress and all. They never got the quilt from the groom, he sure held on.

There are a lot of things that happened, e.g., little things like giving classes in England, to different Units, like 101st, that was sent to Africa and Italy.

Going across the Channel, climbing the hill, seeing all the crosses in a row, you know that this is it - it's no game.

We were supposed to check a certain unit, and we had the break through in St. Lo. They had to bulldoze the highway through town.

KARLO J. JUHOLA

We chased that outfit to St. James, and never did get up to it. We met the 3rd Army tanks coming south, while we were trying to get back to Company A, to join the 3rd Army, 3rd Platoon, attached to 12th Corps. Then the dash across France, bridgehead, and across the Seine River. Other incidents - Lt. Boltz trying to get into Paris. We did get there after twice trying. That some town; got into Paris after the war in Europe for the third time.

After in this history. It seems to feel good that she kept such deep interest in the organization.

She inquired about "coining the word camouflage." That was indeed an interesting inquiry, being the very heart of our activity, and it actually inspired writing the paper herein "Camouflage - About the '50's'." We are pleased to give her acknowledgement and credit for the suggestion.

ELMER KAESTNER  
(Mrs. Jeanette C.  
Kaestner)

EDITOR'S NOTE

Elmer Kaestner died some years ago, and his dear wife wrote this letter (1984) to us. We are indeed proud to include this letter in this history. It makes us feel good that she kept such a deep interest in the organization.

She inquired about "coining the word camouflage." That was indeed an interesting inquiry, being the very heart of our activity, and it actually inspired writing the paper herein: "Camouflage - About the '602'." We are pleased to give her acknowledgement and credit for the suggestion.

Cordially,

Elmer A. Kaestner

ELMER KAESTNER  
9/27/84

Once again, thank you so much for remembering me by sending a copy of the 9th Reunion program of the 602 Engineer Camouflage Battalion.

It's always so interesting to read the enclosures you incorporate into the program. In this instance, the map on which you trace the course of the 602nd while in Europe and the Origin of Bugle Call. Those things make a lot of things clear to those of us who remained on the homefront for Elmer didn't talk much about what you had all gone through.

I wonder what gave way to coining the word camouflage? I remember reading about the Sabotage and how that came into being. The story was that during the industrial revolution in France the peasants were constantly throwing their wooden shoes (or sabots) into the machinery and rendering them inoperable as a protest to machinery replacing manpower.

Perhaps on one of the years in which another reunion is scheduled, I can come with one of my two children - if that is ever permitted.

In the meantime, if you and Mrs. Todd are ever in our community, do stop to see me.

Thank you again,

Cordially,

Mrs. Elmer A. Kaestner

ROY KALLIO

One of my recollections of the war took place at an airport in Leipzig, Germany, in May of 1945 as hostilities were coming to an end in the European Theater of Operations. Members of the 602nd, 1st platoon, 'C' Company were assigned to guard a hanger containing 12 of Germany's newest rocket planes. This was considered to be a very important discover, and the planes were subsequently distributed among the allies.

As a note of interest, an Oct/Nov 1983 issue of Modern Maturity Magazine contained an article about Gen. Chuck Yeager flying at Mach II. It was my opinion that the X-1 rocket plane pictured in the article could well be the one discovered in that Leipzig Airport in 1945.

ELDEN KELLER

Just a few lines as you would not be able to read very much. I can't write very well anymore.

Yesterday, I picked up branches all day. We had more rain and a lot of wind. More predicted for tonight and tomorrow. I will not be able to get anything written for you but have a little bad news and thought you would like to know. Joe Simmons from B Co. died Monday the 14th. His sugar jumped to over 800 and they got it down to just under 400, but he couldn't hang on any longer.

Funeral was today. I am planning on going to Stevens Point if I feel okay that is not so far and hope we have good weather.

Hope this finds you well and we will try to see you in August.

JOHN KERSKI

I've been racking my brain trying to think of some unique experience that I could comment upon during my short time with Co 'D' 602nd Engineers. Like most young men who were drafted or joined the military, many of the things that occurred within the first 6 months are very hazy, especially after 50 years.

I left the 602nd in late September, 1943 for the U.S. Army Air Corps. I spent 5 months as an Aviation Student at Presbyterian College, Clinton, S.C. When the Pilot/Navigator/Bombardier programs were cut back, I was transferred back to the Army Ground Forces and ended up with the 325th Engineer, 87th Division at Ft. Jackson, S.C. I applied for O.C.S. and was Commissioned a 2nd Lt. U.S. Army, C.E. in late 1944.

After Commissioning, I was sent to Italy for the last 3 campaigns of World War II. I decided to stay in the Army and became an Army Liaison Pilot in late 1946. I joined the 11th Airborne Division, in Japan Flying and Jumping for 3 years.

I was sent to the Army Language school for Japanese and when Korea came along was ordered to Korea where I earned 6 Battle Stars for the first 6 Campaigns. I was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for exceptional service as the Field Post Engineer for I Corps.

During my 20 years of active duty, I spent 9½ years in Japan, 3 years in Korea and 6 months in Italy. I retired March 1, 1963 after 20 years of active duty in the grade of Major.

While with the 602nd at Camp Butner, N.C., I made good friends and remember most of them. Several transferred out to ASTP, or to other units. A few were killed during World War II. Many have died since the end of the War. Those who are still living are valued as my "military buddies," since we all have had the experience of serving our country.



HENRY KOPONEN

This is a true copy or a statement on what went on during the 2½ days I was with the 28th Infantry in the Battle of the Bulge.

We left Luxembourg on the morning of December 19, 1944. I was Nord's driver. We were on our way to Bastogne and Wardin, ten miles south from Luxembourg, when we got to the 28th Infantry Division Intersection. The men of the 28th asked us where we are going? We said we were going to Bastogne or Wardin. They said it was okay to go through, but didn't know the Germans were a mile or so down the road.

We left the 28th and drove to the next intersection. The Germans had a road block. We came over a fairly steep hill to the road intersections and could see some men moving. My last words to Lt. Nord were "Germans." I hit the brakes, got the truck stopped and put the truck in gear. If I didn't, the truck would have rolled into the German tank that was in the road intersection. We were no more than fifty feet from the Germans. The Germans had a tank and anti-tank in the way.

That is when I started moving as fast as I could. I disappeared through a 16 x 15 hole in the canvas behind the seats. Into the truck box I jumped and onto the road with my gun. I jumped into the ditch and that is when the Germans started shooting at me. Our truck got hit with an anti-tank shell. After the war was over, Lt. Nord said there was half a dozen men shooting at me. I escaped through a small hole in the hedge-row. There was a small open field and I got behind this farmhouse for protection.

I knew maybe Lt. Nord was captured by the Germans. He didn't have a chance to go anywhere. I left the farmhouse into the woods where I met three women. One did speak some English. She said they left the house to get away from the German soldiers. I explained to the women what happened at the crossroads.

I left there and made my mind up to take a shortcut through the woods to the 28th. When I got back to the 28th Infantry Division Intersection, there were the same men we spoke to before. I explained to the men and the sergeant what had happened at the

HENRY KOPONEN  
Page Two

intersection. The Sergeant said to stay with the 28th.

We got orders to lay in the ditch and wait for the Germans to come from St. Vith who didn't show up. I was here with the 28th 4 to 5 hours. There were some forty men holding this intersection. We got orders to get in the trucks and head south of Bastogne.

We took the road going east. We did not take the road going south where Lt. Nord and myself got stopped by the Germans. We went a few miles east and turned south to get to Bastogne. There was small arms fire south of Bastogne. Down the road the Germans had a road block. The driver got the truck I was in turned around and went back to Bastogne. They sent men back to where the Germans were. The next day the road was open to Bastogne. We had guard duty off and on. The Germans were shelling Bastogne with 88's intermittently.

I got permission from the 28th Infantry Lt. to get back to my unit or company in Luxembourg, to let them know what had happened to Lt. Nord, myself and the truck. I got a ride in a 6 x 6 going east from Bastogne to Luxembourg. The men were ready to move to anew place when I got back to the 4th Platoon, Company B.

The Battle of the Bulge raged from December 16, 1944 to January 25, 1945. The Germans were driven back. After the war, Lt. Nord said the S-S- Troopers were the best the Germans had in their Army. This is when we hit the road block at the intersection. This is a statement written from the time Lt. Nord and myself left Luxembourg to Bastogne. The 2½ days I was with the 28th Infantry till I got back to the 4th Platoon in Luxembourg. P.S. Lt. Nord was captured. See his letter [Ed.]

GEORGE KOSKI

We left New York in January 1944 and landed in Liverpool, England. From there we went by train to a tent city south of Bristol. A few days later we got our trucks and equipment and began traveling around southern England on our training missions; mostly armored units, 2nd Armored for one. They had just come from Africa and couldn't see how a camouflage net was going to protect them. They didn't pay much attention until Vince Merrill sent in a report to their commanding officers. After that they did.

In our free time, Vince and I saw quite a bit of England; Winchester Cathedral, Stonehenge, etc. During our stay around Bristol, we spent a few evenings in Bristol on pass ... got used to the Blackout and the warm English beer.

We moved down to the Salisbury Plains where we stayed in quonset huts with coke heaters to keep us warm. Everything froze at night. At one time we stayed at Hindon House near the village of Hindon. Walking distance. It had a neat little pub that we visited most evenings. They had a hall there where we threw a party for the town folks. Our cooks served coffee and cake. As I recall, we had a good time (! [Ed]). Sometime later we went to the marshalling area where all the truck drivers had to waterproof our trucks. As it turned out, we made a dry landing. On the beach, I picked up a bunch of life belts (Mae Wests) filled with air. They made a very nice air mattress that I carried through most of Europe.

Mainland

I don't recall much happening in the beach area until the big bombing and the breakthrough at St. Lo. From there we moved fast until we were held up for a few days at the Falaise Gap where the Germans were bypassed. We sort of policed the area for a few days. At that point Class "A" food caught up with me. I recall having seconds on sunnyside up eggs for breakfast (at least 8).

The day Paris was freed, we drove in a few miles then turned around and headed north for Belgium. While we were between Brussels, Belgium and Maastricht, Holland, the armored units had

run out of gas, so we joined the Red Ball group and made a run to Paris for gas. As I recall, we went 80 some hours just stopping to eat our K's and a ten minute break every hour. After the gas run, we made one more trip back someplace to pick up Bridge equipment.

From somewhere in Belgium we crossed Maastricht and through Holland to Aachen, German. That was our first time in a house as winter war was coming on. This is where Vince sold us his liquor ration for the month. Schnapps, whiskey and wine. As I recall, we all got drunk one night. While at Aachen, we got 12 hour passes to Brussels. From our platoon, four of us went at a time. That's a story you'll have to ask me about. I don't recall much of Verviers except while we were at Wardin, I went back there to pick up our mail. It was cold and snowy and I froze my feet. While at Wardin, we got a 36 hour pass to Luxembourg (city). We arrived there and had showers and clean clothes; immediately we got word to get back to Wardin. The Battle of the Bulge had started. We were pulled back to Neufchateau (Chateau #9). A VI Rocket landed near a crossroad here and the officers thought the Germans had arrived. They sent us down there with our Bazookas. At Spa another Rocket landed and blew out the windows in the house we took over. We moved up near Liege, Belgium for a while and as the German offensive ended we went back through Malmedy and St. Vith. From there we were attached to a different division, most of our time was with the 29th Infantry.

We wound up south of Cologne on the Rhine. We had a beautiful home at Bad Goesburg. The Remagen bridge was a few miles south of us. That's the town where you got all the wine. I was on that trip.

While at Triptis, the fighting was pretty much over so all we did was loaf. Here were shot a few German deer and had some steak fries by Miller. At Ulm on the beautiful Blue Danube (dirty gray), Rufus Vorfsahl and I among others got a three day pass to Paris. Transportation was so bad we stayed nine days. On our way back we

had a layover in Strasburg, three hour pass.

As the war was about over, we were putting up road signs near Gera south of Leipzig. We kind of got lost on one trip and wound up in Czechoslovakia near Chemnitz ahead of the American lines. We got stopped by a cavalry outfit at the border and had to prove we were Americans.

At Weimar, which was eventually taken over by the Russians, we had a brewery that was making beer with American ingredients. It wasn't very good but we drank it anyway. Weimar is another story!

I recall being in Nurnberg, Heidelberg and Jena (Zeis Ikon Cameras were made here). Somewhere during our stays, we found a factory that was making accordions. The fellows were buying them up and everyone was involved in making wooded crates to ship them home. I never bought one though they were only \$10.00 a piece.

On our trip south to Cannes, France, we passed through Dijon and Lyons, France. While waiting for our new orders, we rested, we got our shots and serviced our trucks for the Orient.

Betty Hutton was there with the USO Troupe. We sat on a hillside and watched her show.

When we left Germany, the high point men stayed because they were to go home first; but, with Japan's surrender we were in the ideal spot to be sent home first. We shipped out on the Gen. SS Ballou, a brand new troop ship on its maiden voyage with troops. I volunteered for K.P. and had the best food in a long time.

When we landed at Newport News, Virginia, we hurried and sent cards to the guys back in Germany, telling how nice it was to be home.

WILLIAM J. MALLEK  
Company "B"

### SERVICE MEMORIES

Life at Camp Butner, N.C. was not too bad; it reminded me of my days in the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corp). We were under army rule and discipline as long as we were in camp. It was the usual, getting up early every morning, washing up, making up the bunk, calisthenics, breakfast and then to work. The army is no different so I knew what to expect.

Basic training was rigorous and strenuous, but at the same time we had some fun. Many of the bivouacs were fun, especially the one we went on in Moorehead City, N.C.; it was like a vacation. Went swimming, got a little sun, and a great time was had. We did some work camouflaging an artillery piece at an old fort near the ocean. They told us German U Boats sank a few of our ships in this vicinity so they wanted to be prepared and ready. While here, we were invited to a parade in town to celebrate a holiday. Which holiday it was I don't remember, but it was a big celebration. As we were marching, a wrong command was called. The unit started to go up a hill, but was quickly stopped by calling the right command. We really had a hearty laugh after the parade. I don't remember if we were reprimanded for this or not. All in all, it was a hoot!

As we prepared to leave New York for England, we boarded a small troop ship ready to sail. We were told it was to be the largest convoy attempted. As luck was with us, we had to get off the ship because a leak sprung in the boiler room; it was a disaster. We managed to get on a large liner, one of the three largest around, the S.S. Mauretania. It crossed the ocean all by itself as its speed was too fast for the U Boats to keep up.

We landed in Liverpool, England; it was foggy and dreary, cold and damp. We boarded a train which took us to a place called Camp Foxley. This camp was built in anticipation of casualties from the landings on the French shores. We used it temporarily for our barracks. While here, we had to sleep on hay mattresses shaped like the form of a man. It was awkward to sleep on them, but we

As we were on this hill at night, we saw flares being dropped some distance from us; it lit up the sky as if it was daylight. We just stood there and watched with awe. All of a sudden a machine gun fired at us from below the hill, but nothing happened. It was one of our units, and the next day our sgt. went down there and gave them hell.

As we forged ahead, we went through many towns and villages that were liberated by our forces. At some of the towns the collaborators were herded into the square of the town and humiliated, especially the women. Their hair was shaved off, and they were kicked out of town.

Another incident happened to us was we got lost and were ahead of our infantry scouts. They quickly pulled us from the road and showed us what was ahead; a German tank pointing straight down the road we were on. Thank God for our scouts!

Can't remember why we were there, but while in Holland we got to see the famous German artillery piece, Big Bertha. It was mounted on a railway car and stored in a coal mine. The shell casings were so huge, they were as tall as I was.

As we were in Belgium during the big push, we were stranded in some woods. They took all our gasoline we had for the purpose of keeping our tanks going. The supply of gas was not able to keep up with our tanks, so they took all the gas from non-fighting units. This lasted about a week or two. While in Belgium, we got to see a famous resort, Spa, (Belgium) where they have natural hot baths. It was a nice feeling to have a good bath and we took advantage enjoying these refreshing baths. We stayed in a villa that during the First World War was headquarters for the Germans.

Bastogne, Belgium was another nice place. We were supposed to have R & R here. We camped just on the edge of town in a house nobody lived in. It was near the Christmas holidays, no fighting was going on. One would think the war was finished. We helped a farmer dress a pig for the holidays and prepared for a good time. We had an opportunity to see the German pill boxes and tank traps

along the Belgium border. The German soldiers were walking around, waving to us as if there was no war. While in camp we got a supply of gas for all our trucks, but soon it had to be destroyed because all hell broke out. The Germans broke through our lines. They had a whole unit dressed as our soldiers, trucks and our equipment; and everything went wacky. This all happened during a switch of infantry divisions on the front lines. As we returned to Bastogne, it was completely destroyed. All the tanks that were put in place to stop the attack were destroyed. The weather at this time was thick, dense like pea soup, so our planes could not help. As we all know, the Germans thought they had us defeated, but we stopped their attack!

Prior to the big attack of Bastogne, while we were in town, one of our officers and his driver were captured on a road going to Luxembourg where German armor had hidden along this road. (This was Lt. Nord. See his letter. [Ed]) A few weeks later, our Captain received a letter from the captured officer stating that he was back home in the states. The Russians had captured the prison they were at and had released them. This all happened close to the end of the war.

The whole battalion got together in Weimar, Germany. Here we had the opportunity to see the Buchenwald German Prison. The prison was built for the German people who opposed Hitler, but they also had other nationalities, along with torture racks, ovens, and experimental medical labs. They had a building full of human ashes in urns, which they tried to sell to the next of kin. The ashes were all in a big mix-up.

The rest is history. We were ready to go to Japan when the second atomic bomb was dropped which ended the war, and we were sent back to the states and discharged.



REMINISCING

I'll never forget when I looked at the map and saw that we were not far from St. Lo. We arrived on Omaha Beach in Normandy, a few days after the first troops had landed there on D-Day. We were encamped in a pasture, cows and all. It seemed to me we were there for several weeks. Looking at the map showing our destination to be Berlin, I estimated it would take years to reach our goal. After all, this was a new experience for me.

Then one day, the sky became full of our planes - bombers, fighters, etc. As far as one could see on the horizon, the planes just came and came and came, dropping their bombs. It lasted for hours. Also saw our fighter planes diving with their machine guns blazing, knocking out Gun Nest Replacements. Every now and then one of our planes would be hit and leave a trail of smoke as it was going down. It seemed this action went on all day. I understand that smoke bombs were used to determine our front line. The wind shifted and reversed. Some of our own men, including General McNair, were killed. We heard of this at a later date. While the bombing was going on, we all cheered as though we were watching a sports event. I'll never forget this sight!

It wasn't long after that, we went through St. Lo. It's no wonder that St. Lo held on for so long, as the German troops were entrenched in natural fortifications and concrete bunkers.

The 29th Infantry Division honored the Commanding Officer of the Engineers, who had been killed, by taking his body first through St. Lo, after its surrender.

Our Platoon was then attached to several different Corps Units, as we never stayed too long in one location. One night while in an orchard, our Platoon had a visit from "Bed Check Charlie" - the sky became like daylight with the flares which were dropped, and then we were hit with Anti-Personal Bombs. We used the well-constructed foxholes left by the Germans. It seemed like hours before the planes left and the opening of my foxhole appeared to me to be like the Grand Canyon! A piece of shrapnel put a hole

WILLIAM E. MARKOWITZ  
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in Paul Gallagher's canteen, and of course it leaked water into his foxhole. We thought it was blood and that Paul had been hit. I think we did have one or two of the Platoon get the Purple Heart due to the shrapnel wounds. As I recall, Lt. Merrill got out of his foxhole with boxer shorts on and very little else, checking things out. There are no Atheists in any foxhole as far as I'm concerned! We then went back to Headquarters Company for a few days to re-group.

Our vehicle was also a casualty from shrapnel. The radiator was hit and lost all its water, as Lt. Merrill found out, taking one or two of our men to the Medics for treatment.

Got an opportunity to visit Brussels, Belgium for a day, then off again racing through France, when we had to stop - the Army just plain ran out of gas!

We did get to Paris. I seem to remember it was our own Platoon, with Lt. Merrill. We got into one of the fine department stores with just enough time to buy a souvenir, so got a silk scarf, which didn't take much room to carry. Our visit was shortened because German troops were still in Paris, so we left and returned a few days later.

We moved on again through Belgium, got into Luxembourg, then into Germany. I believe we went with another Division and settled in the village of Wardin, Belgium, a few miles from Bastogne. Wish I could remember all that happened there. I know it was supposed to be a holding front - that's a story in itself. We were there with our entire "B" Company. No activity along this front, so for a while we became part of Wardin, going to the local church on Sundays. The congregation thought we were too generous with our contributions in the collection basket! We visited the local Pub on Saturdays for a bit of music and apple-jack. The Priest disapproved of this activity, while the village boys were at the front.

It was getting near Christmas, so we all got together and started to collect goodies from our Christmas parcels from home to

give a party for the kids in Wardin. I did spend some time in Wardin making water colors from sketches that I had accumulated. I was also sent to a new Infantry Division in our area on the front lines for a few days, teaching the merits of good camouflage. Meanwhile our collection of Christmas goodies was growing and looking good.

One afternoon a parade of civilians from other areas came walking on the road which ran through Wardin and they told us the Germans were coming. Of course we said it couldn't be, but they kept on walking, burdened down with whatever possessions they could carry. Soon artillery shells were zooming over our heads, from both sides, ours and the Germans. We found out later that Bastogne was going to be the holding point. I believe Lt. Nord was taken prisoner here. His driver managed to escape. That night we were given orders to vacate Wardin and we left on an old Roman road - the only escape route. We spent that night on the road and it seemed as if the entire American Army was with us. If the Germans had any kind of Air Force at that time, we would have been "sitting ducks." The road was jammed with men, trucks and equipment.

We saw large trucks going past in the other direction and learned it was the 82nd Airborne Division. That, as we all know now, was going to be in the "Battle of the Bulge", in Bastogne. As for us, we wound up in Liege in a schoolhouse and spent Christmas there. We learned the German troops had taken all the goodies which were gathered for the kids' Christmas in Wardin. They also took all our equipment which was left behind, especially the fuel. We also learned that the German troops did not treat the Wardin fold very kindly.

We went on through Belgium making a number of stops. I remember a Buzz Bomb landing near us - good thing it hit an open field. It made a huge crater, but did no damage.

We stopped at the Rhine River near Cologne and stayed at a beautiful chateau. I remember holding an original Rembrandt

painting, which I was tempted to take - often wonder what because of it. I also recall some of us, along with Paul Gallagher, crossing the Rhine River to raid an old underground wine cellar and picking up a couple of small truckloads of wine. We were practically swimming in the wine here and could hear the artillery shells thundering overhead.

I don't remember if we crossed on the Remagen Bridge or our own Pontoon Bridge. While here we did get to climb up the Drachenfels, visit a castle, also Cologne, which had been leveled by our air attacks. Only the beautiful cathedral was spared.

The next happening I remember was the liberation of Buchenwald, a Concentration Camp - the sights at the camp I'll never forget! We probably were there soon after it was liberated. This was once a walled-in area, now the entrance was wide open. The prisoners wore black and white striped uniforms and walked aimlessly about, looking like walking skeletons. Army trucks were picking up dead bodies and some were stacked like cordwood in rows along the side of the crematory wall. There must have been four or five bodies high, with blue numbers tattooed on their legs. The ovens still held bones of the bodies that previously had been burned. The place where the prisoners slept was like shelves, about four and five tiers high, with just enough room in which to lay. There's much more to say, but that's enough. I did take a few photos while there.

We kept moving throughout Germany - seemed the war was coming to an end. Saw a number of work camps - whole families, Russian, Polish, etc. I remember we picked up some German prisoners and sent them back to Headquarters Company. As we moved along we saw the sides of the road filled with German soldiers - they were just giving up to the American troops. I think they were more afraid of the Russian troops than us.

We were then told that Weimer, Germany, was as far as we would go, near the Elbe River, and that it was pre-arranged with the Russians, so it seemed that the European War was over at last. We

stayed there for some time. Weimar, as you might know, was the old Republic Capitol of Germany. While there we visited the homes of Goethe the poet and Franz Liszt the pianist. Also visited a beautiful park with an Olympic sized swimming pool. The stay in Weimar was most enjoyable. Orders came to leave Weimar - I believe the Russians took over soon after.

I seem to recall we went at times by train and somewhere along the way in those 40 and 8 cars. Also remember seeing the city of Ulm or what remained of it, as it was demolished by our planes. Only the large cathedral was standing. Ulm was once an important railroad terminal.

Another of our stops was Heidelberg. The beautiful fortress seemed spared from air attacks and no damage was done to the city. at the time, I did not realize we were near a town where my mother was born. It would have been nice to visit, but of course, at that time, we were forbidden to converse with any Germans.

Our destination was finally reached - Marseilles, France, and at a camp on a mountain top we learned that we were being processed to leave from Marseilles to go directly to the Orient, so we were very busy packing equipment, learning Japanese, etc. Morale was quite low at that time. However, I did get to visit Marseilles and it looked like the melting pot of the Mediterranean - a very interesting city. Also visited the Island of Chateau Dif, where the Count of Monte Cristo was held prisoner.

The month was August and we heard by radio the dropping of the Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima. The war in Japan then ended quickly, so the ship which was ready to take us there brought us back to the good old U.S.A. We landed at Newport News, Va., and I'll never forget that day - it was Labor Day. We got a great welcome, band music and all. I assume we were among the early arrivals back from the European Theater. I was then sent to Indiantown Gap, Pa, finally discharged from there, and the last train ride over the Allegheny Mountains was to Pittsburgh and HOME!

VINCENT HERB MARTIN

Thank you for the invitation to the reunion again, but as we will be in Alaska at that time, we are unable to attend.

We would be interested to find out if there will be 50th reunion in "Normandy 94" of this unit. It would be a wonderful experience for the men and very interesting for the wives to see where their husbands spent their time.

If such a trip is in the offering, please let us know.

The first of these incidents is familiar to most everybody in the Battalion since it resulted in the only Purple Heart anyone in the 3rd Platoon received and, if he hadn't been a good deal more cautious and prudent than his platoon leader might have expected in Paul Gallagher's not being around to extend 402 during the St. Lo breakthrough, the 3rd Platoon's overnight bivouac, not long after the St. Lo breakthrough, was a very interesting one where the Germans had conveniently left enough holes already nicely dug to accommodate the platoon. So far as I can remember about the only thing we had seen of the Luftwaffe up to that point was "Red Check Charlie" and so I may perhaps be somewhat less culpable in waiving (or at least not giving adequate consideration to) the dangers of parking near a road intersection when there was a war on. Again, unless by all to fallible memory is good, that night we had the only air raid that occurred during our entire continental experience, and anti-personnel bombs as that fell quite vividly upon us, I remember quite vividly telling from the side to the other of my comrades to get down, until the raid apparently ended and I heard Michael calling for help. All I could find in my haste and the dark were a shirt, shoes and helmet. Gallagher had also come out, and together we got Michael who had been hit in the leg into one of our trucks, which we later found had a hole in its radiator. We took off wildly around the countryside looking for an aid station. When we finally found one, a medic shone his flashlight up and down my bare legs, assuming I was I who needed attention. Michael was shipped off to England

VINCENT N. MERRILL

A school mate once advised me never to talk about my mistakes: "You'll hear about them soon enough from other people." However, there were a couple of incidents involving the 3rd Platoon of Company B which might have had disastrous consequences but for a few fortuitous circumstances and which have lain more or less dormant in my conscience over the years in an otherwise singularly happy memory of what most of us regard as an unpleasant "tour of duty."

The first of these incidents is familiar to most everybody in the battalion since it resulted in the only Purple Heart anybody in the 3rd Platoon received and, if he hadn't been a good deal more cautious and industrious than his platoon leader might have resulted in Paul Gallagher's not being around to attend 602 reunions. I am referring, of course, to the 3rd Platoon's overnight bivouac, not long after the St. Lo breakthrough too near a road intersection where the Germans had conveniently left enough foxholes already nicely dug to accommodate the platoon. So far as I can remember about the only thing we had seen of the Luftwaffe up to that point was "Bed Check Charlie" and so I may perhaps be somewhat less culpable in waiving (or at least not giving adequate consideration to) the dangers of parking near a road intersection when there's a war on. Again, unless my all too fallible memory is wrong, that night we had the only air raid that occurred during our entire continental experience, and anti-personnel bombs at that. Sleeping in my birthday suit I remember quite vividly rolling from one side to the other of my uncovered foxhole, until the raid apparently ended and I heard Michalko calling for help. All I could find in my haste and the dark were a shirt, shoes and helmet. Gallagher had also come out, and together we got Michalko who had taken a hit in the leg into one of our trucks, which we later found had a hole in its radiator. We took off wildly around the countryside looking for an aid station. When we finally found one the medic shone his flashlight up and down my bare legs, assuming it was I who needed attention! Michalko was shipped off to England

VINCENT N. MERRILL  
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for treatment but in due course returned to the platoon. Whether then or by daylight, Gallagher found one of the bombs had landed right on top of his covered foxhole and demolished all his equipment I don't know.

The second incident occurred when B Company was headquartered at Wardin in Belgium (a few miles on the wrong side of Bastogne, as it turned out) in late November or early December of 1944. The 28th Division was headquartered not far away in Wiltz, Luxembourg. I don't know whose idea it was or why it was thought desirable, but the 3rd Platoon was assigned to erect a camouflage flattop over the division headquarters motor pool. Mission accomplished promptly and satisfactorily - until a few days later came a few inches of heavy wet snow, the weight of which stretched the wires that supported the flattop and caused it to drape itself all over the headquarters vehicles. Being in the line of German advance, I believe the 28th Division suffered rather heavily in the Battle of the Bulge which occurred soon after. If the Germans had started their offensive a few days earlier, there would have been hell to pay!

Warren is a high class man. Everyone who knew him thought so. This is evidenced by his giving us the letter about the camouflage installation because, as he said, he didn't want to attract attention to himself in talking about his capture. However, upon our insistence, he gave us the letter on his capture.

We are very happy to present both the letters here.



WARREN H. NORD  
Co 'B'

EDITOR'S NOTE:

This History would not be complete, or be what it should be, without a little extra attention to Lt. Warren Nord.

He was the only one of the whole organization who was captured by the enemy. He was captured by the Germans, and later escaped, and returned home, in one piece, and we are glad God spared and he is with us.

His letter follows, which was written some time ago, but it really fits in well with the spirit of this History.

This letter gives us a pretty good picture of his experience as a POW, but we want to tell everybody that he has also written a whole book, giving many details of a long and arduous journey including his escape from his captors. The book is too lengthy to be included in this History, but it is great reading.

Nord's driver in the incident was Henry Koponen, about whom you will see other references in this volume. Kope was quick, and able to dodge the enemy and get back to tell us about the event. Kope didn't get a scratch either.

Nord was really dedicated to the cause, and put everything he had in his activities in the organization, and especially in our specialty, camouflage itself. When we asked him for a letter for this History, he responded with a letter about a camouflage installation (see following).

Warren is a high class man. Everyone who knew him thought so and this is evidenced by his giving us the letter about the camouflage installation because, as he said, he didn't want to attract attention to himself in talking about his capture. However, upon our insistence, he gave us the letter on his capture too.

We are very happy to present both the letters here.

WARREN H. NORD  
Co 'B'

With Koponen (Nord's driver") on Dec. 19th we started for Wardin to try to get a handle on what was happening in the big German drive to the west. We were just east of Wardin in pea soup fog coming down a fairly steep grade to a road intersection, having not traveled the route but once, that I can remember. We could see some dark forms moving about but could not make out if they were some of our own boys. We were moving cautiously since we could scarcely see beyond our hood. We were hit by an anti-tank gun set up at the intersection. Koponen set the brakes and disappeared through the hole in the canvas behind the seats and I jumped out the right door practically into the arms of a German soldier that was cocking his pistol to make mush of my brains. I wasn't about to argue with that. I was had. I tried to see Kope but he was zig-zagging up the road ditch with a half dozen guys shooting at him. I did not hold out much hope for him. (Kope survived and made it through the woods to my headquarters).

I was herded over to a flat area on the northeast corner of the intersection and I watched the German artillery set up by a farm house on the southwest corner. Apparently they were shelling Bastogne or perhaps Wardin -- lobbing shell after shell off to the west.

A German officer drove up in a car he had picked up along the way and his aide sat in the back seat behind me with a burp gun. He tried (the officer) to find out if I could speak German but I didn't give him a tumble. He kept humming "Kamerad Ub Bist Di." I was taken personally to the front lines and ended up at an old school house where I was interrogated but I gave then no information.

After many 20-30 mile marches I was interred in Stalag IV B (an enlisted men's camp) at Muehlberg and later transferred to Oflag 642 at Shokken, Poland, an officers' camp.

In the middle of January 1945, the Russians were driving West and the Germans ordered us out of 642 and tried to march us back

with the Germans. On the 24th of January we were held in a barn on a large farm near Remburg, Poland. There were several driveways into the barn separated by hay mows on either side. We slept in the hay on either side of the center drive. Lt. Martin Coleson, 10th Armored Div. and I cased the barn about 3/4 of an hour before we were to fall in for head count before beginning our day's march. We found a door on the end of the adjacent drive which we sprung open and made our escape. Copping a blanket each which we threw over our heads to hide our uniforms and kept to open fields away from roads and farm houses. We found a farm that was unoccupied but under surveillance of a neighbor who came over to milk the cows, pick up eggs, etc.

We slept under hay in the loft and picked up a turnip or two in a root cellar along with a couple of potatoes - that made up our diet. We stripped the cows after he had milked them and found a couple of eggs the farmer had missed. We broke open a bee hive and filled our pockets with honey comb that was quick energy but really a mess.

On the fourth day of our stay in the bar, we were hoping the Russians would over-run the place and not blow us to kingdom come. Only trouble was a lot of German soldiers and their horse drawn wagons moved in and left a guard at the barn door. So there we were -- under the hay being eaten by some sort of mites that had our bodies about raw. Too we both had deep chest colds. Couldn't get up to go to the bathroom either. Luck was, the guard went out for a few minutes and we clambered down a ladder from the loft and broke out of a door opposite the farm house.

Traveling through a large swamp in snow up to our hips we came upon a few houses in an old lake bed. We could not travel any further and took a chance to approach a man and his son traveling in a wagon toward one of the houses. He turned out to be a good Pole and they fed us and made us acquainted with a neighbor who took us in for the night.

German soldiers came to the house in the night and wanted food and a place to sleep. Our host took them in and fed them and one of the soldiers tilted his chair back against the bed post on which I had hung my pants. Our boots were on the floor next to the bed. They were told they could sleep in the barn in the hay where it was warm from the body heat of the animals. The next morning the Germans were told the Russians were coming and they took off.

Through this Pole we got in touch with the Polish underground who took us by sleigh to an adjacent town where we were put in touch with the Russians. We accompanied the Russians on their drive into Germany and ended up in Filehna, Germany where they moved up to the front in the battle of Berlin. We were excess baggage by then as they wanted the Germans for themselves. God pity the poor Germans. The Russians are a tough lot.

A Russian Major gave us a note which we were to use in case we ran across unfriendly troops (Patrols) or M.P.'s in any towns we might go through. It got us out of trouble several times in our trek through Poland including Warsaw. We walked, hitched rides with refugees hooked rides on trains, etc., all the way down to Odessa on the Black Sea. No one seemed to be interested in getting us to Moscow.

At Odessa, we met U.S. Officers who were to arrange transportation on a couple of U.S. boats that would take us to a replacement depot in Naples, Italy. Instead we ended up going to Port Said on a British boat and from there we went by another British boat to Naples where we ended up in the replacement depot for disposition. We ended up heading back to the States on the Marposa, a liner that normally ran from San Francisco to Los Angeles to Hawaii. And so we were home once more, somewhat worse for our experiences.

WARREN H. NORD

One of the most interesting events that I remember from the standpoint of camouflage was the time that our platoon ran across a fake airfield set up by the Germans. It was amazing and apparently very effective judging by the number of bomb craters it had received from allied aircraft.

For the life of me, I cannot remember where it was located but I lean toward an area near Aachen. I'm sure we wrote it all up in our reports to Capt. Clarke but now I can't recall the specifics. Perhaps some of the other men in the 4th platoon can fill in the blanks.

The Germans were very clever in their use of camouflage and their work on the airfield was superb. They had selected an area several miles short of a target that had a large field adjacent to a patch of woods. They had mowed the grass on the field to appear as a long runway from the air. A few landing lights were strung along the perimeter of the field that could be controlled at a central switchboard tucked away in the trees and brush.

Next to the runway, particularly at one end in the woods, were drums of oil and fuel that could be detonated from the switchboard.

In the trees proper were parked many "planes," either parts of demolished aircraft or plywood cutouts just partially concealed by overhanging brush and trees. A wing or tail or a motor and propeller were exposed just enough to make a crew on a bombing run think that here was a legitimate German airfield. A fake hanger camouflaged by netting had also been constructed.

Being close, within a mile or two of the real target, illuminated just enough to catch the attention of enemy aircraft was successful in getting Allied pilots to dump their bomb loads. At this time, a controller located to the rear of the "airfield" at the switchboard would throw the switches necessary to explode the drums of oil and fuel making a very real scene of a hit. Other planes would likely follow suit and drop their bombs with no more destruction than some craters in the fake runway or maybe a hit on the concealed "planes" in the woods.

As the bombers would veer away they would be hit by a hail of anti-aircraft fire from positions along the target proper. By then it might be too late to avoid the flak and be shot down.

This was one of the most clever bits of camouflage that I was privileged to witness.

I understand though I did not see, the area where the Germans chose a staging area for troops, vehicles and tanks prior to the big offensive in Mid-December of 1944 was screened by hanging vertical sheets over the entire area and the road leading to it. These sheets were hung at regular intervals to shield off any view of the staging area. The only view of the area would have been from the vertical and since the whole country was blotted out by fog for days their ruse was undetected prior to their big push.

I submit this as being more pertinent to our work in camouflage than my becoming a P.O.W.

BILL ROSER

Co 'B'

#### DRAWING FIRE AT ZWIEBELFUTZ

One day in March 1945, I was ordered by Lt. Czaplinski to go to a town in the Rheinland in order to conduct a training session with an infantry company in one of those small German towns on the Cologne Plain. I don't recall the names of those small towns, but I remember quite vividly what happened that day.

I had three men along: T/5 Rufus Vorpahl, driver, PFC Don Zuehlke, and the other was Pvt. Bezotti, if my memory serves.

Our destination was a village we will call Zwiebelfutz, and as we traveled toward that Dorf, we noticed that vehicular traffic had become quite light. We came to a village about 3 KM on "our" side of Zwiebelfutz, which we will call Jauche. The terrain there is flat as a billiard table and Rufus drove cautiously through the village of Jauche, taking care to avoid as much as possible the debris in the road that could cause a punctured tire.

We emerged from the little town, heading for Zwiebelfutz, when suddenly there sounded the "whoosh-crump" of an incoming, bursting artillery projectile. It landed about 100 yards ahead of the truck. I yelled, "Rufus! Turn this sonofabitch around and go back!", which was a superfluous order, as Rufus had stopped and already began the turning about maneuver a second or so after the burst. As we turned a little closer - maybe 75 yards ahead of our position in the road. We made it back to Jauche and the cover of the buildings there in what would probably have been record time. We were all okay, and the weapons carrier showed no signs of damage. We remained there for a short time, but there was no more incoming fire, so we headed back towards Zweifall, where we had been billeted.

On the return trip, we stopped and told an MP what had happened, and commented that both towns seemed to be deserted. He looked at a map and stated that the Krauts had retaken Zwiebelfutz the night before.

We never did find the Infantry Company, and the mission was not completed. A weapons carrier and four carbines are no match

Thank you for calling me yesterday.

for artillery fire and a German infantry company, who were the probable inhabitants of Zwiebelfutz at that time.

picked them up as the first army began to move out for a push against the Germans. (We could have seen some crackerjacks with the Germans, it was so quiet.)

Our night was spent with "Long Tom Howitzers" that were very noisy when they went off. We also took note to the front line artillery and on the way we passed a checkpoint, had a flat tire and the 88's started firing. The officers and sergeants came running from the checkpoint to see where the first round landed. It was just left of our truck. By the time the first round was hot they had a Piper Cub spot the 88 emplacement. Just a few rounds from the shells landed on the truck, but we made it to the front line.

We arrived in Paris with the second division and were sent to look on a German officer who was staying with a French girl. All we found was a German taking care of a baby. However on our last round of the house we found the officer and a young girl. We took her both to the trailer where the Americans, French and British had their headquarters. We left the next day.

The British and the Americans changed sides. At one time the British thought we were the Germans and threw a few bombs at us but caused no damage.

We had a field meal with the second division, the Germans put a few mortar shells in the area, again without damage.

The Germans ran out of gasoline; we saw dead horses along the road where our air force had shot them. We passed a German named [unclear] with dead officers. ("Maybe they died of fright.") We left them there.

One morning in Meuse, Belgium our front line troops were cresting back. The airborne came in and held the Germans back. had no way of getting out so we got up thirty caliber machine guns, bazookas and our rifles. However they came and took us to



AL SACHS

Thank you for calling and writing.

When we were in the E.T.O. we were attached to the Second Division and the Fifth Armored. We took nets to the front line and picked them up at the First Army depot. They were getting ready for a push against the Germans. (We could have had cheese and crackers with the Germans, it was so quiet.)

One night was spent with "Long Tom Howitzers" that were very noisy when they went off. We also took nets to the front line artillery and on the way; we passed a checkpoint, had a flat tire and the 88's started firing. The officers and sergeants came running from the checkpoint to see where the first round landed. It was just left of our truck. By the time the first round was shot they had a piper cub spot the 88 emplacement. Just a few fragments from the shells landed on the truck, but we made it to the front line.

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We had a field meal with the Second Division, the Germans put a few mortar shells in the area, again without damage.

The Germans ran out of gasoline; we saw dead horses along the autobahn where our air force had shot them. We passed a German command car with dead officers. ("Maybe they died of fright.") We just left them there.

One morning in Waimes, Belgium our front line troops were retreating back. The airborne came in and held the Germans back. We had no way of getting out so we set up thirty caliber machine guns, bazookas and our rifles. Someone then came and took us to

headquarters. (That was the start of the Battle of the Bulge for us.)

We arrived in Leipzig, Germany and pulled up by a big barn, the Germans had a big office and fall-out shelter in the area. The Germans opened up again on us with 88's; still no damage. They must have run out of ammunition.

The Second Division had to make contact with the Germans. After we left the outskirts of Leipzig, they sent us to a German air force base to guard a dozen rocket planes, they were either 262's or 292's. The 88's fired again but just hit the side of our hanger. Then we went back to some town in Germany.

ROBERT G. SAUTER

Three experiences stand out very vividly as I recall my "career" in the army. Two were humorous and enjoyable while the third was proof that "someone was watching over me" during that time and for that I have been ever grateful.

The first experience happened Stateside. We had shipped out on the Frederick Lights for Europe but just a short time out of dock we were hit and had to be returned to port. Having time on our hands my buddy George and I decided to go into New Brunswick for a night on the town. We visited a few taverns, had a few drinks and George even happened onto a jar of "HOT" peppers - something he enjoyed. The first bite into one of the peppers squirted him right in the eye and almost blinded him. Of course, I thought this was hilarious but you know George didn't agree with me. It truly was funny though and was good for a laugh at a serious time. We stayed around the taverns until they closed and then not knowing where to go or what to do we called a cab and asked the driver if he knew a good place. Well ..... at that time, unlike the present, there were segregated areas and segregated bars and of course the cab driver saw fit to let us off at one of these places. On the way over to get us he had picked up a burly Air Force man who decided to make it a night on the town along with us. We went into the bar, ordered our drinks, proceeded to mind our own business when the "burly guy" decided to play "cutsy" with one of the girls. This did not set very well with the rest of the patrons so they decided to gang up on us and had us cornered until Mr. Air Force picked up a big round table and heaved it into the crowd making a beautiful runway for us and run away we did. Outside Mr. Air Force took off as fast as his feet could carry him (smart man) while George and I stayed around deciding what to do next. Just then out of the tavern came the girl. Thinking it was George who had bullied her she commenced to take off after him chasing him round and round the cars with one shoe on and one shoe off, swinging it at him. I stood there laughing until out of the corner of my eye I happened to notice a group of angry

ROBERT G. SAUTER

patrons coming out of the tavern so I grabbed George and we ran for our lives with all of them in pursuit. Luckily, we found a doorway to duck into while they ran right past and down the street. We took this opportunity to go the other direction, find a cab and head back to the train. As we passed the tavern we had just come from we noticed the place swarming with MP's -- back to the base we went -- not stopping.

Another occasion to remember was when we had moved into St. Lo. We were billeted near a big chateau and got set to "dig in." In the process of digging my shovel hit something hard, something that sounded like glass so I continued to uncover the treasure which to my amazement happened to be a whole line of liquor -- Champagne, Calvados, Cognac and other good brews. The French people had buried this treasure to keep the Germans from having a good time but little did they know it was the Americans who would benefit from their hoarding. Needless to say, that night was "party time" and we even managed to store a few extra bottles to be enjoyed for other nights thereafter.

My last experience I shall always remember as one for which I will be ever grateful to "the Man Upstairs" for watching over me then and many times after this event. We had moved into Paris and "the old man" said that this was as far as we would go, however orders came through that we were to follow the troops north of town. We arrived at our destination and had billeted down for the night when an order came through for someone to take a message back to Paris. Being chief driver I was assigned the job and had to take off immediately in the dark of night. I had driven up with the convoy, paying little attention to the roads, so now being sent off alone, in the dark, I found to be a very scary situation. Much to my surprise the Being from above miraculously drove with me that night, showing me that way around each turn, every hill, every curve and with HIS help I had no problem finding Paris. To this day I thank the good Lord for driving with me that night and being with me all the other times during my jaunt with the army.

ARDEN SMITH  
Company "B"

At the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge, our Company Hdq. was at Wardin, a short distance from Bastogne. Our Platoon was at St. Vith. On the morning that the German forces launched there attack I was to take my truck to Verviers for its 1000-mile inspection.

When I awoke that morning we were being shelled by the Germans' 36 inch railroad gun, it was bout 7 miles from us, you could hear the report, then hear the shell and then actually see it. They were shelling an ammo dump on the hill behind us so the shells were going over our heads. There were small arms fire all around us and much traffic, all coming from the front. These were new 2½ ton U.S. trucks. This was strange, so I went in and awoke the First Sgt. and reported that I thought the Germans were attacking. His reply to me was, when they get outside, come and wake me. (NOTE - across the street was a couple (man & wife) living. A week before this attack 2 young men, 26-28 years old moved in and none of us saw the couple again, this too was brought to the attention of the Company, but ignored. We would often see the 2 men.) I then went into the house where the officers slept and woke them. This was the H.Q. Bldg. I reported to my Lieutenant and the Colonel, who was the Commanding Officer of the 106th (FULL BIRD). My Lieutenant let me know that I didn't know what I was talking about and that I gave him a pain in the rear. I asked him if he still wanted me to go to Bn. H.Q. His reply: that was your orders yesterday wasn't it? Yes sir. Then what makes you think they have been changed? Sir, if I leave you will be a truck short to move out of here. He said: What makes you think we will move? Sir, if you don't you will be buried here. At that point, I left. A short distance down the road across the field, and as I approached it, here comes a German personnel carrier, a half-track. I just made it past where the roads meet, I wasn't seen, and they sat up a machine gun right there. My next encounter with them was just as I was going into Malmedy. As I rounded a curve, there

ahead of me were 2 German trucks and 6 men marching G.I.'s up the road and into a field ahead of me. There were 25 or more G.I.'s and all I had was my M-1 carbine. I didn't stop till I passed and where the road turned nearly at a right angle to the field, which I could see to my left. The trucks pulled to the left in the field and up to the fence line and lined up the G.I.'s 30 yards out in the field. Then two men got in the back of each truck and threw the tarps open and there sat two 30 caliber machine guns and they opened fire on our men and gunned them down. (I can still see this in my mind to this day). I found out later that one G.I. escaped because he fell and played dead.

As I drove into Malmedy I was stopped by an M.P. This M.P. had on a new uniform complete with white gloves and leggings, white belt and was squeaky clean. I knew the moment I saw him he wasn't one of ours. He questioned me as to where I came from, where I was going, why I was going there and the usual questions one of our M.P.'s would ask a suspect, such as: who won such & such pennant (baseball), where the New York Yankees were from and all such stuff. He spoke English that was to good, flawless, perfect diction, and as he stood there I was trying to figure a way to get at my carbine that was next to me between the seats. Just at that moment an "88" round came in and landed across the street from us. It exploded and a brick from a building came at us and passed between my face and the windshield, just missing the M.P.'s head. He ducked and when he did I got the hell out of there and went on to Wiltz, which was also being shelled. I continued on to Verviers. On arrival, the Bn. Commander asked me why there was no phone service, all communications had been cut by the time I got there. He asked me what in hell was going on. I proceeded to tell him what I saw and what I thought was happening. I guess he thought I was nuts and told me the way I talked I should be running things. (To tell the truth, a few more DINKS like we had and we would have lost it).

When the mechanic finished with my truck, I started back. By this time the Germans had nearly reached Bastogne, and as far back as I could get was Wiltz. It was getting dark, the armored units had the roads plugged coming out, along with the artillery and ambulances plugging the roads coming in. I parked my truck in the town square and tried to hitch a ride on an ambulance, but was seen carrying my carbine so they kicked me off. I talked to several G.I.'s who were milling around town and none of them knew where their units were or if there was anything left of them. At dark I heard generators running in a shed just off the square so I looked in and there sat a young man about 18 years of age, scared to the point of shock. I went up to him and asked what his duties were and he just stared at me. I continued talking and finally he said he was there to see that the generators were kept running. I decided the fellow needed me so I stayed with him. The building we were in had two wooden walls and the other two were made of rock. The roof was wooden with shakes on it, some holes but the condition was fair to good.

I was there about two hours, the shelling got real bad and you could hear small arms fire. About this time a Master Sgt. and a Staff Sgt. came in DRUNK! They had been to the supply depot for rations. The Master Sgt. began picking on the kid and got him crying (he was scared stiff), and this (peevied) me off, so I took my carbine, racked a round in the chamber and stuck it in his guts and told him to lay off the kid or I'd blow a hole in him, and that I wanted a fifth of wine and one of Cognac, and for him to stand still and send the Staff Sgt. after it. Shortly he came back from the truck with the bottles and I ordered them to leave, which they did. I opened the wine before and didn't want any. I told him it tasted like grape pop and after half a glass he wouldn't care what it tasted like. I then took charge of the Cognac, and the next thing I knew there were birds singing, the sun was out and there was blue sky above us. Both generators were still running, the kid

was still asleep, but the roof and wooden walls were gone. There only stood the 2 ends made of rock, there was not a scrap of wood or debris on us or the generators. (And we don't believe in miracles.) ( I woke the kid and left, went to the truck and it hadn't been touched. Just as I pulled on to the main street, there on one corner was my Buck Sgt. and on the other my Lieutenant. The first words from him were "Where in HELL have you been?" My answer was short and to the point, PLAYING GOD!

In Belgium, one day in August, we were riding down the road on an inspection assignment. When out of nowhere came this spitfire, shooting up this whole road that we were on. You could see the bullets hitting the road but again we were lucky. They all missed us. I often wondered who was piloting the plane. He sure was not friendly. He continued on after it disappeared, going very slow and cautiously. A battery of 88's fired a salvo and I leaped from the truck. I would have broken any broad jump records that existed because I thought the spitfire returned.

In September we arrived in Breinig, Germany. (Back in Belgium, we raised a trail filled with German canned goods, dried sausage and pigs - we had copies of it.) With these items and the garden's being relaxed (tomatoes, beans, onions, potatoes, turnips, etc.) we had made the best vegetable soup in the world, but the bad news was we were shelled 20 days straight by 88's. There was a battery of 88's near us and the Germans are trying to knock them out. We were quartered in a duplex building. An A.A.A. outfit was billeted on one side and my platoon on the other side. An 88 shell with a delayed detonator went through an 8" brick wall, taking one of an A.A.A. G.I.'s leg off and through the floor, exploded in the basement killing two soldiers who were liberated by the A.A.A. outfit. They were laying with the A.A.A. outfit until they could return safely to base. Again my platoon was lucky. Not a scratch.



LEO J. SPREITZER

In the early part of July 1944, while in Hedge Row country in France, we were suddenly awakened by air craft bombs. I was snug in my fox hole, when the earth started to tremble and the dirt was falling in on top of me. I tried to dig deeper and say my prayers at the same time. The bombs whistled and the explosions were certainly felt. The next day I was inspecting camouflage of a unit near by that had orders to move. I noticed one particular G.I. singing and loading up this mess truck. He was happy as a lark. I asked him why he was so happy and ambitious? He took me over to the Hedge Row where he had his fox hole and within 8 feet there was buried a huge dud.

In Belgium, one day in August, we were riding down the road on an inspection assignment. When out of nowhere came this spitfire, shooting up this whole road that we were on. You could see the bullets hitting the road, but again we were lucky. They all missed us. I often wondered who was piloting the plane. He sure was not friendly. We continued on after it disappeared, going very slow and cautiously. A battery of 155 Howitzers fired a salvo and I leaped from the truck. I would have broken any broad jump records that existed because I thought the spitfire returned.

In September we arrived in Breinig, Germany. (Back in Soisson, Belgium, we raided a train filled with German canned goods, blood sausage and plus - we had cases of it.) With these items and the garden's being matured (tomatoes, beans, onions, potatoes, turnips, etc.) we had made the best vegetable soup in the world, but the bad news was we were shelled 30 days straight by German 88's. There was a battery of 155's near us and the Germans were trying to knock them out. We were quartered in a duplex building. An A.A.A. outfit was billeted on one side and my platoon was on the other side. An 88 shell with a delayed detonator went through an 8" brick wall, taking one of an A.A.A. G.I.'s leg off. Went through the floor, exploded in the basement killing two Russians who were liberated by the A.A.A. outfit. They were staying with the A.A.A. outfit until they could return safely to Russia. Again my platoon was lucky. Not a scratch.

RUFUS VORPAHL

Bill Roser and I were on a mission, and as we were returning, a German man flagged us down. He told me in German that he was a political prisoner. He said the U.S. Army freed him from the camp. He showed me a letter written in German & English. He had to walk home, and in this letter it said the mayor of any town should feed him. He said the town he just came from refused to feed him, so we took him back to the town. The mayor of the town owned the restaurant. We went in the restaurant with the man - other people were eating at the table, and I asked the mayor why didn't he feed the man? He said all we have is bread, so I said give him bread. He started swearing at me in German, so I pointed my carbine at his belly. He grabbed a loaf of bread and started cutting, still swearing at me. When we left, the man was sitting at a table and eating.

We were staying in a home in a small city in Belgium. I can't remember who my bed partner was, but I heard a German VI Rocket coming over. I got out of bed, and just then I heard the engine shut off. I was facing the window and put both arms over my eyes. The glass was flying all around my head. I looked around and my partner sat up in bed and caught a piece of glass in his teeth. The bomb landed about 200 yards from the house, and the explosion drove one of the doors right through the jamb. We had to take the hinges off to open the door. We went out to check the hole the bomb made and it was about 50 feet across and 50 feet deep.

Lt. Czaplinski and I were on a mission somewhere in Belgium, and we drove into a small town. There weren't any people on the street, and no one in sight. We sat in the truck for 15 or 20 minutes, and still no one came out. I looked back across the open space we just crossed. I could see dust being made by an armored unit heading toward us. They stopped and the commander drove up to us in his jeep, and stood up and said "what the hell are you guys doing here - I had orders to take this town." The Germans who occupied this town must have seen us coming and left. So Lt. Czaplinski and I took the town.

DAN WICKMAN

Somewhere in Germany during the winter of 1945. some of us were hungry for fresh meat. So, George Thompson, another person whom I can't recall, and I went to a place where we had previously seen some cattle.

When we arrived at the place, we saw that the cattle were very close to a crossroad. An MP was directing traffic at the crossroad. We knew we had to do this deed as quietly as possible.

We went into the barn lot and picked out a young, fat cow and chased her into the hay storage area and shut the door.

I told George to shoot the cow between the eyes and I would cut its throat. But George shot too low, knocking the cow down; but the cow got up, bellowing loudly, and began to run around the hay mow. After several more shots we finally got it down and cut its throat. So much for being quiet!!

With all the bellowing and shooting we thought perhaps the MP would send up some troops to see if there was a sniper around or just what was going on. So I decided to go out and talk to the MP. I gave him a sad story about not getting our rations. I told him we were butchering a cow.

He laughed and said, "I knew that, I saw you when you chased it into the barn."

Anyway, we ate like kings for awhile after that!

GIL ZANK

When A Company boarded ship to cross the Channel for a landing on D+33, it did not disturb me greatly, as I can recall. As a Sergeant in the Motor Pool, we had it pretty good, everything considered. However, that feeling changed in a hurry as we prepared to disembark. It was cold, wet and dreary with rain coming down when we hit the beach. Our forces still had not gotten too far off the beach, at that time, and the beach was a mass of men and equipment everywhere. Our Air Force was in control of the skies, fortunately. However, the German 88's were keeping up a steady barrage of the beach area. We were told to dig a fox hole and get in it. This was to prove to be no easy task. By the time reality set in, I knew, this was not fun and games. The Germans were real and they were playing for keeps. As I think back now on that first night on the beach in Normandy, it was probably the worst night of my life, at that time. The area we were dug-in was located somewhere between the German artillery and ours. We carried on a constant duel all night, the 88's screaming in and ours answering. All the while the rain poured down and every time a round landed, it would raise me about a foot off the ground, and while I really didn't want to dig in with that little shovel, I now wished I could get even deeper. It was a very miserable and frightening time in my life. As I recall, I don't believe I slept at all that night. I had never been so scared in my entire life. The gray light of morning finally came, but of course, the rain continued to fall. We had to get our equipment together and move off the beach. It didn't seem that there was any system to this, but evidently there was. We drove through the mud, I'm sure only God knew where. Eventually, we reached St. Lo and watched as the Air Force pounded the town into oblivion, along with all resistance. The air attack was awesome and turned the sky dark. Two weeks later we were attached to General Patton's 3rd Army and began the historic drive across France. All in all, it was an experience I will never forget and at the same time would never care to go through it again.

KENNETH C. ZEITLER

THE LIBERATION OF VERSAILLES

To write a story, or an incident, or even an observation of the war is just not my 'cup of tea.' My thoughts today and those of 50 years ago are alike as day and night. On paper the stories appear almost stupid and rather humorous. My story which follows, is both of the above.

It was mid August of 1944, after the breakthrough of St. Lo. The Germans were on the move, retreating to the east toward Paris. We were on their heels, not knowing where the heck we would wind up.

On this beautiful day, Lt. Knapp, a platoon officer, decided to scout the countryside. I have no idea what his mission was, but I do know my jeep seemed always available to anyone who wanted to go for a ride - provided, of course, he had permission from the old man, Capt. Fletcher. Sgt. Evel Davis also accompanied us on this wild excursion.

We left our Bivouac area about 8:00 a.m. There were pockets of resistance, here and there, but we managed to avoid those, luckily. I remember that tanks were also firing their guns. Then, by accident or pure luck, we rapidly moved ahead of those tanks. In very short order, we found ourselves in the city of Versailles. There on the cobblestone intersection - and directly to my left - stood the great palace. It was an impressive sight! It was also map reading time.

Within minutes, my jeep was surrounded and converged upon by mobs of French people. The crowd was of varied descriptions: nuns, old men, women with children, and beautiful French girls. They were all shouting, crying and waving. They grabbed us and kissed us. We were their liberators (by accident) and apparently the first American GI's they'd seen and had been waiting for. What honor and glory for us. This is one emotionally charged experience I'll never forget.

Suddenly, snipers were firing at us! The joyful crowd dispersed faster than it had appeared. In the midst of all this commotion, the French underground approached us. Due to a

language barrier, there was a misunderstanding as they started to roust Germans from houses and basements and bringing them to us.

What were we to do with these guys? As we slowly moved down the street, German soldiers started to follow us as though they were our prisoners. It seemed the French underground was really activated and were routing Germans from every nook and cranny in huge numbers. All of these were following behind my jeep, marching like real German soldiers.

As for us, here we were, three GI's in a jeep with only a .45 pistol, a carbine and my tommy gun with hundreds of German soldiers marching behind us - all going nowhere. I had absolutely no idea of what to do. By the looks on the faces of Lt. Knapp and Sgt. Davis, I knew damn well they didn't either.

Ironically, a tank battalion was moving into a nearby park to bivouac there for the night. Lt. Knapp did some fast talking to an MP who was directing the operation. Their words were short and snappy as we barreled off down the street.

On our way back to headquarters, the darkness of night fast approached as did a violent electric storm. As the rain poured upon us we found shelter in an old hay shed. It had open sides, allowing us to see all around. We slept on the hay. For some reason, the loud, crashing thunder woke me up. Between the artillery fire and the flashing lightning, I saw the scariest sight of my life. The place was crawling alive with rats and we were in the midst of them! Needless to say, the rest of the night was spent in the jeep. We reported to Company Headquarters the next morning.

As I mentioned in the beginning, writing is not my "cup of tea," and putting it down on paper makes me realize that this jeep driver sure as heck is left with a lot of questions -- answers to which I'll never know.

DONALD ZUEHLKE

My brain tumor and radiation treatment makes it difficult to write a complete sentence.

Here are two experiences that first come to mind.

The Frederick Likes broke down and left us in the harbor. We were able to spend the New Year Holiday in Baltimore. We left for England on the Mauretania. It was a crowded and uncomfortable trip.

When we left the area near the Battle of the Bulge, Company B spent the night bivouacked near an estate. William Markowitz and I were armed with a bazooka and stationed at a curve in the road. We were thankful it was a quiet night.