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by

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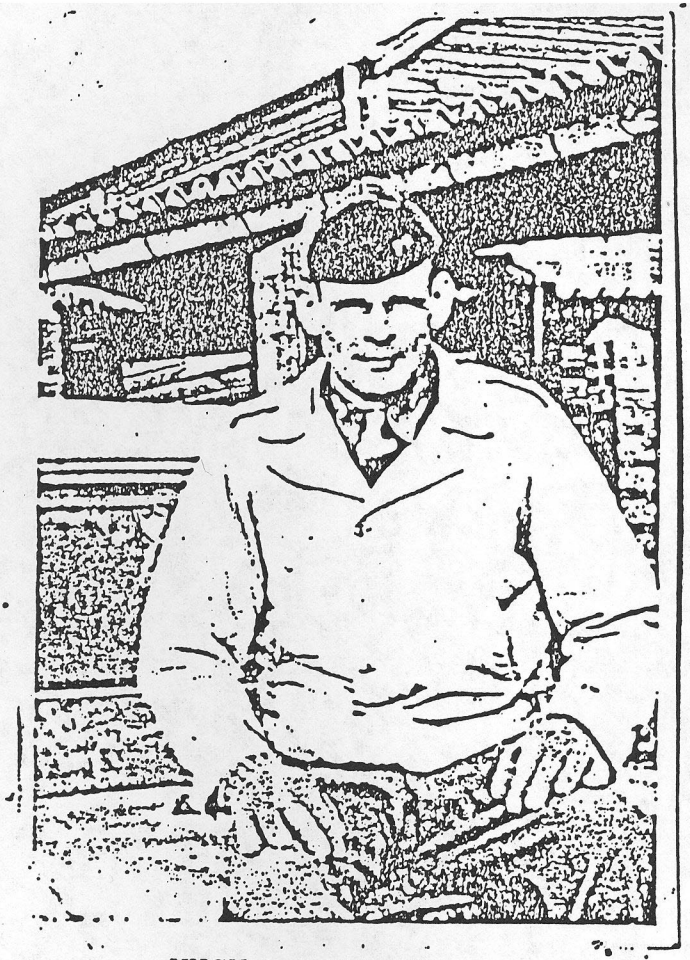

HUGH L. BRYAN

This story was written for my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren in the hope that they will find it interesting.

April 1986

For some time now I have been wondering if, after all these years, I could remember enough of my travels, experiences and feelings as a soldier just before and during World War II to put them into words. Perhaps I can remember enough to be of some interest to my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of whom I have been richly blessed. While I have never considered myself versed in writing, and undoubtedly I have forgotten many things, I shall try.

My story should best begin at its end, as I stood on the pier at Le Havre, France in September 1945 and looked up at the "SS" Pachaug Victory" the troop ship that was to start me on the long journey back to the home I had left so many months and years before. I had also entered Europe through the same port, Le Havre, but with much different feelings. As I stood on the pier waiting to board with the men I was bringing home with me, I had a feeling that I would never forget for the rest of my life. I could feel the tension and fatigue that I had unconsciously lived with so long gradually leaving me. I was no longer facing the unknown -- it was all behind me. Only a soldier can probably understand. So much for my feelings -- now for my story.

As I boarded, my thoughts went back five years before to September 16, 1940 when my National Guard company was mustered into the Federal service. At that time I was a second lieutenant in Company L 118th Infantry which had been the Hartsville company. It was a month before my thirtieth birthday. The 118th was a part of the 30th Division. After receiving our orders through the Adjutant General we began to enlist young men from the area to try to bring the company up to strength as soon as possible, with good response. For approximately ten days we occupied a tent camp on a part of the old airport which was then across from the present Beacon restaurant. At the end of this time the company moved by train to join the rest of the Division at Fort Jackson, S. C. to remain in training there until August 1942.

The division was then known as a square infantry division, i.e., four infantry regiments divided between two brigades. My own brigade, the 59th, was commanded by Brig. Gen. T. E. Marchant of Columbia, and consisted of the 118th from South Carolina, commanded by Col. Harry O. Withington from Charleston, and the 121st from Georgia. The other infantry brigade was the 60th and consisted of the 117th from Tennessee and the 120th from North Carolina. The division also included the 55th Field Artillery Brigade, consisting of the 113th F.A. from North Carolina, the 115th from Tennessee, and the 118th from Georgia. Also making up the division was an engineer regiment, a medical regiment, a quartermaster regiment, and special troops which consisted of signal, ordnance, and finance detachments. I am giving you the initial organization of the division because it has a bearing on the later activities of our regiment and our many moves.

(3rd Bn)

Our own battalion commander was Lt. Col. L D. Matthews from Rock Hill. The officers of Co. L were Capt. Boland Gardner, Commanding, 2nd Lt. Murray Tedder, 2nd Lt. Earl Dickerson and myself. My father-in-law-- your grandfather, Lt. Col. H. L. Hoover--was the divisional chaplain and I saw him often during our time at Fort Jackson. There was also on

the post, but not a part of the 30th Division, the 102nd Cavalry of the New Jersey National Guard -- more of them later, and the 8th Inf. Div.

It should be remembered that America was not then at war and would not be until a little over a year later, after Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. However, I believe that most people thought it inevitable that we would soon join England and her allies actively in the war against Nazi Germany. Industry was already beginning to change over to a war footing for the manufacture of arms and equipment for our rapidly expanding army as well as for our soon to be allies. President Roosevelt shortly gave England 50 World War I destroyers from our mothball fleet, and lend-lease was soon to begin. This was a plan whereby the United States would lend to England, Russia, and the other allies arms, munitions and food, to be returned or settled for at a later date. As far as I know, England is the only one who tried to do this. In fact, my regiment used British arms and equipment for awhile when we first went over seas.

At any rate, when we first got to Ft. Jackson we were rather poorly equiped and were armed with 1903 Springfield bolt-action 5 shot 30 caliber rifles and wore old style steel helmets similar to those worn by the British and our own troops during the first World War. The officers carried 45 caliber colt automatic pistols and also carried, and still drilled, with sabers. We, of course, had no jeeps then and not a great many trucks. The artillery on the post was horse as well as motor drawn, and the 102nd Cavalry was horse mounted, with large tractortrailer vans to move the horses for longer distance for greater mobility. The 102nd was one of the last of the horse regiments. We were not always too happy with them. Sometimes when we were on practise maneuvers in the field and would string our field wire along a road for communications, along would come a troop of Cavalry across the road and the horse's hooves would chop the wire up. It wasn't long before the Cavalry regiments in our army were mechanized however and the old horse Cavalry was no more.

Not only was our regiment not too well equipped at Jackson during the first few months, but we were badly in need of training. Due to the rapidly expanding army, the regular army officers and non-commissioned officers were needed as training cadres for the new divisions being activated. Our division, being National Guard, was considered to be at least partly trained, when in reality about all we knew was a little close order drill, basic field maneuvers, military curtesy, and a smattering of first aid, sanitation and the like. For example, about all we knew about the use of the bayonet was how to attach it to our rifles. Until our mess sergeants and some of our cooks could attend cook's and baker's schools we were anything but gourmet eaters. So understrength, under-officered, and undertrained, we set out to learn the hard way -- training ourselves. I suppose we were a little like that old Navy saying, "When confused and in doubt, run in circles, scream and shout". Learn we did, though, slowly and surely.

One instance of this that I remember well because it directly concerned me, was when the colonel called me to headquarters oneday and without fanfare assigned me the job of regimental bayonet instructor. I was to select two non-coms from each of the rifle companies and start

immediately -- meaning the next day. How did I do it? I'm not even sure myself. The last thing that I visualized myself as being was a blood-thirsty knife fighter. But do it we did, and after about a month, when all of the riflemen in the regiment were qualified, I was commended for my work and suddenly found myself an instant "expert".

What I did was borrow a rifle, a bayonet and a field manual on bayonet fighting with pictures, take them to my quarters that night and start reading and going through bayonet positions as shown in the pictures. I didn't get much sleep that night but in the morning I was ready to teach my non-coms what I had just finished teaching myself, I didn't make it a point to let them know how I had learned. As far as they knew I was just an "old bayonet fighter". I even taught them how to grunt and yell with their thrust just like the book said. When I was satisfied with the non-com instructor's progress, I had our carpenters make up six rows of five dummies, each mounted on posts. The dummies were made wth bundles of sticks covered with burlap and with hinged padded 2" x 4"s to swing for the parry, long and short thrusts, withdrawals, butt strokes, etc. See, after all these years I still remember the terms, which is my whole point. When you learn anything the hard way you aren't as likely to easily forget it.

So it was with most of our training. We began taking hikes; first with cartridge belts and rifles, and then full field equipment -- first five miles, then ten, and twenty miles a day. At the end of our training we were double timing (jogging) for $\frac{1}{4}$ mile, walk $\frac{1}{4}$ mile, and repeat. Of course, we didn't do this for twenty miles, but long enough to wish that it hadn't been thought of. As I recall we worked up to one twenty-eight mile day, but mostly a day's march was twenty miles. Not as long as "Stonewall" Jackson's men marched in the Shenandoah Valley but long enough so we didn't have to be rocked to sleep at night. Nanny says she thinks the buggle call "Taps" sounds so sad since she associates it with funerals. To me I remember it as a beautiful call -- the last of the day before rest. "Day is done -------".

Now "Reveille", the first call of the day -- "I can't get 'em up--" was another thing entirely, and not much to my liking. However, the field music (drum and bugles), which marched through the regimental areas immediately after the call, did their best to soften the sting with lively tunes. I remember the near-by Georgia regiment always played "The Old Gray Mare" which was probably appropriate for some of us.

It was on one of our early hikes that a tragic thing happened to the company -- we lost our captain. Capt. Gardner was older than the rest of us and had been a soldier in the first World War. Because of his age he probably was effected by the heat more than the rest of us. He suffered a heart attack on the march and died. We were all saddened by his passing, moreso because of the time we had all spent together in the Guard, and knew each others wives and children.

In January 1941 all of the second lieutenants in the regiment were promoted to first lieutenants. We were no longer "shave tails". You may not know why green 2nd lieutenants were sometimes referred to as "shave tails". This was because in the older army, green or untrained pack mules had all but a tuft at the end of their tails shaved so that they could be more easily recognized, and not approached from the rear with the risk of an unexpected kick. At any rate, we became mature rankers. At least we thought of ourselves that way at the time. Who was to know the

difference; everyone else was still inexperienced.

About this time too we began to get our new equipment and were issued the new M-1 Garand, 30 caliber semi-automatic, 8 shot, gas operated rifles. These were most welcomed since the old Springfields, although more accurate, kicked like a mule and would give you a "fat lip" if you didn't keep your thumb from around the stock when you fired. The new M-1, being gas operated, had a cushioned recoil. The officers put away their sabers and we were soon issued the new all-purpose helmet which consisted of a plastic helmet liner with an outer shell of hardened steel. Incidentally, the helmet has a little weight to it and has to be gotten used to. When it is first worn for any length of time your neck muscles get a little sore and sometimes ache. The only answer, of course, is to keep on wearing it until the neck muscles are strengthened. The liner is light and is an excellent rain hat. I refer to the new helmets as being all-purpose because of the many ways the outer shell can be used. Many times I have used it to wash my socks and other items of clothing and, of course, my feet. I suppose that the shell has been used by more soldiers to wash and shave in than any other container. You can even heat water in it, but then that will smutup the top. It can also be used for sea sickness and, of course most important of all, as a head protector. Isn't it surprising how many things can be said about a helmet?

As the weeks and months passed in 1941 we continued to get our new arms and equipment. We already had Browning 30 cal water cooled machines with an effective rate fire of 125 rounds per minute in the three machine gun companies of the regiment, but now each rifle company had a weapons platoon, consisting of two sections of 30 cal. air cooled light machine guns and two sections of 60 millimeter mortars. The regular machine gun companies got new 81 millimeter mortars. We began to get these new arms , including BAR's (Browning automatic rifles), as well as jeeps, 3/4 ton weapon carriers and 2½ ton kitchen baggage and personnel trucks. These were most welcome since we were spending most of our days training on the reservation and on the rifle ranges and instead of having to walk home every evening we were sometimes able to ride.

The kitchen trucks usually brought us our noon meal and we all lined up for "chow" with our mess kits and canteen cups for milk or ice tea in the summer and coffee when it was cold. Because of our outdoor appetites everything that was brought to us we ate, and I mean everything whether we liked that particular food or not. One thing we promptly learned was the importance of thoroughly washing and rinsing our mess equipment. Food particles and grease, even soap left on, would quickly spoil, particularly in hot weather, causing diarrhea. Of course, we had other names for it and it wasn't very comfortable to have. The cooks from each company would provide two 40 gallon galvanized cans filled with water kept boiling over oil flame heaters to which soap was added, and two other similar cans without soap for rinsing. After eating we would scrape what little was left in our mess kits into garbage cans, hang the mess kit handle on the handles of our canteen cups , and each man would swirl these in the hot soapy water and then rinse them. You may wonder why I mention this in detail -- it is because it was important for us to keep as fit as possible and a slip-up could effect a lot of people at a time. We were not always able to do this, however, and sometimes I have even had to

clean my mess kit with dry sand, but never when I could boil it.

Along with our new equipment we began to get out first draftees or selectees as they were later called. The first World War II area draft act was passed in September 1940, and In December 1941, just after Pearl Harbor, the period of service for all selectees was extended until six months after the official end of the war in Europe as well as in the Pacific. In all, over 10,000,000 young men between the ages of 18 and 37 were eventually drafted, and by and large these were the men who made the difference in the outcome of the war. In March 1941 our company strength was three officers and 140 enlisted men.

In April 1941 we had a distinguished visitor. President Roosvelt came to look us over and review the division. I suppose that he wanted to see what progress we were making. He looked just like his pictures with his cigarette holder held jauntily in his mouth.

About the middle of 1941 we had another unfortunate thing happen in the company -- we lost our 1st Sergeant. He went on leave one week-end and we never heard from him again or never knew what happened to him. The company mess sergeant, Sgt. Woodrow Hawkins, was moved up to 1st Sergeant and proved to be an excellent one. I don't know what we would have done without him. Actually, the 1st Sergeant and the other sergeants really run the companies. While officers have responsibility and command -- sign "Morning Reports" and "Sick Books" and have power under the 15th. Article of War (company punishment) -- the sergeants live close to the men and know their strengths and weaknesses. I think that I learned early on that if I wanted something done, and done quickly without a lot of red tape, to go to a sergeant, in most instances, and not to an officer. This worked for me during all the war years nine out of ten times. When I got to be a company commander and called, "First Sergeant -- dismiss the company!" I always tried to remember to walk off right away and not hang around because I knew he usually had his own comments and instructions to give before he actually did "Dismiss!". Sometimes I knew there were things it was just as well I not know too much about.

Along about this time Lt. Tedder went off to the Infantry School at Ft. Benning, Georgia for a three months course. This left Lt. Dickerson and me to run the company. As senior, I commanded, but actually we ran it together, since there were only the two of us officers and only one with the company when one of us was on special assignment training the incoming selectees to bring them up to the level of the "old" soldiers of the company. Lt. Dickerson was a good officer and a good friend. Earl was an ex-sergeant in the peace time years and, therefore, knew the "ropes". Although we parted late in 1942 when he was transferred to Company B of our 1st Battalion, we came together again when I went to Company B as C.O. many months later.

I don't think I told you but when the division first came to Ft. Jackson, and for all the time we were there, we were quartered in the old National Guard's summer training area, which consisted of a wooden mess hall and kitchen and one long single story wooden barracks in the enlisted men's area. This building had no windows but had a waist high cut-away section which could be raised for ventilation. It could hold about 40 men and there was an orderly room and supply room at one end. The building was screened and heated with stoves. The rest of the company and the officers lived in squad and wall tents erected over wooden floors and 2 by 4 framing that came up to head height, was screened and had screened doors. When the weather was warm the sides of the tents could be rolled up for ventilation and in the winter it was heated by conical Sibly stoves with pipes through the center holes. There were spark arrestors at the end of the pipes and care had to be taken that these stayed in place to keep the tents from catching fire or holes burned in them. Five men slept in each tent. Doesn't sound very comfortable to live in for two years, does it? Actually, we grew accustomed to it and it sure beat sleeping on the ground, as we often did when we spent the night on the reservation. Oh yes, we did have a wooden latrine with running water and sinks, showers and commodes. This was the lap of luxury compared to what we later had in Iceland.

You can imagine, however, the feeling of the young trainees straight from the comforts of home. I well remember about the middle of February when we got our first really large group of selectees. They came about three days before we were told to expect them. For the week before their arrival we had been rushing to build additional tent frames and had a few tents up. Regular contract carpenters had almost completed a wooden day room at the end of the company street. Well, this particular night it was raining heavily and cold and I was in the orderly room catching up on some paper work when I heard the sound of stamping feet in the mud outside in the company street, and a strange sergeant came to the door with the criptic comment "I've got your new Draftees outside, Lieutenant". I went to the door and there in the muddy street, sitting on their equally muddy barracks bags, were 25 of the most bedraggled and unhappy looking young men I had seen for quite a time. I asked the sergeant where he had gotten them from and he said from a railroad siding about a mile away, and that they were from New York and New Jersey. Well, I thought, "This is the army, Mr. Jones", but I couldn't help but feel a pang of pity and compassion for them. I put on my helmet liner and raincoat and went to welcome them to their new home; I can only imagine what their thoughts were. With the good work of the 1st sergeant, mess sergeant and cooks we finally got them out of the weather, hot food in them, and cots for the night crowded in with the other men and in the unfinished day room with a fire in the stove for the first time. I even saw a slightly happier look on some of the new young faces -- their first appreciation for even the small things in life, which I suppose is one of the first things a soldier begins to learn. My own thoughts I am afraid were: situation normal -- system all screwed up -- as usual. Then I realized that as far as the selectees were concerned I was the system, at least for that night.

At this time our selectees were coming to us in such large numbers each week, totally untrained, that the division realized it was impractical to absorb them directly into the regular training schedules of the various companies. As a consequence they were assigned on arrival to a training regiment for three weeks basic training before being assigned

to the companies. As you might have guessed, I was assigned with other officers and non-coms to this training regiment in addition to my regular administrative duties with Company L. At the same time, reserve officers were also called up and at mid year 1942 the company was atfull strength with a full compliment of officers: 6 officers and 193 enlisted men. It was a whole new ball game.

We had some happy times as well as ones of sorrow. After being assigned to our company we lost three of our selectees though death -- two from illness and one from a rifle shot. One selectee accidently discharged his rifle when cleaning it after coming off the range. We never determined how the round was left in the chamber. We tried to leave nothing to chance and be as careful with the young trainees as possible. It was our regular practice before leaving the range to give "inspection arms" and, while the bolts were open, for an officer to put his little finger up the chambers of the barrels and visually check the magazines. I was thankful that I wasn't the range officer at the time, Although I knew he was not at fault, it didn't diminish my sorrow. One of the hardest and most hea rt-breaking things a commanding officer has to do is write letters to the next of kin. There was always moisture in my eyes when I did.

It was now time for the 30th Division to leave Fort Jackson for army maneuvers in central Tennessee . This, I suppose, was our dress rehearsal and lasted for thirty days. This was the largest maneuvers held up to that time and was participated in by several divisions, including an armoured division commanded by Maj. Gen. George Patton, who was later to command the tank divisions that swept across France and Germany and contributed so much to the defeat of Nazi Germany.

The maneuvers were held in the rolling hills, almost small mountains, in the middle of Tennessee in the rural area around Murfreesboro and Shelbyville, southeast of Nashville. When we left our assembly areas we left our squad tents and canvas cots behind and stayed in the field for the entire time , sleeping in our pup tents and on the ground and constantly moving over the hills. Some of those hills were so steep that often our artillery had to winch their guns up into position and leave their trucks at the bottom. Although we occasionally rode from place to place in trucks, our regiment, being infantry, moved mostly on foot. We grunted and puffed up the hills and dug our heels in coming down. It was particularly hard on the men in our weapons platoon who had to carry, in addition to their packs, the machine guns and mortars One carried the machine gun tripod and another the gun itself. Others carried the mortar base plates and still others the tubes and bipods.

I remember one short stocky little selectee whom we called "Red" Mason, was assigned to carry a mortar base plate, which was a flat metal plate about a foot square and weighed about twenty pounds. It was carried in a canvas bib like pouch which fitted around the neck. "Red"had worked with a traveling carnival in New Jersey and was a right outspoken little fellow. Well, one day the company had been walking pretty much all day, up and down, and it was getting on towards evening when we came to a particularly steep hill. I had gotten almost to the top and was pretty much "pooped" myself when the platoon sergeant of the weapons platoon blew his whistle to get my attention and when I looked back down the column he was pointing to "Red" who was sitting on the ground slumped over his base plate. I should have mentioned that the weapons platoon was our fourth platoon and was the last in the company column, which meant that the head of the column was sometimes at the top of a hill while the weapons platoon was just starting up. I thought that "Red" had

passed out, and thought, "Oh, no, why did it happen now when I am almost at the top." An officer isn't supposed to get tired, even if he is, so I started back down to see what the trouble was. "Red" hadn't passed out -- he was just plain mad -- and I could hear him cursing even before I got there. I won't tell you what he was calling the hill, the base plate or the army. When I finally got to "Red" the first thing he said was, "Lieutenant, I have lugged this --------- base plate all day and I ain't carrying it up that hill; I guess you'll just have to go ahead and courtmartial me." If I hadn't been so tired myself I guess I would have "chewed him out", but what I did say, as nearly as I can remember after all those years, proved to be more effective, which was, "Red, you know this country is pretty wild, not like New Jersey with a lot of farms around and it will soon be dark. Also, for sure, nobody is going to carry either you or your base plate or bring you supper. I'm not going to courtmartial you. I'm just going to leave you here." With that I turned and started back up again, and near the top I looked back and, to my relief, I saw "Red" on his feet and coming up. I never had any more trouble with "Red", but I have wondered what I would have done if "Red" had left the base plate behind, or if I really would have left him.

Our mess sergeant and cooks took real good care of us. We had at least one hot meal each day and three hot meals on Saturday and Sunday when we were in bivouac. The rest of the time we ate either C or K rations. The C rations were more filling, but the K rations were more tasty. The K rations came in three types -- breakfast, dinner and supper and were packages in small brown cartons, about 1 3/4" by 4" by 8" in size and coated with paraffin for water proofing. The breakfast ration was perhaps my favorite. It contained a small can of powdered scrambled eggs mixed with chopped ham, several biscuit like crackers, a small container of jelly, some instant coffee, a little sugar and powdered milk, two cigarettes and a small pack of toilet paper. The K rations were light and easy to carry while the C rations were a little bulkier and were usually carried in a jeep or weapons carrier and were in medium sized little cans containing a variety of mixtures such as pork and beans, beef stew and mixed fruit. There was also a can of round hard crackers which, when taken out and soaked in water, would swell up into soft little biscuits. Once I ate some when they were dry and drank water right away. I don't think that this was a very good idea since they swelled up inside of me and I wasn't very comfortable. One advantage of C rations was that the cans of pork and beans or beef stew could be wired against the engine of a jeep or truck and, after a few miles, you could have a hot meal.

Speaking of meals, I got a good first hand look at rural mid-Tennessee economy one day. I was way out from nowhere in the rolling hills with twenty men on what was called a reconnaissance when midday came and the truck that was to bring our rations didn't show up. A half hour passed and no food. Not far away I saw a lone farmhouse on the side of a hill, so I told the men to wait on the road and I would go to the house and see if I could get us something to eat. When I came up to the house a woman, a little boy about ten years old and two teenage daughters came out. I told her we were hungry and asked if she could feed us. I told her we would pay. She said that they would be glad to and asked how many. When I told her twenty-one she said to bring them up in about forty-five minutes. The kitchen was a separate building with a covered dirt-floored breezeway connected to the house. An hour later we were sitting on benches around wooden tables under the covered breezeway. On the tables were dishes and pans of the finest country food I believe I have ever eaten. As I remember there was country ham, pork sausage, fried liver, a big p plate of cold fried chicken, hot biscuits, homemade butter

and jam, boiled potatoes, corn on the cob, all the milk we could drink and real buttermilk with little lumps of butter. She apologized for not having time to cook some apple pies. It's been forty-three years ago but I can almost still taste that food. We were delighted that our food truck had gotten lost. After we had eaten and expressed our appreciation for the fine meal, I asked how much she wanted in payment. She hesitated a moment and then said, "Would 20¢ apiece be too much?" We all agreed that twice that much would be too little, but 35¢ apiece was all she would agree to take.

Due to the frequent evening showers and the clay hills, it was sometimes difficult to find a dry place to sleep. Even with our pup tents the rain would sometimes run in. I remember one night near a little town just north of Shelbyville with the unusual name of Bellbuckle which had an unusually high hill near it on which we found ourselves one rainy night. The ground was so muddy that I didn't want to be down on it but I saw split rail fence nearby and decided to sleep on top of it. There are few rail fences left today, and you may not have seen one, but there were quite a few in central Tennessee at that time. They are made by splitting eight or ten foot logs about 10" in diameter in four pieces and laying the pieces alternately in a zig-zag pattern on top of each other, as you would make a match stick house. Well, I took two of the top pieces off of the top and laid them across one of the zig-zags of the fence, spread half of a pup tent over them and tied it on with a tent rope. This made what looked like a stretcher. I laid down on it high and dry, pulled my raincoat over me, including my head, and had myself a fairly comfortable night. Of course, a soldier can sleep anywhere when he is tired enough. I'll bet Abraham Lincoln never thought the rail fences he used to split would ever be used like that.

Bathing and washing was sometimes, but not always, a problem. There was usually a break on the weekends in the exercises and we usually went into bivouac at that time near a stream deep enough to bathe and wash our clothes in. As a special treat we sometimes got a jeep or a truck and went into a nearby town to a barber shop for a shower. For 25¢ you got a small towel and the use of a piece of soap. Many barber shops at that time offered this as a regular service and the ones in central Tennessee did a land office business on Saturday afternoon and Sunday. Also on Sunday mornings our own chaplains conducted church services and we didn't have to dress up for that.

The people in Tennessee were very good to us and put up with lot. With all the tanks, artillery pieces, vehicles, moving all over the countryside, on the roads and off, there was bound to be some broken down fences and churned up fields and orchards. I remember in one little town with a bank on one corner of the main intersection that Patton's tanks were passing through. One of the tanks, in turning at the intersection, had a tread lock on one side and plowed into the bank and knocked off one whole corner of the building. About the only time I thought that I saw a farmer really lose his patience with us was one noon when the company had stopped for "chow" near a farm with a well in the side yard. It had been a very hot day and all of our canteens were just about empty. I asked for and got permission for us to drink and fill them. A line promptly formed, but it didn't last long. We drank his well dry in forty-five minutes, but the water would come in again overnight, so it wasn't too bad.

When the maneuvers ended we went back to Ft. Jackson to more comfortable quarters

Well, back to late 1941. We finally got another officer, 1st Lt. Peyton Hartley: the first of several reserve officers we were to get in the next six months. Lt Hartley was a welcomed addition as far as Earl and I were concerned. It meant we didn't have to stretch ourselves quite as far and could get to bed a little earlier at night, since after being in the field all day we had to check the administrative affairs of the company at night. We were finally getting used to wearing the uniform, saying "Sir" and thinking more like soldiers than civilians. We had been in the Federal service for a year.

The original plan was for the division to remain on active duty for one year, but with the threat of war increasing every day this period was extended. However, the men were given the opportunity to be discharged and a few asked for this. The majority elected to stay in. Most of those who got out returned to one of the armed services a few months later after war was declared -- some in the air force, some in the navy and some back in the army.

At the end of September 1941, after those who elected to were gone, our company strength was 4 officers and 113 enlisted men. About this time Lt. Tedder returned from the Infantry School and the division went on maneuvers in northwest South Carolina around Chester. While these were in progress I received orders to the Infantry School. Nanny left our little daughter with her parents and drove up to the maneuver area to pick me up. She had a little trouble finding me with all the different units scattered over the countryside. I went out looking for her and found her after dark, parked by the side of the road waiting, with the doors locked. Poor little thing, I knew that she was worried with all the trucks and soldiers on the roads and no me. She was real good about it, though, and we drove home for the week-end and then I was off to Columbus, Georgia for three months at Ft. Benning at the Infantry School.

Fort Benning is a very large and old regular army post located on the Georgia side of the Chattahoochee River on the Georgia-Alabama line. It has long been the site of the Army's Infantry School. When I was there parachute troops were also in training. There was a regiment of the regular army, the 29th Infantry, which acted as training and demonstration troops for the students.

It was just like going back to school for me, with classroom and outdoor bleacher lectures and instruction, and with oral, written and practical tests. At the successful conclusion of the course each officer got a diploma. My class consisted of about 200 officers, mostly 2nd and 1st lieutenants with a few captains, and was designated as Company E of the Second Student Training Battalion. The official name of our training was "Rifle and Heavy Weapons Company Officers Course". There were also several other student battalions in various stages of training on the post.

We were quartered in regular enlisted men's barracks and were issued M-1 Garand rifles, bayonets and full field equipment. During training we wore light green coveralls and, except for our insignia of rank, we were privates again. In the evening we wore our regular uniforms and could go to the officer's club if we cared to. Our class had

officers from all of the United States, the Hawaiian Islands and Puerto Rico. The school was well organized and thorough and, while in many ways it was a repeating of what I had been doing for the past year, it gave a chance to compare the way we had been training with the professional way -- not as good, of course -- but not bad either. Since the training emphasis was on infantry weapons, it gave me the opportunity to learn the finer points and become proficient in firing them. I learned, for example, just what amount of force to use in the "two mil tap" when firing the machine guns in traverse and search fire. This is done by sitting behind the gun with the knees bent, feet on either side of the trail piece of the tripod and tapping with the heel of either hand on the side of the gun just above the trigger. If the traversing knob is loosened slightly, but still with some tension, the proper tap should move the barrel of the gun 2 millimeters to the right or left. With each tap the trigger is pulled for about a 2 or 3 second burst, which in theory covers the fire zone without leaving gaps and without firing off an entire belt of ammunition in an uncontrolled swing. I mention this to show the difference in training at Benning in controlling the gun and not just merely firing it.

There also were field problems in which a tactical situation would be outlined as to opposing forces in different terrains and officers of the class were called on to give their solutions. Usually there were several correct solutions , but only one was considered the best. This was known as "the school Solution", which usually led to our chanting a school's witticism: "Here lies the bones of Lt. Jones, he gave his life on the field of strife, clutching the school Solution".

There were many fascinating things for me at Ft. Benning. One that I particularly remember was the little narrow gauge railway system that ran to the ranges and maneuver areas. The engines were real little steam engines and the cars were covered and open-sided with wooden benches. I enjoyed riding on them very much. They reminded me of the little trains at amusement parks.

Another unusual and surprising thing was the way the written test was given after we had finished studying and firing the 37 millimeter antitank gun. This was a small artillery piece that the ~~anti-tank~~ company of an infantry regiment was armed with. It had a caliber of 37 millimeters with about a six foot barrel and was mounted on wheels, and fired a 10" long round. It had a very high muzzle velocity and, because of this, when it was fired it made such a loud sharp crack it would literally shake your teeth. Well, when it came-time to take the written test we were given pencils and paper, taken to the range and sat with our backs to the guns. At odd intervals one of the guns were fired without our knowing when -- disconcerting,you can bet, but the purpose was to see how well we could think when we were tensed up after the first few rounds.

Nanny and my precious little daughter, your mother and grandmother, who was 3 years old at the time, came down to see me Thanksgiving week-end while I was at Benning. They brought Mazaree Wilson, a young colored girl who had been working for us off and on for a few years. I rented a two room apartment in the post bachelor's quarters, and arranged with the adjutant of the 24th Infantry (colored Troops) for room and board for Mazaree at the home of one of his married non-commissioned officers. Nanny, Margaret and I ate our meals at the post officers club and had a wonderful Thanksgiving dinner. It was a time to be truly thankful that we could be together. We didn't realize then that nine months later we would be separated and not see each other again for a little over three years.

The following month, on December 7, 1941, the shock and sadness of Pearl Harbor occurred and we found that we were at war with Japan as well as Germany and Italy. I don't think any of us were surprised but were shocked about the way it occurred. After war was declared hardly a day passed that the names of some members of our class were called out during lectures or exercises. This meant that they were being recalled to their units for redeployment or movement to the Pacific area. The first to go were officers from Hawaii and the west coast. We paused a moment to tell them good-bye and wish them God speed. Those of us from the eastern part of the country waited for our names to be called, but after awhile it appeared that we would not be called and the remaining members of the class graduated on January 30, 1942 and returned to our units.

When I got back to Ft. Jackson the first week in February 1942 I found a decided increase in activity. We all knew that it was just a matter of time before we went overseas. The only question was when and where. I also found that my father-in-law, your great-grandfather, had retired from the army and had moved back with Mother Hoover to Hartsville to take up his duties again as rector of St. Bartholomew's. This was a wise move since Father had served in World War I and was 63 years old.

With war declared the draft system really got to working overtime and our division began to receive large numbers of selectees directly from the induction centers. They had only been issued uniforms and barracks bags and had no basic training at all. It was up to us to see that they were trained. Fortunately, however, the older officers and non-coms were much better qualified to train the selectees after the year of service and officers' attendance at the Infantry school. Of course, there were problems and heartaches and lots of homesick young men.

Shortly after I returned to Ft. Jackson, Nanny and little Margaret, who had now reached the mature age of four and was a little doll, joined the Army. Of course, Nanny, who was only twenty-eight, was also a doll, only a little bigger one. What they did was find an unfurnished apartment in Columbia on South Harden Street just up the hill from Five Points, move some of the furniture from our house in Hartsville, and set up housekeeping. We became an army family to our friends and neighbors. And when I wasn't on duty, Nanny would come out to the post for me and I could spend the night at the apartment. We would have to get an early start back to the post in the morning though. Little Margaret was always very careful to observe proper military courtesy and returned the salutes of the post gate military police everytime she went past. I can see her now -- standing very straight on the front seat with her little hand, fingers rigidly extended, to her forehead. The MPs always gave her a big smile along with a snappy salute. We went on picnics on Sundays and it was a happy time for me after the past two years.

I suppose it was selfish of me to let them do it since I had such little time with them and it was hard on them away from family and friends with nothing much to do all day. At any rate, it wasn't for long and it did give me something to cherish in the years of seperation to come.

Our days were full and the last few months at Jackson passed fairly quickly. Nothing unusual happened to me except for two things -- one bad and one good. I developed pneumonia and had to spend awhile in the post hospital. The good was that while I was in the hospital I was promoted to the rank of captain. When I recovered and was out of the hospital, I left Company L and took command of Company K of the 3rd Battalion of the regiment.

Around the middle of July 1942 we had a division review for some very important visitors. We were becoming a part of history. Our visitors were British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, Field-Marshall Sir John Dill of the British Army, General Sir Alan Brooke, chief of the British Imperial Staff, Secretary of War Henry Stimson and our own Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall. Shortly after they left our regiment received its overseas movement orders. Except for a battalion of the 115th Field Artillery, which was to go with us, the rest of the 30th Division was to remain at Ft. Jackson for awhile. We liked to think then that when Churchill saw our regiment he picked us out and asked General Marshall to send us on over. Whatever the reason, we were soon on our way.

You will recall that early in my story I described the make-up of our division. Our regiment, the 118th Infantry, together with a battalion of the 115th Field Artillry, was now formed into what was designated as the 118th Infantry Combat team. Since we were no longer a part of a division, we became available for a great variety of assignments, such as garrison and outpost troops as were in Iceland, as airport security, as training troops for replacements, and later as occupation troops in Germany. This had its advantages as well as disadvantages. While we were spared much of the hardships and suffering of the front line divisions, it meant that we were available for any unusual and sometimes odd-ball assignment, and many more moves than the average regiment. Often our battalions, and even companies and platoons, were separated from each other by long distances and for long periods of time. Our T. O., or table of organization and promotions of officers and non-coms, was frozen for the most part. One thing for certain, we never knew where we were going and what we would be doing next for the next three years. We became seasoned travelers and could move at a moment's notice.

After our reorganization, we spent the next two weeks at Ft. Jackson packing and getting ready for our move. For security reasons we were not told where we were going. We measured off and staked out on the ground the exact sizes of box and flat railway cars and practiced loading our vehicles, weapons and other equipment.

At this time I moved to the 3rd Battalion Staff as S-3, or operations officer. Also, a number of our older and trained officers and non-coms left the regiment to serve as cadres for new divisions being formed. However, we were brought back up to strength with reserve officers and officers from other regiments and also additional selectees. Col. Withington was transferred and a regular army officer, Col. E. G. Sherburne, assumed command of the regiment. He proved to be an excellent and compassionate officer, and we were fortunate to have him.

On the 3rd of August 1942 our regimental headquarters and 2nd and 3rd battalions left our quarters at Jackson and marched to the railroad siding at the west end of the post and loaded into pullman cars for our trip to New York. Our 1st battalion remained behind, but would follow in a few weeks. Nanny and little Margaret came down to see me off, and the last I saw of them was standing by the track waving as the train pulled out. I tell you, it was a sad feeling and I guess I was crying a little inside.

As a troop train we had movement priority and moved rapidly north. We didn't go directly to New York but got off at Perth Amboy, N. J. and went by ferry directly to a dock in lower Manhattan, and there boarded a British troopship, "H. M. T. Batory". We remained on her overnight and sailed out of New York Harbor the next morning, August 6th, in a small convoy for Halifax , Nova Scotia, although we didn't know it at the time. All troop movements during wartime were secret. The Batory was a Polish passenger ship of about 18,000 tons that had been at sea when Germany invaded Poland. She had put into a British port and had been turned into a troop transport. All of her officers were Polish, and only a few could speak English. Our main contact with them was through the British liaison personnel aboard. Although most of the enlisted men were in the usual troop compartments, officers and senior non-coms were assigned staterooms. Being a captain, I was given a first class cabin with a full size bath tub. The only trouble was there was no water for it. For Armament there were four gun tubs to the side on the boat deck with twin barrel 20 millimeter rapid firing Bofors in each end a 3" gun at the stern.

Two days later, after an uneventful passage, we arrived off Halifax harbor. The harbor is large and deep and,as we followed a destroyer through the opened submarine net into the inner harbor, we saw that it was filled with many ships: troop transports, cargo ships and warships, mainly corvettes and destroyers, both British and American. Halifax was the turn around port for north Atlantic convoys and where the convoys gathered for the crossing to Europe. We waited two days anchored in the harbor, waiting for our convoy to assemble, and sailed on August 10th.

Our convoy was made up of eleven large liners, some larger than our own, sailing in four columns. Ten carried troops and the one just ahead of us was a heavily armed British Auxiliary cruiser (a converted merchantman). Our escort consisted of the American Battleship, Arkansas, one light cruiser and twenty-eight destroyers. We were the largest convoy to sail in the war up until that time. The reason for the heavy escort and the battleship and cruiser was that in 1942 Germany was winning the battle of the Atlantic with her submarines and her few large capital ships in her surface navy were considered capable of standing off out of range of the destroyer's guns and sinking one ship after another at leisure with their larger caliber guns. Our escorting destroyers were deployed in an outer and inner ring and, except for the occasional sighting a mast tip on the horizon and the distant sound of one or two depth charges, the only destroyers we saw were the ones in the inner ring. These would pull in closer as night came and cruise through the columns, checking to see that the black-out was being strictly observed. The Battleship Arkansas, with the cruiser following, was at the center of the convoy, and every morning that the sea was not rough the cruiser would catapult

a small float observation plane which would scout ahead of the convoy for an hour or two. On returning it would land in the water and be hoisted back aboard the cruiser. The British gun crews on the Batory instructed our men in the handling of the Bofor guns and we began standing regular watches in the gun tubs. We were still not told where we were going and all of us, except perhaps the regimental staff, thought that we were going to England. Thanks to the care taken in planning our excort, we had a safe and uneventful crossing with sea sickness the only disagreeable thing we had to contend with. I was fortunate and, excent for the first few days, I had no trouble in adjusting to the rolls and pitches of the North Atlantic and soon had my sea legs.

About a day off the west coast of Ireland our ship and the British auxiliary cruiser, together with a destroyer and two British corvettes that had joined us off Ireland, broke away from the main convoy and started north. We knew then that we were not going to England and were probably going to Iceland. This was confirmed by a briefing of all officers the next day, and we passed it on to the men. We felt rather important: one ship with four excorts and, except for rougher seas, the trip continued uneventfully.

About noon of the third day we approached Reykjavik, Iceland from the south and had our first look at the large island that was to be our home for the next fourteen months. From what we could see through the mist, it appeared rather bleak and forbidding, and I expect a number of us were beginning to wish Mama hadn't raised her boy to be a soldier. As we slowly came into the harbor blinker light on the shore began to flash and the ship's air raid siren began to sound along with general quarters. We continued on to our anchorage with all our guns manned, but all we could see was one lone plane over the center of the harbor, almost too high to be identified. It turned out to be a German four engine Focke Wulf, which was probably on a reconnaissance mission, and left before any of our fighters from the nearby airfield could reach his altitude and intercept. It was as though the Germans were expecting us and was our first, even though remote, contact with the enemy. After crossing the whole ocean without a sighting we wondered what we were getting into. We needn't have worried, however, for except for these reconnaissance flights we never had any real contact all the time we were in Iceland. The only thing close was when our first Battalion came over a few weeks later on another ship. It was also met by a Focke-Wulf which dropped only one bomb which missed the ship, which was then at anchor, and exploded on the shore with no damage at all.

The Batory stayed at anchor in Reykjavik harbor for two days while we anxiously waited to disembark. What we could see of the town close up looked a little better and we knew there were American troops, and also a large airfield nearby. In late afternoon of the second day the Batory and the British auxiliary cruiser raised anchors, left the harbor and started north again. My thoughts were, "What now, where else was there to go?" We soon found out. All that afternoon and night and the morning of the next day we sailed along the west coast of Iceland, mostly in sight of land. We rounded the northwest corner, or claw, and turned east along the north coast. A few miles to the north was the Artic Circle. We came at last to the entrance to the Eyjafjordur , which is a long and narrow

fjord in about the center of Iceland's north coast. We turned southward, went up the fjord for about 20 miles and came to anchor off the little town of Akureyri.. We had finally reached the end of our journey. Akureyri looked to be about the size of Lamar, S. C., but we found later that it was the second largest town in Iceland. We had been on the Batory for three weeks. Thus our voyage ended, and my first crossing of the Atlantic.

Through our field glasses we could see British army personnel and 3 ton British Bedford trucks on the waterfront, so we knew at least someone was expecting us. Col. Sherburne and some of the regimental staff went ashore to see what the situation was. On his return we learned that we were the first American troops in all of Northern Iceland, and that we were to relieve two battalions of the York and Lancaster regiment of the British army with their attached artillery. These men had been furnishing security in a large area up and down the fjord in small company and platoon size outpost camps. We had seen a few of these Nissen hut camps on the banks as the ship had come in. The York and Lancaster had been evacuated from Narvik, Norway after the ill-fated effort by Britain to drive the Germans out, and had been in the Akureyri area ever since. They were to go back to England on the same ship that brought us over and, needless to say, they were delighted to see us and gave us a royal welcome when we came ashore. We learned that when British soldiers were happy they came to attention with a one-two stamp of the feet with a big smile and a quivering palm out salute, followed by a hearty one pump hand shake. We also were surprised to learn that that our vehicles and heavy weapons, which we had packed so carefully, had gone on to England in the hold of another ship and we would take over the York and Lancaster arms and vehicles which they would leave behind. Each of us was to keep our rifle and side arms however.

After we had learned all this, we were ready to go ashore, but it wasn't all that easy. The Batory was too large to go along side any dock at the town and we would have to ferry everything ashore. Major Hovis, the Regimental Supply O. (S-4) and myself, as operations officer of our 3rd battalion, were given the unloading job. Maj. Hovis had gone ashore to look things over and try to line up some barges and fishing vessels to act as tugs and to take the men off. I remained on board to organize the disembarkment. I had finished with the personnel movement schedule and was standing by the rail with our battalion executive officer, Major Jeter, when he must have felt inclined to "get into the act". At any rate, I remember he turned to me and said, "Unload the ship" and turned and walked away. I don't know why he said this, since I knew neither one of us had the slightest idea or experience except what we had seen in pictures of how to unload a ship, much less one the size of the Batory. I did learn one thing right there, though. If you want something done , just say so -- even used it myself later on. Well, I found the ship's British liaison officer who could speak Polish and arranged for the crew to take the cover off the one forward hatch and man the hoists. Then I organized working parties in the holds and on deck to load the cargo nets and guide them over the side. I also found that the ship had water line doors opening from the holds which were a big help. By that time the first barge and fishing trawler were along side, and away we went. I wish I could say as smooth as silk but that wouldn't be quite right. It took all the rest of the afternoon and

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missing

a little of the night to unload and move everything to the main British supply base on the edge of the town. Then all that remained was to start sorting it out, and moving it to some thirty different camps with unlikely names of Bragholt, Sugar Beer, Fagriskogur, Pity Me, etc., that the British had named their camps. Some of the camps were near isolated Icelandic farms and were given the names of the families that lived in these. Others were just plain British wit. I don't know why -- they were hard to pronounce, much less spell, but we decided to keep the names -- maybe a little American wit. The only reason I remember how to spell them is from some old papers I found.

The British were very helpful in furnishing drivers and guides, and by the end of the next day we were settled into our new homes and the British on the Batory. All that remained was a brief relief ceremony and signing for the British equipment at each camp for the take-over to be complete. The Batory then sailed for England and left us with a feeling of isolation.

Our 1st Battalion, which left Ft. Jackson a few weeks after we did, landed at Seydisfjordur on the east coast of Iceland and were quartered there for ten months, until the regiment got together again in the Reykjavik (pronounced Wreck-a-vick) area a few months before we sailed for England. Since they were about 126 miles away with no passable roads we didn't see them at all during the time we were separated

Our 3rd Battalion staff, headquarters company, and Company M took over the same camp that had been the headquarters of the British Hallamshire Battalion of the York and Lancaster Regiment, and for that reason, was a little larger and better equipped than some of the other camps. The name of the camp was Krossastadir (Kros-ah-starter) and was located about twelve miles north of Akureyri on the south bank of the Horga River, which flows into Eyjafjordur from the west. This river flowed through a narrow valley with steep high mountains on either side. It was about 150 feet wide near our camp, with rocky banks and bottom, swift in places, and with crystal clear and very cold water. When I first saw the valley it was an unusually calm, clear and sunny autumn day, and breathtakingly beautiful. The air was so clear as to appear invisible, and the distant mountains looked to be closeenough to reach out and touch. Our valley went all out to give us a pleasant welcome and we were to remember it with nostalgia when the weather turned bleak in the months ahead, with gusting winds, and rain and snow and ice, and the long winter nights. We soon found that Iceland was a land of extremes.

Perhaps you would be interested in the lay out of our camp, and the comforts we had, or didn't have, and how we lived. The British had already erected Nissen huts for sleeping quarters, and for kitchens, mess halls and supply storage. Our battalion headquarters was a series of connecting Nissen huts and we had one very large Nissen hut for recreation and church services. Our Nissen huts were made with curved piecesof sheet metal fastened to semicircular steel frames, forming a round top and sides, with wooden ends with doors and windows and some with dormers with windows on the sides near the middle of the huts for light and ventilation. The inside of the huts were lined with 2" thick sheets of insulation. The huts were shaped like a tin can cut in two lengthwise, and were particularly suited for places with high winds and snow, since snow tends to slide off and there is less resistance to wind. Rocks or sandbags were stacked

(pages 123 &124 do not exist)

around the bases to anchor them further against gales. For heating, we had round stoves shaped like drums with chimneys through the roofs.. We managed to stay warm if not always completely comfortable when the weather turned very cold. Later on I bought a sheepskin to fold over my feet at night. Sometimes I put newspapers between my blankets to help retain body heat. This worked pretty well.

For lights we had a medium sized electrical generator located in a barbed wire enclosed hut about 150 yards from our camp's edge to reduce radio interference. Our water supply was a small mountain stream flowing down through the center of camp. This was dammed just above the camp causing the water to back up, forming a pond with about a six foot depth at the dam. A four inch pipe ran through the base of the dam and was buried in a ditch running to accumulating tanks in a hut below. The downhill flow of the water from the dam built up enough pressure for spigot flow like a water tank over a town. We could even heat water in a boiler for showers and when water froze in the dammed pond we still had flowing water from the bottom of the reservoir. Unfortunately, our plumbing comforts ended there. Due to the hard volcanic makeup of the soil and the fact that in the winter the ground actually froze to a depth of about 10 inches, septic tanks or pit latrines were out of the question. In fact, about the only way you could dig in the winter was with a pneumatic drill. As a result, our latrines were built of rocks with tin roofs and old wooden two, four, and six holers with buckets under them. The backs of the latrines had hinged wooden lift-up doors for removing the buckets. You can imagine the chilly drafts that occurred when the weather was cold and the ground was covered with snow, and little time was spent in them; in fact, sick call brought many complaints of constipation until our medical officers found a simpler solution. They arranged for portable kerosene heaters to be put in the latrines. That part of life became a little more bearable after that.

The British had surrounded all of the camps with concertina barbed wire. This was 4 foot diameter rolls of barbed wire which, when stretched out spirally, kept their rounded shape and stayed upright. Tin cans with rocks in them were fastened at intervals , which would rattle if moved. The only sounds we ever heard though were from sheep and ponies that sometimes wandered around at night when they got cold when the wind blew hard. The wire did give us a sense of security when it was snowing heavily and the walks between our huts were covered. We knew we couldn't get confused and wander off from the camp into the snow and darkness. I remember one time in a heavy snow I couldn't find the walkway to the mess hall for supper so I just ate a can of beans I had and went to bed.

It may be of interest to you that when I first moved into the battalion headquarters' huts, I found a regimental crest of the York and Lancaster Regiment on the entrance door. It was hand painted by a British soldier and showed a tiger with a white rose with a smaller red rose in its center under a crown and with a wreath surrounding them. I understand the crest, not the painting of course, dates back to the English civil wars and was from the 1455-1485 "War of the Roses", when the House of York fought the House of Lancaster for possession of the English throne. The House of York took a white rose for its emblem and the House of Lancaster used a red one. I removed the crest from the door and managed to hang on to it. It is now fastened to the wall of the den of Nanny's and my house.

Perhaps it would be well, before going on with my story, to tell you a little about the strange land we found ourselves in. Iceland is a large sparsely populated island in size approximately 300 miles from east to west and 190 miles from north to south. It is located 520 miles northwest of Scotland and 215 miles east of Greenland and about 700 miles west of Norway. Its north most point touches the Artic Circle. Our camp was 25 miles below the circle. On the south coast is the North Atlantic and on the north coast is the Arctic Ocean. In 1942 the entire population of Iceland was only 130,000 with about one quarter of the people living in Reykjavik, which is the capitol. The rest are scattered along the coast in small villages. Practically no one lives in the interior of the island since it is mainly lava fields, glaciers and mountains. The mountains are rather high -- the highest has an elevation of about 7,000 feet and Vatnajokul is a very large glacier with a snow cap and ice field approximately 80 miles east to west and 60 miles from north to south. There are several other much smaller glaciers in the interior. Actually, you might say that Iceland is a volcanic island, with a good many extinct volcanoes and one, Mount Hekla, which still smoked a little when I was there. There are many thermol springs and hot water from them was used to heat hothouses for growing vegetables and fruit, and for heating houses and swimming pools. For these reasons, Iceland could be aptly described as a land of ice and fire. There are no trees to speak of in Iceland and this perhaps was the thing we missed most. The people were all of Nordic stock, sturdy, with fair hair and skin, and almost without exception well educated. There was a good public school system and even a university in Reykjavik. The language could probably best be described as ancient Scandinavian from which the modern Norwegian, Swedish and Danish languages came from.

In May 1939 England occupied parts of Iceland in a surprise move in order to prevent an occupation by Germany, as she had Norway, and in July 1941, even before America was actually at war, the Icelandic government, feeling it was in their best interest and since they had no army of their own, invited America to send troops for their protection. Also, I suppose they felt that since America was then a neutral, there would be less chance of Germany moving against them than against British troops.

Well, to get back to my story -- with the British gone we began to take stock of what we had and to make a home for ourselves. As the battalion operations officer I had gone over the ground with my British counterpart before the relief, and knew pretty well what we had. All of our heavy trucks were 3 ton Bedfords and smaller cars and trucks were Hillmans, naturally, with the steering wheels on the wrong side, as far as we were concerned. Our machine guns were Vickers water cooled guns that took .303 caliber cartridges instead of .30 caliber as we used in our M-1 rifles, and the artillery pieces were 25 pounder British guns. Fortunately we were left diagrams and instruction manuals and we were kept pretty busy getting familiar with our new equipment. There were a few unexpected surprises however. A few days after our arrival, the Captain of K Company, which was quartered at Skoger, the next camp on the river road to the west, called battalion headquarters and when I answered he asked, "What am I going to do with all these little horses?" The British had failed to mention them and I hadn't noticed them on the property inventory. Anyway, I went to Skogar and found ten little long haired Icelandic ponies in an enclosure around a Nissen hut for a barn. The British had used them for

pack and ammunition carriers and had left feed, harness, saddles, pack racks, and horse blankets -- the whole works. They had found the little animals well suited for the rough off road terrain. We kept the ponies, but, except for recreation riding and pets, had little use for them. I've often wondered what happened to them after we left. I hope they were not eaten.

One of our missions was to provide security for Eyjafjordur (I-ja-fea-ode) as a turn-around harbor for the British Home Fleet when it patrolled the North Atlantic out of Scapa-Flow. One of the main purposes of these patrols was to keep the German battleship Terpitz, and other capitol ships of the German navy, from leaving their ports in Norway and elsewhere for raids on allied shipping. To prepare for this part of our mission we reworked the road the British had built up the mountain behind our camp, and made new machine gun positions high above the camp overlooking the valley. There was little chance that we could shoot down a German plane with our .303 caliber Vickers guns, but they were all we had in and we thought that we could keep them flying high, and if they did come down the valley they would be almost level with our guns and we might have a chance. At least we could give the anchored fleet warning of any attack. Our plan was to take the guns up in trucks and put them in place when an alert sounded. The only trouble was that we had our first practice we found that the pits and sandbagged positions had filled up with an early snow which had thawed and then froze solid and we had to set up the guns in the open. Remember we had been training for over two years in the southern part of the United States, where there was little or no snow, and we had to learn a whole new way of doing things.

Being in a rather isolated and out of the way place, we had a low priority on arms and equipment and had to make do with what we had. I remember that just beyond our northernmost camp on the fiord we built and sandbagged gun emplacements and put telephone poles in them pointed towards the sea to simulate coast artillery. It was our hope that they would look real in aerial photographs taken from the high altitudes that the German reconnaissance planes flew. When snow was on the ground our men tramped through the snow back and forth between the emplacements once each day to make the "guns" looked manned. We never found out if we really fooled the Germans. But high flying planes did come over and we presumed photos were taken. Our own planes took a few pictures and they looked pretty real, so perhaps it wasn't a complete waste of time. We did get two 90 millimeter anti-aircraft guns just before we left, but the planes were too high for their range and they only fired a few rounds in practice. Two of our planes did manage to shoot one German plane down just off the coast, and our navy picked up seven survivors. These were the only Germans we saw all the time we were in Iceland. Our airforce built a small field at the south end of the fiord with about six fighter planes. Due to the rough terrain the runway was very short, and ran down a slight incline to a high cliff over the water. The planes would rev up their engines and take off with as much speed as possible and shoot off the end of the runway, something like taking off from an aircraft carrier. The young pilots took great delight in "buzzing" our vehicles on the roads and often startled us when they came over with a roar. They weren't supposed to do this, of course, but they knew that we weren't going to report them.

In mid October 1942 we had our first visit from the British Home Fleet and a chance to see the naval might of our ally. It was a most im-

pressive sight. The fleet consisted of four battleships: H.M.S. King George V, Ansul, Howie and one other that I don't remember the name of. There were heavy and light cruisers, one aircraft carrier and a number of destroyers. Since the fiord was very deep, the battleships and some of the cruisers came all the way up the fiord and anchored off Akureyri, while the carrier and destroyers stayed at sea off the mouth of the fiord and patrolled to protect the fleet from surprise. Some of the officers and sailors came ashore, and we met our first British naval personnel. What impressed me most was their cheerful, professional and businesslike manner. They had been at war for three years, and struck me as people who knew exactly what they were doing. The fleet stayed in port for two days and sailed on the morning of the third. The fiord seemed very empty without them.

Because Camp Krossastadir was located near the farmhouse of a family by the same name, there was a fairly large sheep corral in the valley near the camp. This corral was built with stone walls about four feet high and divided into a number of separate pens with openings in them. In November, before the heavy snows came, the Icelandic families in the valley held. what you would probably describe as a sheep roundup in order to put them in their winter enclosures. We had grandstand seats and were interested observers. The people, both men and women, came dressed in trousers and wearing calf length rubber boots and riding their little ponies and, with the help of their sheep dogs, drove the sheep from the mountains into the corral and into the pens of the different owners. The women seemed to work just as skillfully and as hard as the men, perhaps even harder. The ponies seemed to know their job, too. The Icelandic pony is a rugged remarkable little animal, with long hair and short legs and a docile nature. The Icelanders had many uses for them -- for riding, as pack horses, for leather and for eating. I never did like the idea of eating pony steak, but tried it once. It was a little tougher and stronger tasting than beef, but not too bad.

I had never seen sheep dogs at work and was amazed at what they could do. At times they brought to mind good bird dogs "making game" as they anticipated the moves of the sheep. The Iceland sheep were a little different from most sheep in that their wool was not kinky, but long haired like the ponies. They were used for their wool, hides and for eating.

There were a few nice salmon in the Horga River and, since I always enjoyed fishing, I borrowed a fly rod from a friend, that his family had sent to him, and set out to try my luck. I remember there was one 3 foot salmon that I could see from the bridge that seemed to stay in the same place all the time, that I thought I might have a chance at. Unfortunately, that salmon was much smarter that I was, and I wouldn't be surprised if some of his great-grandchildren are still near the same spot. It was a little chilly the first time I went, and ended rather abruptly when, after a short while, ice flakes began shedding off the fly line when I stripped it in to make casts. I decided to call it a day when my fingers got so cold I could hardly feel the line. I went several other times, but never could seem to get the hang of how to get old grandpa to strike.

A transport came into the fiord in September 1942, bringing USA doctors and nurses to staff the British hospital at the south end of the

fiord. Also aboard were more American engineers, signal corps and service troops, and soon Akureyri was a busy little base with a PX (post exchange), supply depot and all. Since our regimental headquarters was located near the town and our 2nd battalion occupied camps around it on up the fiord, we visited it from time to time and got a feeling of "going to town", which made us feel less cut off from everything. I was surprised as to how well stocked some of the Icelandic stores were in the way of hardware, tools, lanterns, etc., which we were able to buy to make ourselves more comfortable. There was even a silversmith shop where beautiful hand crafted bracelets were made and a small factory for tanning seal, sheep and pony hides. Since a good many of the Icelanders could speak some English, we were able to make our purchases without too much difficulty, and I bought Nanny a silver handmade bracelet, a sheepskin and a sealskin pocketbook while I was in North Iceland. The monetary unit was the Krona, which, when compared to our dollar, was worth about 12¢. This didn't necessarily mean that we could always buy things at "bargain basement" prices because the prices in the Krona were adjusted accordingly. I thought, though, that the prices were fairly reasonable considering the long distances most of the goods had to be shipped. This was the first of many different monies we had to get used to in the countries we were stationed in.

As 1942 came to an end, and December and Christmas approached, the days became shorter and shorter and we had to make a major adjustment in our life style. The sun began to rise at 11:00 AM and set again at 3:00 PM, and the first snows and gales came. It was a real problem to know what to do during the long hours of darkness. Although we tried to observe reasonable training and duty hours, by necessity we had to stay inside much of the time. I suppose that we began to learn what cabin fever really meant.

Our morale remained surprisingly good, however, and I suppose that the newness of it all kept us on our toes. We were issued, and carried at all times, live ammunition but, except for an occasional German reconnaissance plane and the remote possibility of a raid from the sea, we had no contact with the enemy in any way. I suppose, though, the element of doubt made things a little more real and spirits up.

For our personal comfort we were issued some cold weather gear in the way of synthetic alpaca lined waterproofed parkas, which came to just below our knees, with hoods attached, long-sleeved woolen sweaters and galoshes for our feet, which had rubber bottoms and leather tops, and were fine for wearing in the snow. These, together with the woolen caps to wear with or without our helmet liners, kept us fairly comfortable. Nanny knitted me a long woolen scarf which I sometimes wrapped around my waist when it was particularly cold and, of course, we all wore heavy woolen underwear. Actually Iceland isn't as cold as the name sounds, since it is warmed by the gulf stream which flows not far from the south coast, and extreme sub-zero weather is infrequent. But the humidity is high and the cold is damp and penetrating, particularly when the wind is blowing hard.

We tried to make our first Christmas away from home as happy as possible and with as much of the Christmas spirit as we could. I was surprised at the ingenuity of some of the men in making decorations from

paper and tin cans. Since there were no trees, I remember one camp that had a beautiful Christmas tree made from a 6' piece of 2x4 with lengths of barbed wire wrapped around at about 6" intervals and trimmed into a conical shape with wire cutters and with strips of newspaper hung from the wire. There was a tin star at the top cut from a flattened out piece of tin can Things like that, together with a little Christmas music, gifts from home and good food, made it almost bearable. I suppose that one of the hardest times for a soldier to be away from home and loved ones is at Christmas time. I missed Nanny and little Margaret very much and played a game of make believe that I was with them -- going over in great detail in my mind our Christmas meal and being around the Christmas tree together. It made them seem a little closer. Each Christmas away we told ourselves that we would be home the following one, which gave us something to look forward to. I'm glad that we didn't know then that three Christmases would pass before we would go home again.

The first few weeks and months of 1943 passed slowly, with our continuing to try to stay active and find things to do during the short days and long nights. It all seemed so strange to us. Sometimes during blizzards the roads were completely blocked by snow, and I remember one night it snowed so hard our hut was almost completely covered by snow and when we opened our door the next day the snow was chest high and we had to dig our way out. My living hut was divided into two sections and I shared a half section with Captain Corcoran who was the battalion adjutant. One particular cold night we were sitting in our quarters reading, when we heard a bumping on the door. Captain Corcoran went to see what it was and when he cracked the door, so as not to let too much cold air in, it was jerked out of his hand and he was pushed back into the hut, followed by a shaggy little Icelandic pony that came right on in. It took us both, pulling and pushing , to get him back out again and send him on his way with a slap on his rump. We sort of hated to put the little fellow out in the snow, but then we weren't about to share our quarters with a horse. Which reminds me of a saying that we had -- that it was so lonesome tha t after the first six months you started talking to the sheep, after the next six months they started talking back to you, and after that you just went around listening. I also remember that we went for almost a month without seeing the sun. This was because our camp was in such a deep valley, and the sun moved in such a low arc during that time that, even on clear days , it never rose above the mountains on one side of the valley.

I remember one afternoon I was riding into Akureyri with one of our battalion medical officers to take care of some business at our regimental headquarters. It was late in the day and already dark. We had hoped to have supper at the regimental mess before returning. There was snow on the roads before we left but not bad, but after about twenty minutes we ran into a heavy snow storm. There was no wind, but the snow was falling in large flakes. When you drive in heavy falling snow it looks as though the flakes are coming directly into the windshield, parallel to the ground, and not downward. This makes it difficult to see the road. We had our lights on and driving very slowly when we saw the tracks of a small vehicle had left the road and disappeared over a rather high bank. We stopped our car to investigate and found that one of our few American jeeps that belonged to our engineers had run off the road, turned on its side, and pinned one leg of the driver, who was alone, underneath it. The driver was conscious but in considerable pain and the

doctor determined that his leg was broken. There was danger of his going into shock from the cold and the jeep was in such a position as to be too heavy for us to lift. Fortunately, we had some blankets in our car and we used these to cover him with and sent our driver on to the next camp for help, a stretcher and some medical supplies. The only thing that we could do was wait and assure the driver that we would soon have him out and on the way to a warm place. Soon our driver returned with a truck and plenty of help to lift the jeep. The doctor gave the injured soldier a shot to ease his pain, put a splint on his leg, and we put him on a stretcher completely wrapped in blankets, and took him to the next camp which was only a mile or two down the road. I have often thought how fortunate it was that we came along before the snow had covered the tracks going off the road, and that there was a doctor in the car with me. The good Lord was certainly looking after us that night.

On clear calm nights we often were treated to a vivid display in the sky of the Northern Lights. These are known as Aurora Borealis, and are rays or electrically charged particles shot from the sun which collide with the gases of the earth's atmosphere near the poles. This causes them to change their charge and make a glow something like a fluorescent light bulb. They make quite a show, sometimes like a shimmering, flickering ribbon standing on its edge and extending from horizon to horizon with colors in green, yellow, and sometimes red. All this was strange and new to us.

Fortunately, we had several moving picture projectors available for the battalions use and a good supply of pictures which we could change around from camp to camp and these helped shorten the winter nights. On the whole, our food was adequate and tasteful, but we did get a little weary of powdered eggs, powdered milk, and spam for breakfast.

When the ice froze on the Norge River, Special Services sent us some ice skates and skis, and officers and men took turns trying them out. I learned to ice skate and ski after a fashion, but my ankles kept turning over when I skated, and I moved mighty slowly when I skied, so perhaps it's a slight exaggeration to say that I learned how.

We had to be a bit careful when we wore the hoods of our parkas over our heads and chins and the drawstrings pulled tight around our faces. The condensation from our breath sometimes froze and would stick the alpaca lining to our lips. The only thing to do then was to cup our two hands over our mouths and breathe hard so that the warmth of our breath would thaw it out.

In order to try to have as much continuous security as possible in the area, our camps observed different days for worship and rest. For example, one camp would have Sunday on Monday and another on Thursday, etc. Regular Sundays for some camps was just another duty day. This gave our chaplains an active schedule and required them to do a lot of traveling. Sometimes the roads would be blocked, but most of the time we had our services. Capt. Corcoran was a Catholic and, sometimes, when a Protestant chaplain could not get there, I would go with him to the Catholic services. I remember that the priest was always so good about explaining everything in the services for those of us that were not too familiar with it. All of our chaplains regardless of denomination, Catholic, Protestant or Jewish, were a great group. I suppose there is

no better place to learn the true meaning of tolerance than in the army.

Near the end of March 1943 our camp's electric generator broke down and we couldn't fix it for three weeks because a part needed replacing and it had to be sent up from Reykjavik. I think that we must have bought all the gasoline pressure lanterns, kerosene lamps and lanterns in Akureyri and, of course, candles. We missed our picture shows and the nights were a little darker -- but with April came longer days, and we were soon to learn what the midnight sun was all about.

There are no snakes in Iceland and not many wild animals. There are a few arctic foxes and seals along the coast and a good many rats. There are mosquitoes during the summer, but they don't bite. There are large numbers of birds -- sea birds and ducks. There is one inland game bird about twice the size of a quail called a Ptarmigan. These are of the grouse family and change colors in the winter to pure white to blend with the snow. There were a good many in our valley, and when the snow first melted in the spring they had not yet changed back to their quail colors. This made them look like little snowballs scattered over the valley. They were excellent eating but we had no shot guns to hunt them with. There were beautiful White longnecked swans that migrated to the valley, and large rafts of ducks of many species on the fiord.

I don't think that I mentioned it before, but for the first few years of the war we, and our allies and the Germans too, carried gas masks. Later when it became apparent that neither side would use gas, the masks were dispensed with. That spring we still carried masks and, like helmets, had to be worn to get used to. It was our practice for everyone to put them on for twenty minutes at a set time each day for training purposes, and to be sure the masks were kept adjusted properly. Normally these periods went by without incident except everyone looked like people from Mars. I remember once, though, that I got a chuckle. One day in early spring when the ice had just broken up in the fiord at Akureyri, our regimental executive officer arranged for a small naval launch to make a reconnaissance up the fiord for the purpose of mapping its banks. As our battalion operations officer (S-3) I went along to make map sketches with the 2nd Battalion S-3 and the regimental exec. Everything went according to plan until near the mouth of the fiord we ran into a squall with pretty high wind. The boat began to roll and pitch and heavy spray was coming over the bow. We were all holding on and not far from being seasick. The exec., who was a career officer who had a reputation of always doing things exactly by the book, was up by the man at the wheel, and the others of us were in the cockpit at the stern. I saw the exec. look at his watch two or three times and realized that it was getting close to the time of day for gas mask drill. The other S-3 and I had no intention of putting on our masks in the rough sea, but figured the exec. would, and got up a little bet as to how long it would stay on. Sure enough, when the time came the exec. put his mask on and turned his big goggled eyes on us to see if we were complying. We made a big show of just holding on and did nothing. I think that his mask stayed on for about three minutes when he made a rush for the side. I don't remember who won the bet, but it was worth it. We were both disappointed that he got the mask off in time.

Russian ships never came into our fiord and there was really no reason for them to. I remember though one that did, under rather unusual circumstances. One morning our naval signal station picked up a wireless request from a Russian freighter to have an ambulance meet the vessel when it came in and pick up the ship's doctor. In order to know what to be prepared for, a message was sent back asking for more information and what the emergency was. It turned out that the ship's doctor was a woman and was pregnant with complications. We learned that a good many Russian ships had women in the crew as well as Norwegian and some other of our allies. In fact, the next ship we were on had stewardesses.

As spring and summer came on the days got longer and longer and the nights shorter. The snow melted and we could take off our parkas. It now became a problem how to fill our days. In May the cod fish ran up the fiord and we organized daily fishing parties to augment our rations. There was a pier at a nearby fish oil factory that we fished from and we sent trucks around to the camps and issued the cod like rations. The fish were very greasy and not too tasty but they were a change from our regular fare.

When supply ships came in they brought us some frozen meat and sometimes cold storage eggs as a change from powdered. The eggs were long in storage with a strong taste but they were in shells. I remember one shipment that was stamped "Union of South Africa". The ships also sometimes brought us Coco-Cola and beer which were rationed so many bottles and cans per man. When these came in there was always a pick-up in poker games. Capt. Corcoran and I kept our ration ice cold in mesh onion bags in the mountain stream which flowed just outside of our hut. I never knew "coke" could taste so good.

Summer came and with it the defeat of Germany and Italy in Africa and Russian successes on the eastern front. Iceland seemed no longer threatened, and it was time for us to leave Northern Iceland and begin our move toward Europe. Although we were to spend four more months in Iceland it was in more pleasant surroundings in the more populated south. I don't think that any of us was sorry to leave Akureyri and we looked forward to being around people again.

Escorted by two British corvettes, our own 3rd battalion, with regimental headquarters, left Akureyri and Eyjafjordur on a U. S. Navy supply ship at the end of May 1943. We sailed into the Arctic Ocean and around the west coast to Reykjavik. Although we were at sea a day and a night, the sun never set. It seemed unreal to us to see the sun start down below the horizon and, before it was out of sight, start up again. We stayed close to the coast and had an uneventful trip, with no submarine or air contacts. The sea was fairly smooth and it was a comfortable trip.

The regimental headquarters and the 3rd battalion disembarked at Reykjavik and moved by truck to a number of camps in the area around the town and on the Keflavik peninsula. These camps were groups of Nissen huts which had been previously occupied by American troops who had now moved on to England. Each camp was of company and platoon size, and were pretty well scattered over the countryside. Our own 3rd battalion moved into camps in about the only flat land in Iceland,

a large lava field about twenty miles to the southeast of Reykjavik and stretching for about thirty to sixty miles along the south coast, and about five to twenty miles in width. It was made up of rather fine redish lava dust and small rocks, and there were small areas of dark sandy beach along the Atlantic Ocean. There were a good many thermal springs (hot springs) and large areas of tundra grass. The Westmann Islands were in sight about six miles off the coast. These are the islands in which a volcanic reuption occurred in January 1973, which almost covered the small village on the largest island with lava, and in November 1963 a new island erupted from the sea bed. However, they were completely dormant at the time we were in Iceland. It was a completely different land than the one we had just left, and a few new things for us to get used to. For example, when the wind blew hard it wasn't snow that came under the cracks at the bottom of doors but fine red lava dust, and we had to sweep it out in the mornings. We soon learned to pack the cracks with rags and paper in windy weather.

The battalion headquarters camp was not far from the Olfusa River which emptied into the Atlantic a short way to the south. There was still a little ice in the river, but this soon melted. We had no specific assignment except perhaps as garrison troops and spent the time mostly in housekeeping chores and making ourselves as comfortable as possible. About a week after we arrived we experienced our first small earthquake. It was the first time for us and was an eerie feeling. The huts vibrated, the doors creaked, and the vehicles in the motor pool rattled, but no damage occurred. We had a number of these little quakes during the next few months but learned to shrug them off. I awoke one morning and saw steam coming out of the side of a not too distant mountain. I wondered about it but nothing happened. We learned later that these were hot springs, and the steam was more noticeable under certain atmospheric conditions. I was relieved to know it wasn't about to blow its top.

Our 1st battalion shortly left Seydisfojordur on the east coast and rejoined the regiment after an absence of a little over ten months. Theyoccupied camps on the perimeter of the Kaflevik airfield. The 2nd Bn had remained in Akureyri(as Northern Sector HQ)until Sep '43, then came to the Reykjavik area.118th Inf was together again as a Regt.

In June 1943 I received a rather interesting assignment which proved to be an enjoyable one. I received orders to report to the U.S.A. Tactical School in Reykjavik as Secretary or Adjutant. This was temporary detached duty and gave me the opportunity to make friends with a number of officers and men of the Royal Norwegian Army, and to work with them and share their recreation. I also had my first close contacts with British Army personnel.

The Tactical School was really a winter warfare and ski school, established by the U.S. Army for the purpose of teaching company grade officers, from all over the island, cold weather survival and how to ski. Students were then to teach their own men when they completed the course and returned to their units. It was staffed with American and British officers for classroom instruction and with Norwegian officers and sergeants as ski instructors. The main school was located on the outskirts of Reykjavik, and the survival and ski instruction area was located on the side of a mountain behind my old camp above Akureyri. I think the reason at first was that in the event a decision was made to use American troops in an invasion of Norway they needed to know how to ski and live in the snow. Earlier in the year I had taken the written entrance examination which I

passed and was waiting to be posted as a student officer. Instead, I joined the staff as adjutant. The reason for this was that, with the war moving more rapidly in Africa, Italy and Russia, it was thought that it would be better to let the German troops in Norway " wither on the vine" and by-pass them. With this in mind, the decision was made to close the Tactical School, and I was to help deactivate it. This was scheduled to take six weeks. This wasn't a very difficult thing to do and, as soon as the last class returned to their units, the school was deserted except for the staff, and plans for disposing of the equipment were quickly made. Actually, I think that we could have closed the school in a weeks time, but I think that we had all learned by then to take things as they came, the good with the bad, and not to be too eager beaverish." At any rate, we saw no reason to question the schedule. If we were going to have a little time on our hands to sightsee and enjoy ourselves -- why not? At any rate, it was going to take a little time to arrange transportation to the U.K. (United Kingdon) for the Norwegians and British. So, as the saying goes, we "just relaxed and enjoyed it". It was one of the few times in my service days that things really seemed to "ease up".

After the first ten days my working day consisted of opening up the school office, checking with the C.Q. (Charge of Quarters) to see if anything had happened during the night, opening the mail, arranging it for distribution, setting up duty personnel for the next 24 hours, checking with the school commanding officer to see if he needed anything or had any instructions for me for the rest of the day and then, if I wasn't on the duty roster myself, sitting down and thinking what the heck to do with myself for the rest of the day. The Norwegian friends I made usually supplied an answer to the latter. There was one Norwegian captain, by the name of Hardy Algren from Oslo, that I liked particularly and we spent many enjoyable times together. Unlike some of the other Norwegians he could speak English well and we had no trouble in communicating. Captain Algren had been in the Norwegian army when the Germans invaded, but had escaped by crossing into Sweden, which was neutral, and taking a ship to Africa. He then crossed to Gilbraltar, made his way to England from there, and then to Iceland. He was about my age and we found we had a lot of interests in common. The Norwegians had several vehicles assigned to them for their personal use and Captain Algren had the use of a four-wheel-drive personnel carrier with three rows of seats and glass windows and was something like our land rover cars. He also had a sergeant driver. With the time and the transportation, Hardy and I took many enjoyable and interesting trips, and saw sights I would not have ordinarily been able to see. Another plus was that the Norwegian language was somewhat similar to Icelandic and Hardy had made friends with some of the Icelanders. He had been in Iceland since the British first came and knew his way around.

Even though our troops were in Iceland on the invitation of their government, the Icelandic people had made no effort to welcome or socialize with us in any manner. The language and different life styles had something to do with it, but I think that most of them objected to the necessity of our being there and afraid of being involved in the war. With Captain Algren I had the opportunity to get to know some of the people for the first time. I was pleasantly surprised to find some of them could be almost friendly. I remember one particularly enjoyable overnight trip Captain Algren and I took to Pingvellir (pronounced Thing-va-leer) which is the largest lake in Iceland and one of the sources of the Olfusa

River. It is approximately fifteen miles due east of Reykjavik. Hardy had made friends with a family by the name of Karastadir (Kar-ra-starter) who had a farm on the northwest bank. We took a two man tent, bedrolls, cooking utensils, fishing rods and some food. The weather was ideal for camping and was about as warm as it got. Even then, I slept in my bedroll, wearing heavy underwear, wool socks and my shirt. We made camp in a hayfield at Karastadir farm , and were invited into the house for supper. The house was very large and built entirely of concrete. Actually, like many Icelandic farm houses, it was made of several gabled two-story wings built together. The family proved to be almost as large as the house. The old gentleman had eleven children, some of whom were married and lived with their children in the wings of the house. We ate supper in a little upstairs room with the farmer and his unmarried sons. His wife and two unmarried daughters served us paper thin Icelandic pancakes, which were folded over and eaten with cream, homemade cake, jam and coffee spiked with whiskey. The old gentleman couldn't speak English and Hardy had to interpret for me. It seems that when guests were present the men always ate first and then, when they were finished, the women of the family ate. After supper the two youngest daughters, lovely blonde girls who had studied English in school, played on an old foot organ and sang for us. Surprisingly, they sang such songs as "The Trail of the Lonesome Pine," "Old Black Joe", "My Old Kentucky Home" in English for me, and then some beautiful Icelandic songs for Hardy and their father. Just as it was getting dark -- about midnight -- we thanked our hosts and went to our tent for the rest of the night.

The next morning, the daughters brought us some fresh eggs and milk still warm from the morning's milking. We cooked the eggs with some spam and ate them with the milk for breakfast. After breakfast we went down to the lake to fish. The young daughters had brought some oars with them and Hardy said they would row us in two boats while we trolled from the sterns with fly rods with spinners and hooks concealed with earthworms. The fish were real trout, not bass like we have at home, and with bright pink meat like salmon. The trout were not large, most were about 1½ pounds, but very scrappy. The water in the lake was a transparent greenish-blue, and you could see them swimming near the bottom in fifteen feet of water before they struck. The girls rowed skillfully and effortlessly but seldom spoke unless spoken to. They did smile from time to time when we showed our pleasure when we landed a fish, and seemed to be enjoying themselves. I wondered what they thought of the strange foreigners who got so excited over a little fish. After about two hours we had all the fish we could eat, and had turned some loose. We had brought a little British Primus stove with us, a skillet and a tin of lard and some salt. We cleaned the fish right on the rocky bank and the girls cooked them for us. They were delicious -- the fish I mean. It was now time for us to leave for home, which we did reluctantly. I got the feeling again that the Icelandic ponies and the women did most of the work.

Although we came from different continents, thousands of miles apart, I think one reason Capt. Algren and I became good friends was that we both liked to fish and shared an appreciation of the outdoors. Hardy showed me how to cook codfish so that they were very tasty, not greasy, completely unlike the ones we caught and cooked in Akureyri. First, let me tell you about our cod fishing trip. In our wandering around Reykjavik we had met the keeper of the inner harbor lighthouse and he agreed to let

us use his dory to fish from. We went after supper and took along, besides our tackle, some apples and candy for his children and a bottle of sherry for him. We knew he wouldn't let us pay him for his boat. The lighthouse was on a small island and at low tide you could walk across the rocks to it but at high tide you had to go by boat. When we got there the tide had started coming in and we had to call to him to come for us and he took us out in his launch. We landed at his little pier and the children came running down to welcome us, and we gave them our presents. They could speak no English but each held out his or her little hand and solemnly shook hands with us. The keeper then took us out into the bay to where his rowboat was moored in deeper water and left us. We rowed out to deeper water to the fishing rocks. For bait we used seaworms which are dug on the beach wherever any sand could be found among the rocks. They are something like grub worms and are excellent cod bait. The fish were biting well and it wasn't long until we had about 15 nice fat cod in the boat. The smaller are a bright redish-brown in color while the larger ones are greyish-silver color. We stopped fishing about 10:30 PM, but the sun was still shinning brightly.

We took the cod home and promptly cleaned and cooked them. We boiled them, which Hardy said was the Norwegian way. Cod are naturally very oily, and when fried become even greasier. We cleaned the fish thoroughly, scrubbed the fat from the stomach cavities with a small brush, then cut them crosswise into 1½ inch steaks and salted them. We then put them in water which had been brought to a boil and let them continue to boil for about 10 or 15 minutes, at which time the meat began to separate from the bone and a greasy scum had boiled out and formed on the surface of the water. We skimmed this off and the cod was almost ready to eat. I say almost because, since we had boiled out all the oil, we needed to put just the right amount back in, which we did by melting butter and mixing the juice from two lemons, which we were fortunate enough to have, and then a little salt and pepper. We put the cod on a dry plate and then poured this over the flakey white meat. We ate the cod with some small Icelandic potatoes which we had boiled in a separate pot -- oh boy, was it good. Since we had a little butter left, we melted it, mixed it with hot water and rum, and had a hot buttered rum before we turned in. It was well past bedtime and I was soon asleep, "fat and happy".

One other plus about my new assignment was the good food we had. When the school was first established an effort was made to get the best available cooks on the island, and since all of the students were commissioned officers, a mess and club fee was charged them. This was used to stock up with some of what I would call fancy groceries, such as frozen steaks, anchovies, olives, bottles of pimentoes, cheeses, lemons and a good supply of all kinds of wines, beer and liqueurs. Arrangements had been made with the airforce to fly these in from the states. When I first arrived and made an inventory, I was amazed at the amount that was left. The school commandant told me that plans called for what we didn't use ourselves, by the end of the six weeks closing period, were to be prorated among the units remaining on the island. You can imagine what happened -- like all good soldiers, British, Norwegian and American, when given the opportunity, stuffed outselves.

Since the staff consisted of some fairly high ranking officers a certain amount of formality was observed in the mess and we wore neck-ties and blouses at the evening meals. However, the good food made up

for this inconvenience. The meals had an international atmosphere, with conversation around the table in Norwegian and English. Most of the Norwegian officers spoke a little English, or rather thought they could, and tried to practice it on me. Half the time I had no idea what they were trying to say and usually just grunted or nodded my head in reply. To tell you the truth, the British were a little hard to understand also, since this was my first contact with them. Our mess consisted of four American full colonels, the senior Norwegian officer, Lt. Col Stenersen, the seniour British officer, Lt. Col. Whitehead, two Captains, Hardy and I, five lieutenants -- three Norwegians, one British and one American,-- and, oh yes, one Sub-lieutenant from the Norwegian navy, a young woman who was secretary and aide to Lt. Col. Stenersen. We all gathered in the mess hall a little before time and ate hors d'oeuvres and had an appetizer of Sherry, scotch or bourbon before we sat down to eat. With our meals we usually had two kinds of wine and, if we could hold it, a liqueur afterwards. Even with all of our gorging there was still a good bit left over at the end of the six weeks, but we gave it a good try. The war seemed an awfully long way off, but the "Midsummer Night's Dream" in the"Land of the Midnight Sun" was over all too soon, although it was something to think about with the army chow of the long months to come. Looking back it's hard to realize it really happened just like I'm telling it.

I suppose the army tried to utilize any skills that the enlistees and drafted selectees had in assigning them to the various branches of the service. However, with the hundreds of thousands that were drafted or enlisted it was probably inevitable that this was not always done. I remember once when this certainly was so. With the students gone, the school barracks were empty and were used once while I was adjutant as temporary quarters for replacements when they came to the island until they could be sent to the various units that needed them. I was asked to take a small Icelandic fishing trawler up the coast to a fiord about 15 miles north of Reyhjavik, in which an American transport had anchored, and pick up about 40 replacements. When they were all aboard , and we had started back, I noticed one unhappy looking much older replacement sitting on the deckhouse. I had been answering questions which the younger selectees had been asking. Thinking I might be able to cheer him up I spoke to him. He was just waiting for someone to tell his story to. He first asked me if there were any railroads in Iceland, and when I told him, "No", he told me that being 42 years old he was too old to be drafted, but wanted to do something to actively help the war effort. He said that he had been a railroad engineer in civilian life, so he hd enlisted with the understanding that, after a little basic training, he would be assigned to the railroad section of the Transportation Corps. Well, there wasn't much I could say to him except that he would probably be moving on to Europe before too long and would probably get his chance then. I wonder what happened to him.The army certainly"missed the boat" or in this case the train.

Where people are concerned, the world can sometimes be a small place. One day I stopped at the Red Cross canteen in town for some coffee and a doughnut, and while there heard a young woman Red Cross worker talking with a southern accent. I asked her where she was from and she said, "Ruth Ballard, from Tarboro, North Carolina". I told her my father's people were from there and that I had an uncle, aunt and two cousins still living there. I told her their names and she broke out in a big smile -- turned out that her brother was engaged to be married to my cousin, Louise Bryan. I had not heard about it. Louise is now Mrs. J. P. Ballard and lives in Cornelia, Georgia. She has two sons and several grandchildren.

Before the school finally closed I took two more very interesting sightseeing trips with my Norwegian friends. One was to Gullfoss, a beautiful waterfall, and to Geysir (ge-sir), the largest geyser in Iceland was nearby, and the other was to Lake Laugarvatn (La-gar-vatin) which is a small lake with a hot springs boiling from the bottom in one part. Both trips were made with Capt. Algren and two of his lieutenants in their personnel carrier.

Gullfoss is in the southwestern part of Iceland, about 30 miles west of Reykjavik, and one of the beauty spots of the island. Translated into English it means "Golden Waterfall". This is an appropriate name for when the sun shone on the mist from the falls it was a beautiful sparkling, golden color. Below the falls the water rushes through a deep gorge. We stopped at a little inn near the falls for dinner (mid-day) and were served a typical Icelandic meal. First we had mutton broth, then a main course of more mutton, homemade hard bread, Icelandic potatoes, which are smaller and darker than ours and taste like mutton too, since they were cooked with it, hard little green peas, and very strong tasting coffee. The main course was served family style, with everything on one big platter.

After dinner we went on to Geyser, which is, when not spouting, a hole in the ground about 15 feet in diameter filled with water which boils up out of the ground and is surrounded by grey lava rock. The geyser had no set time for spouting and sometimes soap was put in to make it gush. It wasn't active when we arrived there, so Capt. Algren asked one of the Icelandic wardens if he would put some soap in for us. This he agreed to do but to the tune of 250 kronur (roughly $33.00). Hardy told him that we didn't want to buy the thing but only wanted to see it spout. After an exchange of words, we were informed that the reason for the expense was that it would require 120 pounds of soap. It sounded to us like a lot of "soft soap", so we decided to just skip the whole thing.

The geysers and hot springs are found in many parts of the island. It was a strange sight in winter to see them surrounded by snowbanks but steaming with hot water. I used to warm my hands in them. The water from many of these hot springs were used for heating houses and hothouses for raising vegetables, fruits and flowers. When I was there there was a project underway for heating the entire town of Reykjavik with hot water pumped through pipes from nearby springs. The hot water was also used to heat municipal swimming pools, which was quite an asset. There was one of the pools in Akureyri, but I am sorry to say none near Krossitader. We could certainly have used the water in our showers instead of having to heat it.

My last trip with the Norwegians was to Laugarvatn and was also a pleasant one. Laugarvatn is not far from Pingvallavatin, which was the lake I went trout fishing in that I told you about earlier. Laugarvatn was a smaller lake, however, but the hot springs were of considerable size, and was a swimming resort for the Icelanders. I wished that we had had time to try the swimming. There was a large inn near the springs which was used as a boarding school during the winter and a hotel during the summer. After looking around a bit we had supper at the inn before starting back. The meal was a true smorgasbord. I helped myself

to some dried fish that looked like strips of wood -- tasted like wood too, but had plenty of vitamins, some small Icelandic potatoes , mutton in thin slices, gaffelbiter (smoked herring), congealed salad and some tomatoes from the hothouse nearby. I had my eye on something that was in a large bowl and which I took to be salad dressing. I had every intention of putting it on my tomatoes when I saw an Icelandic woman start heaping it into a small bowl, and then put milk and sugar over it. On questioning, I found out it was dessert -- something like our milk clabber.

There were many of the beautiful little Icelandic children at the inn and I gave chewing gum to some of them. Needless to say, my thoughts were far away at the time, with another little light-haired girl of my own. There were many women there dressed in the colorful Icelandic long dresses. These were women of the "old school" with little black tasseled caps. Hardy told me that the colors are changed after marriage. Some of the younger ones seemed to be getting away from this mode of dress, but almost all of the older women still wore it.

I am sure that had I not been assigned to the Tactical School, or made friends with the Norwegians, I would never have seen what I did of Iceland, or learned what I did about the Icelandic people.

It was now time for my Norwegian and British friends to leave for England and the school to officially close. The night before they embarked Lt. Col. Stenersen hosted a farewell dinner party. There were many speeches made, toasts drunk. I was presented a large illustrated book titled "Alt for Norge!" ("Norway Forever") with the Norwegian freedom symbol "17", and with my name on the fly leaf and a note of appreciation for my assistance to the men of the Norwegian armed forces in Iceland. This was signed by a Major General for the Norwegian High Command in London. Unfortunately, the entire book is written in Norwegian, but the pictures are good. I still have it, and looking at it brings back many memories. The next day I shook hands with all my friends as they boarded their transport and wished them Godspeed . I have often wondered what happened to Hardy and the others, and if they all got home to Norway. Two days later I received orders to report to Camp Utskalar on the perimeter of the Keflavik airport on the peninsula just south of Reykjavik, and to take command of Company B of our 1st battalion. I was back in the army again.

It was good to get back to serving with troops. While staff work was interesting, and sometimes demanding, and my job at the Tactical School enjoyable, I don't think that there is any duty an officer has that gives more satisfaction than that of company commander. I think this is because of the close personal contacts with the men. I don't think this is possible for battalion and regimental commanders in the same degree.

Company B had originally been the National Guard company from Charleston, S. C., and a few of the older senior non-coms still retained their Charleston accents. As soon as I learned to say "news-pepper" for newspaper and "Bat-ry" for Battery, we got along just fine. It was good to see my old friend Lt. Dickerson again. We had started out together in Compay L. Earl was in Company C at a nearby camp but later came to

Lieutenant Colonel Carl Stenersen

Royal Norwegian Army

requests the company of

Captain [illegible] BRYAN

on Friday afternoon, 9 July 1943

at

a Farewell Party

Four to Six O'Clock

in

The Norwegian Quarters Camp Herskola

Company B after we got to England. The officers of Company B were Lts. Hammond, Pollack, Spencer, and Overby. The 1st Sgt. was Sgt. Hathorn.

The Army Air Corps field at Keflavik was a very large base and was the main refueling and rest stop on the northern route for all of the bombers and other large planes being ferried to England for the massive raids over France, Italy and Germany that did so much to bring about Germany's defeat.

The main mission of Company B and the other companies of the 1st Battalion was to furnish perimeter security for the airfield, but with the allies beginning to contain enemy submarine activity, and gaining control of the Atlantic, there was little possibility of any action against the base,. Consequently, we soon found that our real job was to act as stevedores for the unloading of supply and munition ships that came into the little seaport village of Keflavik. We had to learn a new trade. Some of the ships were large freighters while others were small chartered Icelandic trawlers which brought food and other supplies around by sea from Keykjavik, rather than overland by truck.

I remember one rather humorous incident when I went to the village with a platoon from the company to supervise the unloading of a trawler with a cargo of food. As the little ship came in towards the dock I could see through my field glasses an American lieutenant standing at the rail in the bow. When they were alongside the dock and tied up, the lieutenant hopped ashore and I could see that he was just a kid, but wore the wheel ensignia of the Transportation Corps. I thought -- fine, here's a qualified officer to oversee a quick unloading, and we can soon be back at camp and out of the wind. The lieutenant came up and saluted and asked if he could have a word with me in private. We walked a little way up the dock, away from the others, and he told me that he was just out of O.C.S. (Officers Candidate School) and had been immediately assigned to the transportation corps and shipped out. He said that he had only been in Iceland three days and hadn't the slightest idea how to go about getting the ship unloaded. My thoughts flashed back to the Batory, and I could imagine how he felt. I told him not to worry, we would take care of everything, but first we would go to a shack at the end of the dock and have a cup of coffee and, after he had gotten warm, we would come back and he could watch the unloading with me. I told him he could then see just how it was done and no one would ever know the difference. Actually, it was no "big deal" to unload the small ship. All that was needed to do was take the hatches off, spread a cargo net on the bottom of the hold, stack the boxes of rations on the net, pull the four corners up, push a hook on the end of a hoist cable through the mesh at the corners, and hoist away. The loaded net was then swung over the dock, lowered, the net spread, and the boxes carried off or put on a conveyor to the trucks at the end of the dock. All it took was a little time and hard work. I knew our platoon sergeant knew just how to do this so I told him to go ahead with the unloading and walked off with the Transportation lieutenant. He seemed very appreciative, but I hope he didn't think everything he did was going to be that easy. As you can see, it is the sergeants that really run the army, and I think the lieutenant learned this for the first time.

I remember one other little incident -- also when we were unloading a ration ship. I went down to the dock to see how the work was getting on. Everything seemed to be going smoothly, so I turned and started back, when I heard a loud thump followed by loud cheering, laughter and hand clapping. What had happened was that one corner of a cargo net had torn out of the hook and spilled the cartons of rations. Some of the cartons had broken open and the cans they contained were scattered over the dock and many had fallen into the water. I couldn't figure out why that had seemed so funny to the men, and was about to play the "heavy" C.O. and have a few words with them, when the sergeant in charge of the detail showed me one of the cans. It was spam, so I couldn't help but laugh myself. Actually, spam wasn't all that bad, it was just that we had to eat so much of it. I guess the men felt the score was evened up a little.

It was a little harder job for us to unload a munitions ship. I remember one medium sized Dutch freighter of about 4000 tons that had a full load of aerial bombs for the antisubmarine bombers stationed at the Keflavik airbase. These consisted of 250, 500, and 1000 pounders with the heavier ones at the bottom of the holds. We had a time limit for unloading this particular ship, since she had to be unloaded in time to join a convoy that was sailing in a short time. We had to be a little more careful in this type of work and take care to center each load in the hold before hoisting out to keep it from swinging and striking the hatch coamings. When this did happen there was usually a loud clang and a little breath holding. Actually it wasn't all that dangerous since the bombs were not armed when stored in the hold, but I was always a little relieved when the job was over. Most aerial bombs had fairly thin shells filled with T.N.T., which is short for trinitrotoluene, and require fuses and boosters to set them off. They were stored separately from the bombs, and later screwed into the noses and tails of the bombs. The fuses were armed (activated) by small propellers which turned as the bombs fell. Without fuses or blasting caps T.N.T. is fairly stable, but not always predictable. It can sometimes be melted at low heats, and sometimes can withstand a hammer blow. I say sometimes because I certainly wouldn't try it.

Our usual practice when unloading bombs of the sizes carried by the Dutch ship was to hoist out loads of four 250 pounders, three 500 pounders, and two 1000 pounders. When we were about half way through unloading the 1000 pounders I looked at my watch and realized that we would never finish in time for the ship to make the convoy deadline unless we could speed things up. The obvious answer was to start hoisting out three 1000 pounders at a time. I remember having a lot of "what if" thoughts -- what if the weight was too great, and the hoist failed and the bombs fell through the bottom of the ship, or if in some way the bombs detinated. I even thought of all the reports and "answer-by-endorsements" I would have to make in explaining how it happened. Then I remember thinking, "what the heck", if the worst happened, which probably wouldn't, nobody would be around for any paper work. After checking with the ship's first officer on the safe stress load of the hoist cables, we started hoisting out three 1000 pounders at a time. As an anticlimax, we finished the job, the ship made the convoy, and we went back to camp for a late, late supper. I was glad to get that one behind us.

Before leaving Iceland I bought a leather bound picture book entitled "Island I' Myndum" (Through Iceland with a Camera). It is at my house in Hartsville and you might enjoy looking at pictures of many of the places I have written about.

It was now time to leave Iceland -- we had been there for fourteen months.

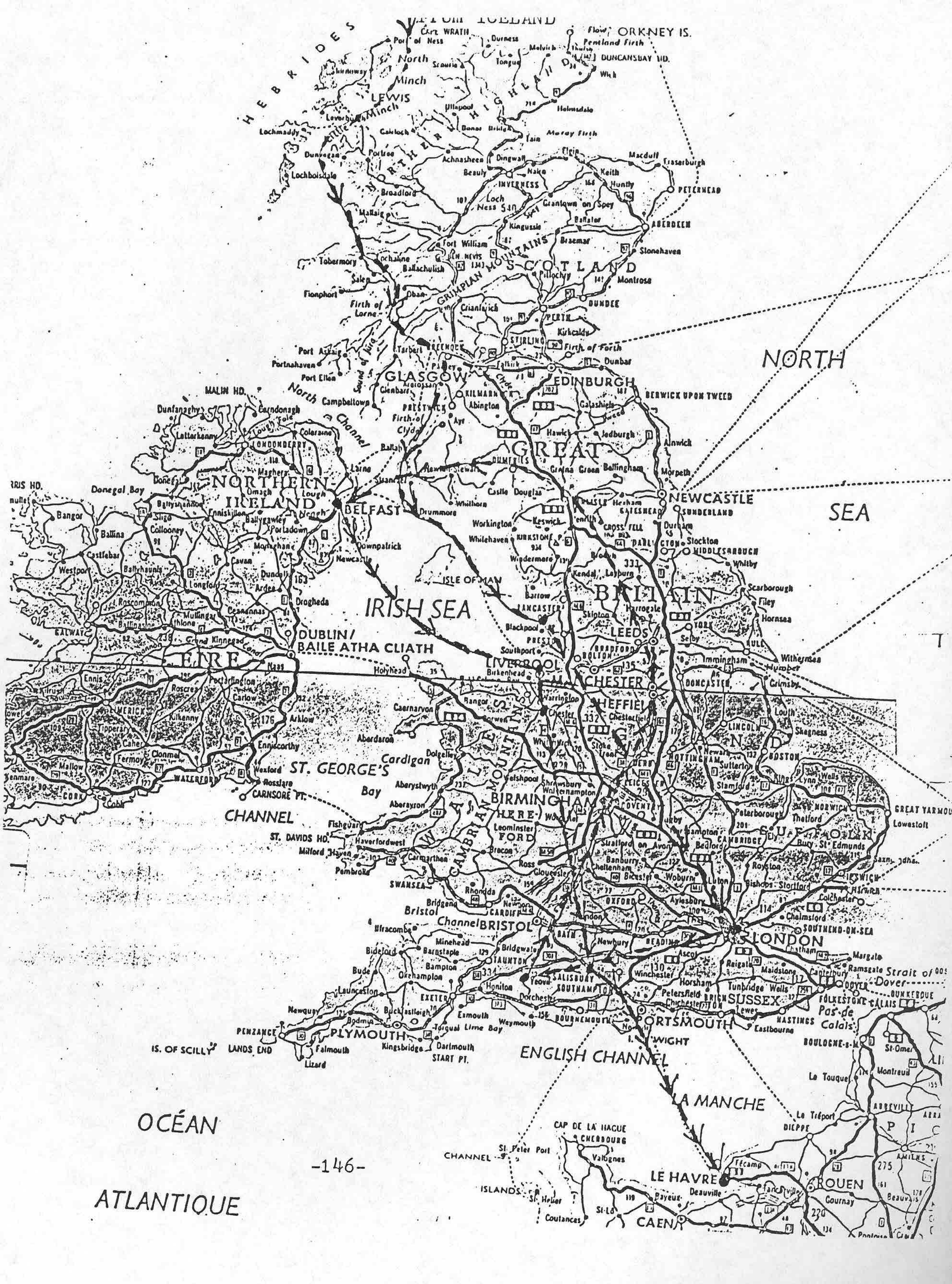
For the second time in a few months I received what was to prove to be a very interesting assignment. I became a member of the advance party for our regiment's move to England. The advance party consisted of two Majors, Benton and Monteith, two Captains, Gesterfield and I, and eighteen sergeants. I temporarily turned over command of my company to the executive officer, and sailed with the advance party on a small Norwegian coastal passenger and cargo vessel three weeks ahead of the regiment. This was in late October 1943.

I don't remember the name of the little Norwegian ship but she was another that had been at sea when the Germans invaded Norway, and was of about 1500 tons, with a Norwegian crew, including three women stewardesses.

I think that I would be well to pause here to admit that for the next two years I went to so many places, and did so many things, that my memory is now a little hazy as to exact dates, names of ships I traveled on, and even the names of some of the places I was stationed. However, I believe that I can remember most of them..

The Norwegian ship sailed in convoy with five small cargo ships, with an escort of four British corvets. These little warships were the work horses of the convoy system. They were only about 200 feet long, but had high forecastles (bows) and could operate in rough seas. They were lightly gunned, but carried a good many depth charges, and were designed for antisubmarine work. With British crews they were superb and contributed much to the winning of the war in securing the Allies life line of food and supplies. Unlike most troop ships we were not crowded, since there was only our advance party and about 125 aircorps personnel aboard, which made things more comfortable.

Considering that we were in the North Atlantic in the fall, our little ship was fairly seaworthy , and we had a fairly comfortable passage. That isn't to say we didn't have to hold on when she rolled. The cabins were small and the bunks had rails around them like hospital beds, to keep us from rolling out. The dining salon stretched the entire width of the ship forward, just under the ship's officer's quarters and the bridge. We missed our American rations -- even the spam. Our rations were British. For example, I remember a typical breakfast consisted of smoked herring, hash brown potatoes, porridge (something like oatmeal) with powdered milk, brown bread, and thick, sweet, hot tea. Meals were served cafeteria style and often we had to hold on to the door frame when we came in, wait for the down roll, and then make a dash for . . the serving counter. After helping our plates, we had to wait for the roll again, and make it to our benches to eat. It was on this ship that I ate the first of many, many servings of Brussels sprouts I was to consume before leaving England. I think that's why today I can't work up any enthusiasm over the little cabbages.


ORKNEY IS.
Pentland Firth
HEBRIDES
North Minch
LEWIS
NORTHERN HIGHLANDS
Moray Firth
Fraserburgh
PETERHEAD
INVERNESS
Loch Ness
ABERDEEN
Stonehaven
Fort William
GRAMPIAN MOUNTAINS
SCOTLAND
Montrose
DUNDEE
Tobermory
Oban
Firth of Lorne
PERTH
STIRLING
Firth of Forth
Dunbar
EDINBURGH
GLASGOW
North Channel
BERWICK UPON TWEED
Firth of Clyde
GREAT
Alnwick
Morpeth
NORTH
LONDONDERRY
NORTHERN IRELAND
BELFAST
NEWCASTLE
SUNDERLAND
SEA
Donegal Bay
Windermere
ISLE OF MAN
IRISH SEA
BRITAIN
Scarborough
Blackpool
LEEDS
YORK
DUBLIN/
BAILE ATHA CLIATH
EIRE
Holyhead
LIVERPOOL
MANCHESTER
SHEFFIELD
Humber
Withernsea
Grimsby
Lincoln
Skegness
Waterford
Wexford
Rosslare
ST. GEORGE'S
CHANNEL
Cardigan Bay
CAMBRIAN MOUNTAINS
WALES
BIRMINGHAM
ENGLAND
NOTTINGHAM
BOSTON
GREAT YARMOUTH
Lowestoft
Norwich
SUFFOLK
CAMBRIDGE
OXFORD
SWANSEA
CARDIFF
Bristol Channel
BRISTOL
LONDON
SOUTHEND-ON-SEA
Strait of Dover
DOVER
FOLKESTONE
CALAIS
DUNKERQUE
Pas de Calais
SUSSEX
PORTSMOUTH
SOUTHAMPTON
SALISBURY
EXETER
PLYMOUTH
PENZANCE
LANDS END
IS. OF SCILLY
ENGLISH CHANNEL
LA MANCHE
BOULOGNE-S-M
CAP DE LA HAGUE
CHERBOURG
CHANNEL
ISLANDS
LE HAVRE
ROUEN
CAEN
DIEPPE
AMIENS
OCÉAN
ATLANTIQUE

We had no enemy air or submarine contacts until we were approaching the northern coast of Scotland. About an hour before sundown on our last night out, a British Southerland flying boat, which had met the convoy to fly air cover, flew over the convoy and signaled with blinker lights that it had spotted a U-boat on the surface following the convoy about ten miles behind. It had immediately dived, which meant that submerged it would be slowed down considerably. We were at supper at the time, and the ship's captain told us that it would be dark in an hour's time, and then a few hours later we would be between the outer and inner Hebrides Islands and in safe waters. Because of this, he felt the U-boat had no chance of catching up in time to make an attack. This, of course, proved to be the case. At daylight we were behind the outer Hebrides, and the beginning of a very enjoyable and scenic cruise through the inland waterway of the west coast of Scotland.

Because of the small size of our ship, we were able to sail through the channels and estuaries of the many small islands along the steep and rocky coast of Scotland. In some places the channels were only a few hundred yards wide and it was like a trip through ancient history. The weather was clear and sunny and we could see close up many of the old ruins and castles of the old Scotish knights along the rugged shore. Further inland we could see the beautiful green rolling hills, and in the distance the mountains of the highlands. There was no threat from submarines and we needed no escort. We had left the convoy and were proceeding alone. It was like a luxury cruise at government expense, and all we had to do was relax and enjoy it. Had we been on a larger ship we would have missed it all.

We continued on south into the Irish Sea and along the English coast. Just at dusk we came into the small port of Fleetwood, which is a short way above the English west coast resort of Blackpool. It had just turned dark when we tied up at the dock, and we had to unload in the dark because of the black-out. We were aided by a half moon, but we fumbled around a bit in unfamiliar surroundings. It was a real treat to hear English spoken again by the British guides that met us, and the workers on the docks. Our party was given orders to proceed by train to London and report to S.H.A.E.F. (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces) headquarters on Grosvenor Square which was just across from the American Embassy.

We were soon aboard our first English train and on our way. Like many other things, the English trains were entirely different from our American ones. They were much smaller and ran on narrow guage tracks. At that time the engines were steam and the carriages, or passenger cars, were made up of small compartments running completely across the cars, with seats facing each other, and doors opening on each side. There was no center aisle, and no way to get from one compartment to another. Once aboard and moving, you had to stay there until the train stopped.

All through that first night we travelled across England with the shades pulled down on the windows, again because of the black-out, and could see nothing of the new land that was to be our home for awhile, until daylight when we were approaching the outskirts of London. I think that we were all a bit awed to see so many houses close together for as far as we could see, after the open spaces and isolation of Iceland. Since

London had few tall buildings, it was one of the largest cities in the world as to area, and it took us quite awhile to reach the center of the city and Waterloo Station.

When we reached the station and got off the train, we found ourselves in a large crowd of men, women, and children hurrying to and from other trains, and most talking in a language we would soon learn to understand. It was the largest crowd we had been in since we left the States, and we were glad to be in one again. Many were in the uniforms of all the allied nations and all of the branches of the service. There were large picture posters on the walls with captions like "Loose Lips Sink Ships" and "Is Your Trip Necessary?" The people were well dressed and cheerful and, even though we were on an island that had been at war for four years and had been living in austerity, I could sense a feeling of confidence and something of the British bulldog spirit. I learned to like and respect these people during the time I spent in England and Northern Ireland.

On our way to headquarters we passed the ruins of many houses and buildings that had been destroyed in previous air raids, and in the parks we could see search lights and anti-aircraft batteries which were manned in some cases by mixed crews of both men and women gunners. Overhead we could see many barrage balloons anchored by cables. They were sausage shaped and filled with gas and were staggered at random heights. These were to keep the German raiding bombers and fighters from making low level attacks. Everything we saw was very businesslike.

When we got to headquarters we expected to receive new orders telling us where our regiment would be stationed, and get our own movement orders. To our surprise we found no one seemed to be expecting us, even though we showed them our movement orders from Iceland. This probably wasn't too unusual with the hundreds of units that were on the move. The sergeants were sent to a nearby transit quarters and mess, and we four officers were sent to a civilian hotel called Bailey's on Gloucester Road which was about two miles away. We were instructed to telephone S.H.A.E.F. headquarters once each day at 10 AM to enquire about our orders, otherwise we were entirely on our own. We expected to receive our orders in a day or two at the most, but actually we didn't get them for eight days; so for that time we had absolutely nothing to do, except for our daily call, but sightsee in London and go to the theater and pubs at night -- quite a deal -- and you can bet we crammed in as much as we could after our long stay in the "boon-docks".

When we left headquarters for the Bailey's Hotel, I stayed behind to see that the sergeants had their duffle bags and were settled in, so the others left without me. It was night by the time I started for the hotel, and with the black-out it was hard to see anything, and I had no idea how to get there except the address. I can remember clearly everything that happened that first night in London. I was carrying a musette bag, gas mask with a helmet strapped to the outside, a cartridge belt with canteen, and a 30 caliber Springfield rifle instead of the smaller officer's carbine. There was no government transportation available and I had to go by taxi. -- There I was, all by myself, walking around in the black-out in the middle of London, carrying a rifle and looking for a cab. I couldn't find any parked at the curb but saw several pass by in the street. The taxis in England during the war had their headlights covered but a narrow slit was left in the center which gave a dim blue light and, of course, everything moved slowly. I decided that the only way I was

going to get a cab was to get in the middle of the street, so I slung my rifle strap over my shoulder and stepped out. Several full cabs passed and then one stopped and I climbed in. There was an AirCorps lieutenant with his arm in a sling with a young English girl already in the cab, and it was they who stopped the cab for me and offered to share it. The cabby knew where the hotel was and the lieutenant insisted on dropping me off there. He told me that he had been stationed at an airfield not far from London for about three months, but that about two weeks before his plane had been hit by shrapnel from a near shell burst and he had gotten a small piece in his arm, so he had been given leave. I was certainly thankful to get the lift and wish I had gotten the lieutenant's name. I got to the hotel about 9:30 PM. It had been a long day and I was ready for a good night's sleep; so after a late supper I turned in. Major Benton and I were sharing a room which had comfortable twin beds -- the first real bed I had slept in since I left home.

We had just dropped off when the air raid sirens started sounding off all over the city. Soon we could hear the engines of the German bombers high overhead, and then the anti-aircraft batteries in the nearby park began to fire. Shortly after that we could hear the explosions of sticks of bombs falling in the distance. Fortunately, none fell close; but they certainly got my attention and I was wide awake in no time. It took me awhile to get back to sleep after the "all clear" had sounded and the raid was over. Thus ended my first day in London.

After breakfast, when we were talking to the hotel manager, he told us that by the middle of 1941 the Germans had lost so many bombers that the Blitz began to taper off and, for a long while, only a few planes were raiding London frm time to time. However, he said that for the last month small groups of bombers had been coming over nightly, between 10 PM and midnight, and he had forgotten to tell us that when a raid alert sounded guests of the hotel were requested to take shelter in the basement or in the underground (subway) which had entrance across the street intersection in front of the hotel -- all in a very matter-of-fact, conversational manner. This is what I liked about the English. They had been living so close to the war for so long they had learned to cope in a calm unruffled manner. England being such a small island, a bomber could be over London just a few minutes after crossing the channel coast; so sometimes there wasn't time for much of a warning after it was spotted. Well, the manager was right -- the raiders did come over about 10:00 or 11 PM every night we were in London. We were usually in a theater or on the street when these occured. You could see the first searchlight that picked up a bomber, pass it on to others when it began to get out of range, while all the while the ack-acks were banging away. In the theater, the picture would be interrupted and a sign was flashed on the screen --"an alert has been sounded". However, about the only ones who left were people with teen aged children. After awhile, another sign was flashed on the screen - "The all clear has been sounded". It took a little getting used to.

Although many of the children in London had been moved to small towns in the country side, where they were safer, there were still a good many left in the city. Triple tiered bunks with mattress pads had been placed along the walls of the underground stations, and people with little children brought them each night at bedtime, in the hope of getting a bed before a raid had started. Those that couldn't find a bunk used their blankets and pillows and slept on the steps leading down. We used the underground many times at night going to and from our hotel and it made me very sad to see the little ones trying to sleep behind newspapers

hanging over the bunk frames to shield their eyes from the brightly lit station, with crowds passing and with the noise of passing trains. I was thankful that my own people were so far away from the war.

One night I went to a stage play entitled "Love for Love" at the old New Market Theater which is just down the street from Piccadilly Circus. This was a very old theater in which some of Shakespeare's plays were first shown. I have forgotten what the play was about, but the actors were good and I enjoyed it very much.

Like the tourists in uniform we were, we saw all the sights of London -- Westminster Abby, St. Paul's Cathedral, the Tower of London, and, of course, the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace. During wartime, the guard change was informal rather than formal and the uniforms were what the British called battledress, and not the scarlet blouse, blue trousers and bearskin shakoes of the dress uniform that is worn in peace time. There was field music (drums and bugles) instead of a band, but it was still a "good show", as the British would say.

The Bailey's Hotel was an old hotel built in 1830 and still retained some of the elegance of the period. It was one of the first in London to have an "ascending room", as elevators were then called. The rooms were large by English standards and the food in the dining room was exceptionally good, but included the ever present Brussels sprouts. In spite of the black-out we had no difficulty going to and from, since we traveled on the underground which was brightly lit and the entrance was just across the street. We usually got back at night after the raids, so it was quiet for the rest of the night and we slept soundly.

However, all good things must come to an end, and on the eighth day we learned that the regiment would be stationed at Yeovil England and got our travel orders. The sergeants had been enjoying themselves too, particularly with no officers around to think up things for them to do. We picked them up, got on the train again at Waterloo Station and were off to join the army again. I think that we were all sorry to see it end.

I hope that what I have written has let you see a little of what London was like in wartime. I never did get back again during the war, but I have been back twice since then with Nanny -- once when Blair was in the navy and stationed at the naval headquarters in London, and once on business. Nanny and I even had dinner one evening at the Bailey's Hotel while we were there. It brought back many memories.

Our trip by train to Yeovil was during daylight and we got to see something of the beautiful English countryside. It was just as you would picture it with rolling hills, winding country lanes with vine covered stone walls, and houses with straw thatched roofs -- exactly like a page out of Dickens. Yeovil was about 125 miles southwest of London and about 25 miles up from the south coast. Our regiment was to be quartered in barracks in one part of a British camp on the outskirts of the town, which had a population of about six thousand. Our advance party arrived about ten days ahead of the regiment and we stayed pretty busy until their arrival: drawing cots, bedding, kitchen supplies, etc., and assigning units to barracks.

The regiment arrived, settled in and wondered what was in store next. It seemed to us that headquarters in London still didn't seem to know just what to do with us. I took over command of Co. B again on its arrival and we began making conditioning road marches and field training in the nearby countryside and on the plateau of a large low hill not far from the camp. This hill had interesting old Roman ruins of fortifications datingback to the occupation of England by Rome. During our breaks we spent our time exploring these. The English people were very friendly and did all they could to make us feel at home. We also found that they had a keen sense of humor. British humor was a a little different from ours. It was more subtle and refined, and sometimes we had to do a "double-take" before we got the point and shared a good laugh.

Christmas time came and many families of Yeovil invited members of the regiment to Christmas dinner. I think that they realized how much it meant to us to be with a family at that time. I was invited to have dinner with Mrs. and Mrs. Lufman and their two teenage children. It was a very happy occasion for me. The next best thing to being with Nanny and little Margaret. Mr . Lufman had been with the British Army in India during World War I and he and Mrs. Lufman were gracious hosts. Considering the food shortages of the time, we had a delicious meal. I remember that for dessert we had a real plum pudding with hard sauce. Mrs. Lufman explained that somewhere in the pudding was a silver sixpence piece (about the size of our dime) and that the person who found it in their helping would be blessed during the coming year. She said that this was an old English custom. Of course you know who got the sixpence. I kept it for many years until unfortunately it was misplaced. I went back to see the family several times before I left Yeovil and took them some cigarettes and candy from our Post Exchange. It was certainly good to visit in a home again.

The regiment tried to show its appreciation by having a childrens Christmas party and about two hundred of the little ones came with their parents. At least, one parent came, since many of their fathers were away in the British army. One of our chaplains was master of ceremonies, and a stout officer was dressed as Santa Claus, or Father Christmas as he was called in England. He gave out presents of toys and candy. It was a real joy to see the little faces light up. I am sure though that we enjoyed the party much more than the children. Three little boys got up and sang for us. The oldest was about eight years old and sang the popular wartime song "White Cliffs of Dover" in his precise little English voice. I think that there was a little moisture in many of our eyes when he had finished. We could almost see the blue birds over the white cliffs. A little girl of about six then recited a poem. All of the children were very grown-up and polite and seemed to appreciate coming to our party.

Speaking of English children -- I remember one day my company was feeding in the field and some little boys and girls came over from a nearby village and gazed longingly at some canned peaches and plums that were being served. Some of the boys loaned them their mess kits and the cooks gave each of the children a generous helping. I was sitting on a bank where they couldn't see me and enjoyed watching them. After they had finished they went over to the messkit washing line and very carefully washed the messkits that they had used before returning them. All American soldiers seemed to love to have children around, and I saw similar

incidents repeated many times later in France and Germany.

One thing that was hard for us to get used to was the English money. We had just begun to get used to Icelandic currency when "bang", we had to learn a new money system all over again. In England it was pounds, shillings and pence. The pound was a paper note which was then worth $4.03 in our dollars and cents. Twenty shillings made a pound, and twelve pence (pennies) made a shilling. The English penny was a copper coin about the size of our fifty cent piece and was worth two of our pennies. Can you imagine how unhandy it was to carry many of these big heavy English pennies around in your pockets? At least they gave us a rich feeling. To further complicate matters there was a ten shilling paper note, a silver metal half crown (2½ shillings or 2 shillings, 6 pence), a silver metal florin (2 shillings), a bob (1 shilling), a silver six pence, a copper three pence piece with flat edges, also referred to as a "tu'pence" and a copper half penny commonly called a "ha'penny". Oh well, you get the idea. The symbol for the pound was "£" and the penny "d", so two pounds, 2 shillings, 2 pence would be written 2£2S-2d.

A number of years after the war the pound was devaluated to about half its value compared to our dollar, and now they have changed to the metric system. A very wise move in my opinion. Incidentally, I never learned to multiply and divide English currency.

Another thing that we had to get used to was the system of English weight. I remember getting on some scales to weigh myself and found that the weight was given in stones instead of pounds. I later learned that there are 14 of our pounds to a stone.

We were not stationed very long in Yeoviland , shortly after Christmas in January 1944, Headquarters apparently decided what our mission was next to be. We were to train paratroop replacement in infantry tactics, in Northern Ireland, so the regiment/was soon on its way to the land of my ancesters. (less the 2nd Battalion)

We went by train up through the entire length of England, into Scotland, and on to the ferry terminal at Port Patrick on the Irish Sea opposite Belfast Lough (bay). We reached the terminal at dusk on a rainy windy night, and boarded an English ferry for the crossing. I thought that I had been in a few rough seas before, but nothing like that crossing of the Irish Sea. As soon as the ship cleared the breakwater I sat down on the deck in the lounge, wrapped one leg around a table leg and stayed there. Fortunately, it was the narrowest part of the Sea -- about 25 miles, and as soon as we got into the protected waters of Belfast Lough the sea quieted and we dock/ed in Belfast with considerable relief.

Whenever I think of the beautiful green rolling countryside of Ireland, and the Irish people, I will always think of the lovely Irish music and its descriptive lyrics:

"When Irish eyes are smiling, sure
Tis like a morn in spring
In the lilt of Irish laughter
Ye can hear the angels sing."

That certainly summed up my feelings after I had been in Ireland for a few months I found the people more like our own southern people than

any I met in my travels, and when I hear and read about the troubles they are now having in Northern Ireland I am sad for them. Even though the southern part of Ireland was a republic and neutral during the war , and there were probably strong feeling in northern Ireland, there appeared to be a mutual understanding for a pause in their differences for the duration of the war. At any rate, I saw no evidence of bitterness in that part of Northern Ireland I was in, and was certainly treated royally by all the people I had contact with.

The regiment disembarked in Belfast and moved by truck to the various British camps we were to take over. These were mostly scattered along the shore of Belfast Lough, and between the little seaport of Bangor on the laugh and the town of Newtownards about ten miles to the south on Stranaford Lough.

In Britain during the war large land owners of estates and members of the nobility gave the government the right to build camps on their property as part of their contribution to the war effort and, in some instances, even gave their manor houses for use of the armed forces.

Each of the camps in Northern Ireland consisted of a barracks area for the replacement trainees and their replacement depot officers, and a separate area for the training troops from our regiment. We had no administrative responsibility of the trainees, which suited us fine. Because of our training mission the regiment was scattered over a rather large area, with one platoon or two platoons of a company in each of the camps. This was a desirable situation for our young lieutenants, who in many instances found themselves with independent commands. One of the platoons of my company was miles away on the other side of Belfast Lough, and I didn't see them again until we were ready to leave. Another platoon was about five miles away, and I recall that its lieutenant had his quarters in a beautiful old manor house with large marble stairways, a large ballroom and a rose garden. It could have been the "life of Riley" had there been any way of heating it. He did have a small trash burner in his room, though,and seemed pretty impressed with the whole thing.

I had my company headquarters and the two other platoons on the estate of Lord Dufferin called "Clandeboy", and which was one of the larger replacement camps and I think one of the best, with a large recreation hall and its own telephone exchange. The men of the company lived in Nissen huts and I lived, with the other officers of the company, in the estate's gatehouse at the main entrance. This was a comfortable old two-story brick building with low ceilings, which made the small rooms easy to heat with trash burners. There was a small sitting room downstairs and what was once a kitchen and a large wash room. We heated our water for bathing in a large open top vat with a hinged top, and we ate our meals in the company mess. Shortly before we left England, Lt. Dickerson was transferred to B. Company and became second in command. I shared a room with him in the gatehouse. Since we started out together at Fort Jackson three years before it was good to be with him again. He did his usual excellent job, and was a great help in running the company.

I didn't realizethat I had stepped so far back in history until I made my courtesy call at the manor house, which was on a hill about five or six hundred yards behind the gatehouse. Lord Dufferin was

with the British Army in Burma and Lady Dufferin was staying with relatives in Belfast, but her secretary and housekeeper welcomed me and invited me to tea. She also showed me over the manor house and told me that it had been in Lord Dufferin's family for generations. She suggested that I would be interested in a stone tower on a lake near the east edge of the estate. She said that it had been built by Lord Dufferin's great-grandfather for his great-great-grandmother Helen. The next day I made it a point to visit the tower and was fascinated by what I found. The tower was circular and built entirely of stone, four stories high and about twenty-five or thirty feet in diameter at the base, and slightly tapered toward the top. It was built on the bank of a beautiful little lake. There was a spiral stairway extending through each of the floors, which were furnished as sewing, reading, and sitting rooms. I climbed the stairs and from the top, toward the east, I could see the Irish Sea and in the far distance a smudge which was Scotland. What fascinated me most was a bronze plaque on the wall of the top room with a poem by the well-known English poet Alfred Lord Tennyson of the early and middle 1800's. You will have probably studied his poems in your English literature classes in school. I memorized the poem and it is as follows:

Helen's Tower

Helen's Tower, here I stand,
Dominant over sea and land.
Son's love built me, and I hold
Mother's love in letter'd gold.
Love is in and out of time,
I am mortal stone and lime,
Would my granite girth were strong
As either love, to last as long!

Tennyson

Written at the request of my friend, Lord Dufferin.

It was not until over forty years later, when I began writing this, that I found in one of Tennyson's collections of poems, this same poem with reference to notes in the back of the book. These notes included a copy of a letter written by Lord Dufferin's great grandfather to the poet Tennyson. I thought that it might be of some interest to you so I am quoting it also:

"My dear Mr. Tennyson -- I wonder if you will think me very presumptuous for doing what at last, after many months' hesitation, I have determined to do.

You must know that here in my park in Ireland there rises a high hill, from the top of which I look down not only on an extensive tract of Irish land, but also on St. George's Channel, a long blue line of Scotch coast, and the mountains of the Isle of Man.

On the summit of this hill I have built an old-world tower which I have called after my mother "Helen's Tower".

In it I have placed on a golden tablet the birthday verses which my mother wrote to me on the day I came of age, and I have spared no pains in beautifying it with all imaginable devices. In fact my tower is a little

"Palace of Art". Beneath is a rough outline of its form and situation.

Now there is only one thing wanting to make it a perfect little gem of architecture and decoration and that is "a voice". It is now ten years since it was built and all that time it has stood silent. Yet if he chose there is one person in the world able to endow it with this priceless gift, and by sending me some little short distich for it to crown it forever with a glory it cannot otherwise obtain, and render it a memorial of the personal friendship which its builder felt for the great poet of our age.

Yours ever,
Dufferin "

Clandeboy was the nearest camp to the little town of Newtownards which was six miles to the south. As far as I could determine we were the first American troops in that part of Ireland and I believe that both we and the Irish people were wondering what manner of people each of us were. We found out very soon, and I believe to the pleasure of both of us.

On the first Sunday in our new camp I went into town for church services and to look things over. I was looking for a Church of England which is very much like our Episcopal Church in this country. I couldn't find one by church time but I did find a Presbyterian Church which I decided to go to. When I went in and started toward a seat, the minister came from the front of the church to meet and welcome me, as did a number of the congregation. They recognized my uniform , which during wartime I had to wear all the time. After the service the minister invited me to his home for lunch, as did several of the elders and others, but I had to decline since I had promised the other officers of the company leave for that afternoon and had to get back so they could get away. Rev. Boyd was the minister's name and he asked me to come back the next Sunday and bring a truckload of the men, and he would arrange for the ladies of the church to serve them lunch after church. I decided right then that Newtownards would be a very suitable leave town, and so it proved to be. Shortly the men of the company laid claim to it as their own. There was none of the "honky-tonk" atmosphere like in the towns that surrounded many of the army posts in the States , and even though I sent a two man military police patrol to Newtownards each night, I am very pleased to say that in all the time we were stationed at Clandeboy we had no disturbances of any consequences -- even in the "pubs" after a few pints. I think that the men realized that the people of Newtownards wanted them to feel welcomed, and acted accordingly.

You may be interested in hearing about the public houses, or "Pubs" as they are called in the British Isles. These go way back in history to the days when people traveled by horse drawn coaches between towns, and were actually stopover inns for resting, and sleeping, and eating, and drinking. Every town or village that I visited had at least one "Pub" where the people gathered before supper and in the evening to drink mostly beer and ale, and visit until bedtime. There were rooms where ladies were welcomed, with usually an open fireplace where adult members of families could meet to talk. There was usually also one or more dart boards which were kept in use most of the time, and were much enjoyed. I wish that we had "Pubs" in this country; with the friendliness that goes with them. They aren't like our nightclubs or bars in this country and the drinking was more of an excuse just to be there. Many

times I saw people just sit and "nurse" a pint of beer or ale for an hour or more while they nibbled on cheese and bread and discussed the day's events. Mention "Pub" to a soldier who has served in Britain and watch his eyes light up.

We alternated leave among the men and every night there were American uniforms throughout the town. It was something for them to enjoy after the isolation of Iceland and to feel a part of family life again. I didn't realize how firmly established the men had made themselves until about two weeks had passed. I thought it would be a big morale booster to have a dance for the company, which was something we had not done since leaving the States. We already had the use of the big recreation hall, so I got part of our regimental band to agree to come and play dance music. The mess sergeants and cooks fixed some cakes and punch, and with a few colored paper decorations we were all set to go -- except for girls, I thought. I had invited the regimental commander and a few other "dignitaries", and authorized trucks to go to Newtownards to pick up any dates the boys might have managed. I didn't think that we had been near Newtonards long enough for the men to establish what might be termed "meaningful relationships" with the girls of the town, so I invited a whole company of "Ats", with their officers, so as to be sure that there were enoughyoung ladies. "Ats" were what the British women soldiers were called, and stood for Army Territorial Service. They were like our "Wacs". I remember thinking, "Well, I've got everything covered." Boy, was I wrong. The company trucks to Newtownards had to make two trips. I believe every single man in the company,and some that weren't had arranged a date. It wasn't a matter of not having enough girls as I feared. With the company of Ats and the young ladies from the town they were"running out of our ears". I'll never doubt the abilities of the American soldier again. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and our first social venture appeared to be a success.

I remember with great pleasure my own association with the people of the town, particularly one Sunday evening when I was invited to high tea by Mrs. & Mrs. MacIlwaine who were memvers of the Presbyterian Church. They were middle aged, and short, and stout, and Mrs. MacIlwaine was a wonderful cook. I remember clearly that enjoyable afternoon. High tea in Ireland and England is a little more than just tea and cookies. It is more like an early light supper. We had tea, a meat pie -- rabbit, I think -- several kinds of hot bread, sweet jams and jellies and to top it off a delicious apple pie. Also present at the table was an eighty year old music teacher, Sir Henry Mathews. He told a number of humorous Irish stories and ,after we had eaten, played the piano and Mr. MacIlwaine sang some old Irish songs for me. Among them was "Father O'Flynn", a song about a lovable old priest who used the rod to enforce his idea of the right way to live, and that beautiful Irish ballad "Where the Mountains of Mourne Sweep Down to the Sea". This tells the story of a young Irish lad who goes to London on a visit and tells about it to his girl who lives at the end of the Mountain of Mourne near the Irish Sea. The first verse in his letter went like this:

Sure, Mary, this London
Is a wonderful sight,
With the people here working
By day and by night,
They don't plant potatoes
Nor barley nor wheat,
But there's gangs of them
Digging for gold in the street,
At least when I asked them
That's what I was told
So I just took a hand

In the digging for gold.
But for all that I found there
I might as well be,
Where the mountains O'Mourne
Sweep down to the sea."

These were the low mountains that I could see about twenty-five miles to the south of Newtownards along the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, or Eire as it was called in the Gaelic language. Later I bought sheet music of these two songs I heard that evening and brought them home with me. I gave them to little Margaret a few years ago. Of course, she's a little bigger now. Get her to play them for you sometime.

It wasn't long after this that I had another enjoyable and interesting Saturday afternoon with friends from Newtownards. I was invited to go rabbit hunting, Irish style, with three middle aged men from the town. This wasn't done with dogs and shotguns, but with ferrets and small square pieces of fish net. I was fascinated in watching how it was done. One of the men had a small wood box with screening over one end and a handle on the top in which he carried the ferret, which is a small animal of the weasel family and about 14 inches long. They are natural rabbit hunters, but seldom eat them. Like some bats they like to drink the blood of their prey. They can be trained to hunt and answer to a high pitched whistle. Another of the men carried a dozen or so three foot squares of wide mesh fish net, with pieces of string tied to the corners, and with the other ends of the strings tied to an eight inch wooden stake -- something like you would make a parachute out of a handkerchief. Each man also carried a small wooden club with a leather thong for the wrist. When everything was ready we went to the first of several rabbit burrows or dens which the men had previously located. These were usually on the side of a hill where several families of rabbits had dug a series of connecting tunnels, with a number of entrances, in which they lived when not feeding. After arriving at the burrows the men spread the nets flat over all except one hole, and drove the stakes into the ground by them. My friend with the ferret then opened the end of the box and let it loose in the hole that was left open. They then told me to get down on my knees and put my ear to the ground. When I did this I could hear squeals and thumping of the rabbits as they scurried to escape the ferret in the tunnels. We all then stood up and in just a moment a rabbit exploded out of one of the holes and became entangled in the net, which was over the hole, and was immediately dispatched with a club and put in a sack. This may sound a little cruel, but you must remember that, with the scarcity of meat and the the wartime rationing, rabbit meat was very prized in Ireland, also there was a shortage of shotgun ammunition. It was just one of the ways the people of Britain survived as well as they did during the war years. We got about two or three rabbits out of each burrow, and ended up with about eight, which was enough to feed several families.

Our chain of command in Northern Ireland was rather a complicated one. While we were still a part of the regiment, the companies and platoons in the various camps were considered to be on detached duty with the replacement depot which had its headquarters in Bangor, which was under the command of a career full colonel by the name of Perddle. Col. Perddle was a little past the age for line troop command, but was very "gung-ho" and appeared to think of himself as running a "tight ship". He liked to make surprise inspections of the camps to catch them unpre-

pared. This was soon remedied by the simple arrangement we made with one of the sergeants at his headquarters to telephone the camp to be inspected as soon as the Colonel had left. I think that the Colonel began to get a little suspicious when things always seemed to be a little too much in order on his arrival. At any rate, he apparently decided to try something different, which led to what turned out to be the funniest thing that had happened to me in a long time. He called a meeting of all camp commanders of training troops one Friday morning in Bangor. When the meeting was over, he suggested that I send my jeep home, and that I could ride with him to my camp since he was going that way. He said that he had something that he wanted to discuss. I don't know why he picked me except perhaps that my camp was one one of the largest. I began to "smell a rat" but of course had no choice in the matter. I tried to think if everything at the camp was in order, but it was too late if it wasn't. Just as we were approaching a camp about two miles from mine, with troops from another company, he told his driver to turn in. The first thing he did was to stop and inspect the gate sentry, after which he turned to me and said for me to make a note that the sentry's shoes were not shined properly, and he needed a haircut. I took out my notebook and did as he said. A little farther along he saw some replacements in a field gathered around an instructor. He turned to me again, after looking at his watch, and asked me what instruction was being given at that time. Since the schedules in each camp were different, I knew immediately what had happened. The colonel had gotten mixed up and thought that he was in my camp. I decided that it would be fun to go along with it and see what happened so I told him I had no idea what the instruction was, but would be glad to ask the instructor if he liked. He said not to bother, but this time he made his own note. A short time later we arrived at the mess hall and, before going in, asked me what was on the menu for the day. I told him I had no idea, but I would ask the mess sergeant if he would like me to. He made another note. After a few more similar instances he told the driver to stop, and turned to me and said that it seemed that I knew far too little about what was going on, that he was disappointed in me, but before letting me out he wanted an explanation, and that later he might require it in writing. I tried to keep a straight face and said, "The explanation is simple, Colonel. This isn't my camp." He gave a sickly smile and then, to his credit, he laughed and took me on to my camp. He never apologized, but then I didn't expect him to and I never heard from the notes he took. I told Lt. Dickerson what had happened and Earl and I have had a good laugh many times since then.

Speaking of how small the world is, I was called to the telephone in the orderly room one evening and it was my first cousin Capt. Tom Lide. He was a doctor with the 317th Station Hospital, which was in Belfast. Tom is the son of my mother's brother and was also my roommate at Clemson College, and later got his M.D. at Duke. We made arrangements to meet and had a fine visit talking over old times. We didn't know it then but we were to meet again in southern England and spend Christmas Day together in 1944 not long before I went to France.

One of the duties that I had to perform in Ireland was a very unusual one and one that I hadn't imagined when I first became an officer. This is what it was. One of the men in the company requested permission to marry a Newtownards girl. I suppose it was not unusual with young men

who had been away from home so long, and with so many young ladies of the town deprived of their own young men away in the British army. Requests for marriage had to be made to the soldier's Commanding officer who, according to regulations, had to meet with the young people envolved, and then recommend approval or disapproval in writing up through channels to regiment, and on to the General commanding the sector. All of this took time, as it was designed to do, and resulted in a considerable waiting period, and gave plenty of time for second thoughts. Overseas marriages for troops subject to move at any time and with the future unknown could result in difficult situations.

In a manner of speaking, I suppose that I became a sort of marriage counselor. I had memorandums suggesting points to be covered in my discussions and had attended a lecture by the chaplains. I remember that first meeting. It turned out to be a pleasant one. The soldier had arranged it and the young lady had prepared tea and sandwiches with the family's best china and linen. The house was immaculate and there were flowers on the tables, and the family was in their Sunday clothes. You would have thought General Eisenhower was expected. First, I talked to the young people alone and pointed out all the pitfalls that I could think of, and suggested that they wait until the end of the war. I wondered how much they really heard of what I said. After our talk I visited with the family members and then we had tea together. We all ended up enjoying ourselves and after/while the young lady lost her nervousness and played and sang for us. They were good people and it would probably have resulted in a good marriage, so I recommended approval. I suppose though that it was for the best that we left Ireland before I heard from Sector headquarters. I have often wondered if any of the soldiers went back after the war, or the young ladies joined them in America.

There was much of history that interested me in Northern Ireland. I remember one Sunday I attended services in a Church of England not far from the little seaport of Holleywood on the Belfast Lough. After the services the rector was showing me over the church, which was quite old. Near the front entrance I noticed a charred beam sticking out of the masonery and asked him about it. He told me that the church had been sacked and burned by Norman raiders in 1067 and, when it was rebuilt, the charred beam was left as a historical marker. I was very impressed.

It was now time to leave Ireland and get on with my story. We had completed our mission of training paratroop replacements. Near the last of May 1944 the company assembled at Clandeboy and marched to Bangor. It was good to have all of the company back together again, if only for a little while. At Bangor we loaded on trucks and moved to Belfast, where we embarked on a British transport and sailed down the Irish Sea, for an overnight trip to England again. We disenbarked at Liverpool, which is a short way south of Fleetwood where we landed in England the first time. From there we went by train to Chester, where we occupied British camps in the area. Again the regiment was broken up into companies and platoons and assigned to different camps. For awhile I had the whole company at a camp called Delamere. This was on a large estate and the regimental headquarters was also in the camp and quarted in the manor house. Again our mission was replacement training. I guess we were considered experts by then. In this case the replacements were infantry, so the emphasis was

on weapons training and firing. The reason for so many replacements was to bring all units up to full strength and provide replacements for the expected casualties during the invasion of the European continent, which was being planned. Since we had not been reassigned to a division as yet, it appeared that we would continue to be used as training troops and would miss the invasion when it came. Since we knew we were well trained ourselves, and combat ready, this left us with mixed feelings. If you were "gung-ho" there was disappointment, but on the other hand we would have a better chance of surviving the war and getting home to our loved ones. In any event, it was out of our hands. In the army you did whatever was assigned without question.

Because of the large stockpiling of arms and ammunition in England in preparation for the fighting in France and Germany, we were able to do range firing without the restrictions we had had in the past. We built our own rifle, machine gun, and mortar ranges in the Chester area and were able to give our replacements the opportunity to familiarize themselves with their weapons. We found to our surprise that many of them had very little opportunity to fire their weapons before leaving the States. It was very important for each man to zero the rifle assigned to him and that he would carry into combat. This was done in two ways: what was referred to as "Sighting and aiming" exercises, and by actual range firing at different ranges. Simply stated this was to allow the soldier to know where his shot would strike when aimed properly. If the shot was high or low or to the right or left of the target, adjustments had to be made to elevation or windage on the rear sight to bring it on target. This was a little like what you have probably heard of as taking "Kentucky windage", only instead of holding the rifle to the right or left or high or low, the allowances are made with the rear sight. Since most rifles varied slightly, if a new rifle was issued it had to be zeroed by the soldier.

"Sighting and aiming" was an exercise designed to teach the replacements proper aiming and shot grouping without actually firing. The equipment used was a wooden rifle rest or holder, a box on which a sheet of paper was thumbtacked, and a short stick with a small metal round black disk at the end with a hole exactly in the center. The replacement lay in the prone position with his cheek against the rifle stock in an aiming position, with one of our training coaches sitting beside him. Another man sat on the box about ten yards in front of the rifle muzzle and moved the disk as directed by the replacement until he indicated he had the right sight picture by calling "mark". The man on the box would then mark the paper sheet with the tip of a pencil through the hole in the disk. The disk would then be moved and the same procedure would be repeated three times. The target would then be examined and, if the exercise was done correctly, the three pencil marks, or shot grouns, should be able to be covered by a nickle. In theory, of course, the dots should be on top of each other. Since the replacement had not moved the rifle it was really aiming in reverse -- the target being lined up with the sight rather than the sight with the target. The correct sight picture for the replacement was when the black disk rested on top of the rifle's front sight as seen through the rear sight and in the upper half of the rear sight's peep hole. When this exercise was satisfactorily completed the replacement was then taken to the range for live firing. Those of you who like to hunt may find this more interesting than the granddaughters, but I hope that it gives you some idea of the simple ways we used to effectively

train thousands of men in a short time.

It was in May of 1944, while I was at Delamere, that I took the first 24 hour pass that I had had since leaving Fort Jackson. While I had gotten off for a number of afternoons and evenings this was the first time I had been away overnight -- except, of course, for the time I spent in London, which wasn't counted as pass time. It was nice to get away on my own and do exactly what I pleased and go where I wanted. I used it to visit The Textile Paper Tube Co., Ltd., which was the English affiliate of Sonoco Products where I was the Personnel manager before going into the army. Mr. Holdsworth, who was the manager-director of Textile Tube, had gotten my APO number (Army Post Office) from Sonoco and had written inviting me to visit. I took Lt. Dickerson with me and we went by bus. The English plant was located at Romely which was near Manchester, only about 50 miles north east of Chester near where my camo was. Mr. Holdsworth and his assistant, Mr. Stevens, gave us a warm welcome and a most enjoyable time. After showing us over the plant they took us to a nearby "Pub" where we had ale and lunch at midday.

The paper mill was not without its war-time shortages and I saw bales of straw being dumped into the beater furnishings. This made rather brittle paper but during the war it was a matter of "make do". I also saw several of the roundnose and cone machines that we had shipped them eight years before and were still running smoothly. The smells and sounds were familiar and made me feel at home. It was like a bit of home away from home.

Before leaving Delamere I was able to go to a typically English country horse show with jumping and all. The field where it was held was just at the edge of the camp and I sent some of the men over to help put up some of the tents that the show committee needed. The proceeds of the show went to the Red Cross. I enjoyed myself thoroughly. The first eight classes were for children under sixteen and some were for riders under twelve with ponies not exceeding 12.2 hands high, which was the English way of measuring horses. There was a bending race, musical chairs and jumping for children. In the bending race six poles were stuck in the ground in a line and competitors rode in and out between them, leaning from side to side. The ponies were partly guided by bridle and partly by the shifting of weight. After moving through the poles the children then made a run for the finish line. The musical chairs were just like the games you have played at parties when you were children. Chairs were placed in a double row, back to back, and while music from a band played the children rode around them. When the music stopped the children would ride quickly towards the chairs, dismount and find a chair, all the time holding on to the ponies reins.

There was one little tow-headed girl that stole my heart. She couldn't have been more than eight years old and her little legs could hardly press the saddle. She rode excellently and had complete control of her pony at the jumps and carried herself with perfect assurance. She was real spunky. She fell off three times, and each time the stewards would pick her up and put her back on her saddle. She wasn't one bit afraid and went on to win her event. All the English seemed to love their horses and were at home on them. They believed that when a person was thrown, the only thing to do was to remount immediately. It was this backbone that I believe helped carry them through the war so well.

One other unusual event that I had never seen before was a race of farmers on their large Clydesdale horses. These are the large heavy chested dray horses, with large thick hairy hoofs, that you probably remember seeing pulling beer wagons in TV commercials. I was surprised at how fast they could run and the ground litterly shook when they thundered past.

Everyone was proud of their trophies, especially the children, and refreshments were served under the tent flys.

June 6, 1944 was a day none of us will ever forget. It was D-Day. About noon on that day we listened to an announcement over the BBC (British Broadcasting Company) radio that American, British and Canadian troops had landed at 6:30 AM that morning on a 50 mile front on the Normandy coast of France. It was the beginning of what General Eisenhower called the Great Crusade and was to end on May 7, 1945 with the total defeat of Nazi Germany and her allies, and the liberation of Europe. The waiting was over. As expected, we had missed the invasion and the urgency of our replacement training increased. We wondered when our time would come to cross the channel and what our mission would be.

1944 was coming to an end and the regiment moved from the Chester area to the Salisbury Plains. These were a large rolling grassy area with few trees located about 150 miles to the southeast of Chester and about 25 miles north of Southhampton and Portsmouth on the south central coast. It was from these two ports that many of the landing craft had sailed from for the D-Day invasion a short while before.

My company headquarters and two platoons of the company were quartered at Tidworth Barracks which was a large and very old British regular army post going back to the days of the British Indian army and where the battalions stayed when they were rotated home from the colonies. The men of the company were quartered in a long row of brick apartments built for married British enlisted men. Each apartment consisted of a downstairs living room, kitchen amd eating area, and bathroom. On the second floor were two bedrooms. Each apartment was separated from the other with an entrance on the street and a small backyard. I think that the men liked this arrangement since it gave them more privacy and a sense of living in a little house after living in tents and crowded Nessen huts for so long. The company mess hall was at the end of the house row.

The company officers were quartered in large brick two story buildings with bedrooms furnished with real beds and leather upholstered easy chairs and chests of drawers. Each building had a large living room or lounge with comfortable settees and chairs. Although we didn't getto use our quarters very much because we were busy most of the time it was a very welcome change from the temperary conditions we had been liviing in for so long.

There was no central heating in any of the enlisted men or officers quarters. Each room had a fireplace, but never really warm except for a short time in the evenings before we went to bed. This was because coal was in short supply and rationed. It was comforting though to sit in front of an open fire again and write letters or read for an hour or two

before Taps was blown. Even then we wore long underwear and wore woolen uniforms and sweaters. I remember one period particularly when our coal supply was so short that we only had a few lumps to burn each evening. Our coal piles were mostly coal dust which was difficult to burn. The oil for our cooking ranges was also in short supply. It was during this time that I gained a healthy respect for the ingenuity of the American soldier. One of the platoon sergeants in the company, Technical sergeant Miller from Charleston, S. C., told me about an idea he had of making coal bricks out of coal dust and asked for permission to give it a try. It sounded like it might work so I told him to go ahead. He went to a nearby Engineer supply dump and got several sheets of 4'x8' plywood, some 1"x5" boards, and several bags of cement. From an airfield near the camp he got a drum of used cylinder oil and I borrowed a cement mixer for him. He sawed and fitted the 1"x5" boards and placed them edgewise on the sheets of plywood to form moulds for bricks approximately 6"x12" and 5" thick. The boards were not fastened together nor to the plywood and could be easily tapped apart. Each mold was for about 60 bricks. He then got a kitchen mop and coated the entire surface of each mould with the used cylinder oil. This was to prevent the bricks from sticking to the wood. When the moulds and the cement mixers were in place near our coal dust pile he was ready for business. After a little experimenting he determined just the right amount of cement and water to mix with the coal dust for bonding without being too hard for burning. The mixture was then poured into the moulds, leveled and left overnight to set -- pretty simple when you think about it, but dog-gone if it didn't work and, although the coal dust bricks didn't burn quite as well as coal lumps, we all managed to stay comfortable for awhile. When we used all the dust in our pile Sgt. Miller just moved his equipment to another pile and went in business again. The bricks could be broken in two to make passable lumps.

As strange as it might sound it was along about this time that one eveing I was warmer than I had been in the winter since I had left Fort Jackson. I was sitting in front of my fireplace in my second floor room, nursing my few lumps of coal and reading a newspaper, when I began to feel comfortably warm. I pushed back from the fire but felt even warmer. I took off my sweater and then my wool shirt, but was still hot. I knew that I didn't have a fever because I felt too comfortable. About that time I noticed a few puffs of smoke coming up between the cracks in the floor near the hearth. You guessed it -- the bottom floor of the barracks was on fire. A few other officers who were in the barracks that night and I discovered that a trunk in the room directly under mine had caught fire and set the floor on fire. It turned out that an officer had been keeping oily pistol cleaning rags in a canvas sack in his trunk and these had caught fire from spontaneous combustion. We called the British fire brigade and began fighting the fire with the water and sand buckets which were kept in each barracks. Soon the fire brigade arrived and the sergeant in charge came rushing in the front door and up to the bulletin board which he began looking at. I hollered to him and asked him what he was doing and that the fire was in the back of the building. He said that he was looking for the fire regulations. In a few ill chosen words I told him to forget the regulations -- lets get the fire out. When the fire was out, and everything had settled down, it turned out we had called the British post headquarters and they had called the fire brigade for us, instead of our calling the brigade direct as covered in the regulations. Our British cousins were always ones to follow correct procedures, re-

gardless of the circumstances, while the American soldier usually went ahead and took what he considered proper action, and then figured out what he should have done. This was probably one of our big differences. We called it initiative, they called it something else. I suppose that this was one of the few times that a British army barracks had central heating and I was comfortably warm, even though for a short time. Fortunately, the damage was slight, since the barracks was brick.

During the late summer and fall of 1944 we followed with interest the progress of the allied armies as they broke out of the beachhead in Normandy 125 miles from Tidworth Barracks across the channel and began to push the Germans back across northern France toward the Rhine River. We learned with sadness of the misfortune of the 30th Division, our old division, when in bad weather they were bombed by our own airforce by mistake with heavy casualties. Our own 2nd battalion left for France, and still the rest of our regiment remained on the Salisbury Plains, training replacements and sending them to France and furnishing security for the large supply and ammunition dumps in the area. We knew we were going across, but we didn't know when.

13 Aug'44

By the fall of 1944 we were beginning to have so much air superiority that the Germans were not able to spare the planes to raid the dumps in England. Because of this it was not necessary to camouflage and tanks, artillery pieces and vehicles were parked in the open in long lines. The whole area for miles around was one big staging area, with air fields and reserve divisions in tent camps. I remember one moon-lit evening a very unusual thing happened. I was officer of the day and sitting in the guard tentwhen I heard the single engine of a Piper artillery spotting plane flying low. There was a long double line of half-track personnel carriers nearby. These were closely parked, bumper to bumper and wheel to wheel, with their canvas tops up. All at once I heard the plane's engine reduce speed and a few seconds later a loud cracking crash. One of the guards rushed into the entrance to the tent and hollered, "Come quick, Captain, you got'a see this." I ran out and saw that the plane had landed on the canvas tops of the half tracks about fifty yards down the line, and broken in two just behind the pilot's compartment. As I hurried towards it, I saw the door open and a British lieutenant climbed out. When I reached him, he said in a slow British voice, "I say, I really made a mess of that one." He was holding one arm and all I could see was a small cut on the side of his face. I asked him what had happened and he told me that he had just flown the channel from France with some supply requisitions and had mistaken the tops of the line of half tracks for the runway of a nearby airfield. I told him to come on back to the guard tent and have a cup of coffee while our aidman checked him over and I would then get a jeep and send him on to the airfield. He was one lucky young officer. His light plane, being made of an aluminum frame covered with linen, just bounced from one canvas half-track cover to another until the wheels collapsed, and it sagged between two vehicles. A heavier plane would have probably plowed in and exploded. The rest of the night was a quiet one.

By the end of the first week in December our troops had pushed the German armies all the way across France along the entire front, and were almost ready to cross the Rhine into Germany itself. Things were

moving rapidly and everyone felt the end of the war was in sight. It was not to be quite that easy. On December 16th, 38 divisions of Germans attacked through the Ardennes forest on a 50 mile front. Our intelligence had been completely fooled and our lines at the point of attack were lightly held, mainly by the 106th infantry division which consisted of new men who had recently moved up. The battle was later to be known as "The Battle of the Bulge". The Germans had planned carefully and the winter weather was so bad our airforce was grounded. The German forces consisted of many experienced armoured divisions with a few motorized infantry divisions. These quickly overran our 106th division, and 9,000 of our men were captured. After their breakthrough the German columns pushed rapidly forward through northern Luxemburg and eastern Belgium until they had comeletely surrounded our 101st airborne division at Bastogne.

Because of this surprise attack and allied losses, that part of our regiment left in England was ordered to send all company officers, except company commanders and executive officers, and 30% of our enlisted men, along with the replacements we were then training, over to France at once. We could understand the reasoning and necessity for this, but it still was a difficult time for the regiment since we had been together for so long. It was the duty of myself and the other company commanders to select the men who were to go, and it was a hard thing for me to do. Since we had no ground rules to help us make the selections, I could only do what I thought was fair. First, I decided to exempt the married men with children, and then as many of those that were married but without children, as the quota allowed. A few of our men were on leave and couldn't be reached, which meant they stayed. I felt it would have been better if we had gone as a unit, but that was not to be. The night before our men left we had a big beer party in the mess hall and I wished them "god speed".

With General Patton's 3rd Army attacking from the south and General Montgomery from the north, Bastogne was relieved and the German drive brought to a halt. The weather cleared and our planes could then attack. The German tanks ran out of gas -- literally , and by December 27, 1944 the drive was completely stopped and many of their units were cut off. By the end of December all of the ground lost was regained. 110,000 German troops were captured and their casualties were 100,000. Such losses in men and equipment no doubt helped to shorten the war, although it was hard for us to see this at the time. While there was much fighting ahead this was the last big Nazi effort of the war.

With all of the activity and excitement of the "Bulge" Christmas 1944 came up fast for us. This was our third Christmas away from the States and it didn't get any easier.-- although a great deal easier than the men of the 101st in Bastogne, and we knew it.

You will recall that I told you about seeing my first cousin and old Clemson roommate, Tom Lide, in Ireland. I found to my surprise that his new the 103rd General Hospital, in which he was a doctor, was located just a few miles from Tidworth Barracks. We were able to spend Christmas Eve and Christmas Day together. We had a fine time talking "family", and I think being together kept us from feeling so homesick. Tom came over and had dinner with me Christmas Eve and I went over to his hospital Christmas Day and had another big dinner. The food that we had at both messes was

excellent and we literally stuffed ourselves. We had all the turkey we could eat, mashed potatoes, asparagus, green beans, cranberry sauce, cake, and two kinds of pies -- apple and lemon. After dinner at Tom's place, we went to his room and had a little party. He and his two roommates, a Catholic chaplain and a supply officer, had fixed up a tree with decorations and presents. They even had some presents on the tree for me. Afterwards, we had a few drinks and spent the rest of the afternoon talking.

Before I left Tom said he knew where two coveys of quail could be found so we went looking. We really found them, too. Of course we didn't have shotguns, so all we could do was stand and watch them fly away -- but I got a "kick" out of it. Reminded me of our Christmas time hunts at home. English quail appear to be larger than the ones at home, more like grouse, and fly slower. I had been dreading the coming of Christmas this year, a little like going to the dentist, but it turned out to be a pretty good one considering that we couldn't be with our families. You may wonder how, after all the years that have passed, I can remember details, such as proper names and what I had to eat. Nannie saved some of the letters I wrote to her at the time and I have used these to "jog" my memory.

When the allied lines were reestablished, after the "Bulge" was contained and our attack began again, the Rhine was soon crossed and German armies were slowly pushed back through the Nazi heartland. As they retreated, they left many booby traps, land mines, and blown bridges. Because of this, it was decided that we should begin giving the replacements training in demolitions. We found ourselves again in a familiar situation. We had to teach ourselves demolitions before we could instruct our replacements.

With the help of the engineers, field manuals, and trial and error we learned about bangalore torpedoes, satchel charges, land mines, plastic explosives, T.N.T., and blasting caps as well as pressure and release triggering devices for setting booby traps. We even had our own explosive dump with allied as well as captured German explosive devices. Fortunately, our trials were mostly successful and our errors weren't costly because we stayed as far away as possible until we could see just what that type of explosive was going to do. It was not a very relaxing job and I know that I must have spent at least half of my time preaching safety to our officers and men.

The bulk of the explosives in our dump consisted of ½ pound blocks of T.N.T., primer cord (fuse), blasting caps, fuse lighters, and electric exploders. These were easy to use and fairly safe with reasonable care. The main thing was to keep alert and never get to feeling too familiar with them.

The ½ pound blocks of T.N.T. were approximately 2 inches square by 3½ inches long and covered with waxed cardboard with one end open. The open end had a hole in the center about 2 inches deep for inserting the blasting cap. The fuse cord was twisted waxed paper with a slow burning power chain in the core. The blasting time could be controlled by cutting the fuse to different lengths. For example, a twenty second

fuse was cut to about 5 inches long. We felt safer though if we checked each new roll of fuse by cutting a piece off and timing it against the second hand of our watches.

The blasting caps were short sections of thin wall copper tubing about ¼ inch in diameter and 2 inches long, closed at one end packed with high explosive gunpowder. The fuse lighters were short cardboard tubes which were emory gritted inside and with a wooden stick inside with a sulphur tip like an old style kitchen match with a three inch dowel fastened crosswise. These tubes were tight-fitted over the end of a cut piece of fuse, and when the dowel was grasped with the fingers and pulled the sulphur tip would pull against the emory and ignite the end of the fuse exactly like striking a match. The lighters were water-proofed as was the fuse cord for use in wet weather.

When a fuse was cut to the desired length and a fuse lighter fastened to one end, the other end was crimped into the open end of the blasting cap tube. This was then pushed into a hole in the ½ pound block of T.N.T. and the explosive was then ready for use. If a larger explosive was needed additional blocks of T.N.T. could be taped around the block with the blasting cap inside. While the T.N.T was fairly stable and could even be melted with low heat and sometimes broken with a hammer (not recommended), not so with the blasting caps which were sensitive to heat and shock. For this reason we were always careful to keep the blocks of T.N.T. and blasting caps well separated when stored in the dump. In fact, as an additional precaution, I always insisted on carrying the T.N.T. in one jeep and the blasting caps in another when carrying explosives to the field for use. We carried the blasting caps in little flat boxes packed in cotton. A blasting cap while small could mangle a hand badly if exploded prematurely. We were very fortunate to have no accidents in the company while handling explosives.

There was one sad and unfortunate accident to one of the replacement cadre officers who was not a part of the regiment. This is what happened: the young lieutenant had been an airborn unit, but had injured his leg in a parachute drop amd been reassigned to the replacement cadre. He had planned a simulated night attack for his replacements and was going to throw ½ blocks of T.N.T. in front of the advancing trainees to take the place of an artillery rolling barrage. This was not so unusual, since this type of explosive was often used on infiltration courses for realism. The lieutenant came to me to draw the T.N.T., blasting caps, fuse cord, and fuse lighters. As usual, before issuing, I asked about his qualifications and he told me that he had been the demolition officer of his parachute battalion, so I thought he should be well qualified. A squad from my company under a sergeant went along the night of the exercise to act as the "enemy" and fire blank cartridges. About 9:00 o'clock that night I heard a jeep drive up in front of the quarters and my sergeant hurried in. I asked him what had happened. He said that he wasn't sure -- that the exercise was going along as planned when there was a flash and a large explosion, and when they went to investigate they couldn't find the lieutenant. I went out to the maneuver area with the sergeant and discovered that the lieutenant had blown himself up. As near as I could figure out what had happened he had prepared his charges with 20 second fuses and, instead of placing them in a box, had put them all into the large pockets in the front of the legs of his jump suit. In taking one charge out he must have inadver-

tently pulled the dowel of another fuse lighter of a block still in his pocket. It was such a sad thing, like so many things that happened during the war.

About this time, I left Company B and was assigned to the staff of the 1st Battalion as operations officer. I suppose that it was a promotion in a way, but I certainly hated to leave the close associations with the officers and men of Company B, which I had commanded for a little over a year. I guess they felt they needed more brains on the staff. Seriously, I think that since the regiment had been together for so long, command assignments were changed from time to time to give us more variety and prevent any chance of our going "stale". It was not a bad idea. At any rate, I had a little more time to myself, which I used to see some of the interesting sights in that part of England and visit the beautiful cathedrals of Manchester and Salisbury. I also saw Stonehendge for the first time, which is on the Salisbury Plains. Nannie and I visited Stonehenge again years later when we went to England together.

With the allied forces pushing through Germany on all fronts and the Russians advancing from the east, everyone began to realize that the end of the war was indeed in sight. The allies were beginning to have complete over-all air superiority and, except for the occasional V-1 and V-2 buzz bombs (rockets), the dark days of theGerman blitz were over for England. We kept training and sending replacements on to Europe and waiting to join the rest of our regiment in France. Our units in England were gradually brought back up to strength with officers and enlisted men from all branches of the service. To help me with my staff operations work, I was assigned an assistant -- an armored corps lieutenant who became my roommate and friend. He proved to be a fine officer and carried much of the work load. He had been wounded three times and had been awarded two silver stars. He had to leave tanks because a hatch cover had been blown closed on one of his hands and crushed it.

As the war began to wind down in Germany, the need for replacements was not as great and I had a little more time to look around. During the late winter and early spring of 1945 I was able to spend two week-ends in Winchester, England which was about 40 miles from Tidworth Barracks. Once I went by myself and once I met Tom Lide there. The town of Winchester was of great interest to me. It was one of the principle cities of England in the Anglo-Saxon times (1066) and rivaled London in trade and importance. There were old Roman ruins on the hill overlooking the town. And Winchester Cathedral was on the banks of the beautiful Itchen River which flowed through the center. Winchester College was also an attraction. It is one of the oldest schools in England, founded in 1382, and one of the first to introduce courses in science and mathematics in addition to the classics.

The Bishop of Winchester had turned his home over to the government for the duration of the war and it was being used by the British Red Cross for quartering allied officers on R. & R. (rest and recreation). This house was located on the street in front of the Cathedral grounds and I managed to get a front room on the third floor. From my window I had a beautiful view of the Cathedral and the river beyond it.

Tom and I spent many enjoyable hours in the Cathedral in which

were the tombs of several of the kings from the time of Alfred the Great who is buried there. We examined with interest a copy of the Magna Carta, which as you remember from your history studies was a document the English barons forced King John to approve in 1215, in which certain rights were promised to the English people. It marked the beginning of democracy in England, and, I suppose to a degree, in our own country as well. We also saw the tomb of Izaak Walton (1593 - 1683) who used to fish in the Itchen River and was known for the classic he wrote on fishing, "The Complete Angler", which introduced the English people to the pleasures of sport fishing -- wouldn't you know this would catch my eye. There was a beautiful path along the bank of the Itchen River along which Tom and I walked and talked. It was a peaceful place.

One of the hostesses of the Bishop's house asked me if I would like to see Winchester College and when I said "yes" she arranged a meeting for me with one of the professors who invited me to tea and took me through the schools. I was impressed with the many places on the walls commemorating many of the great men who had attended school there over the years.

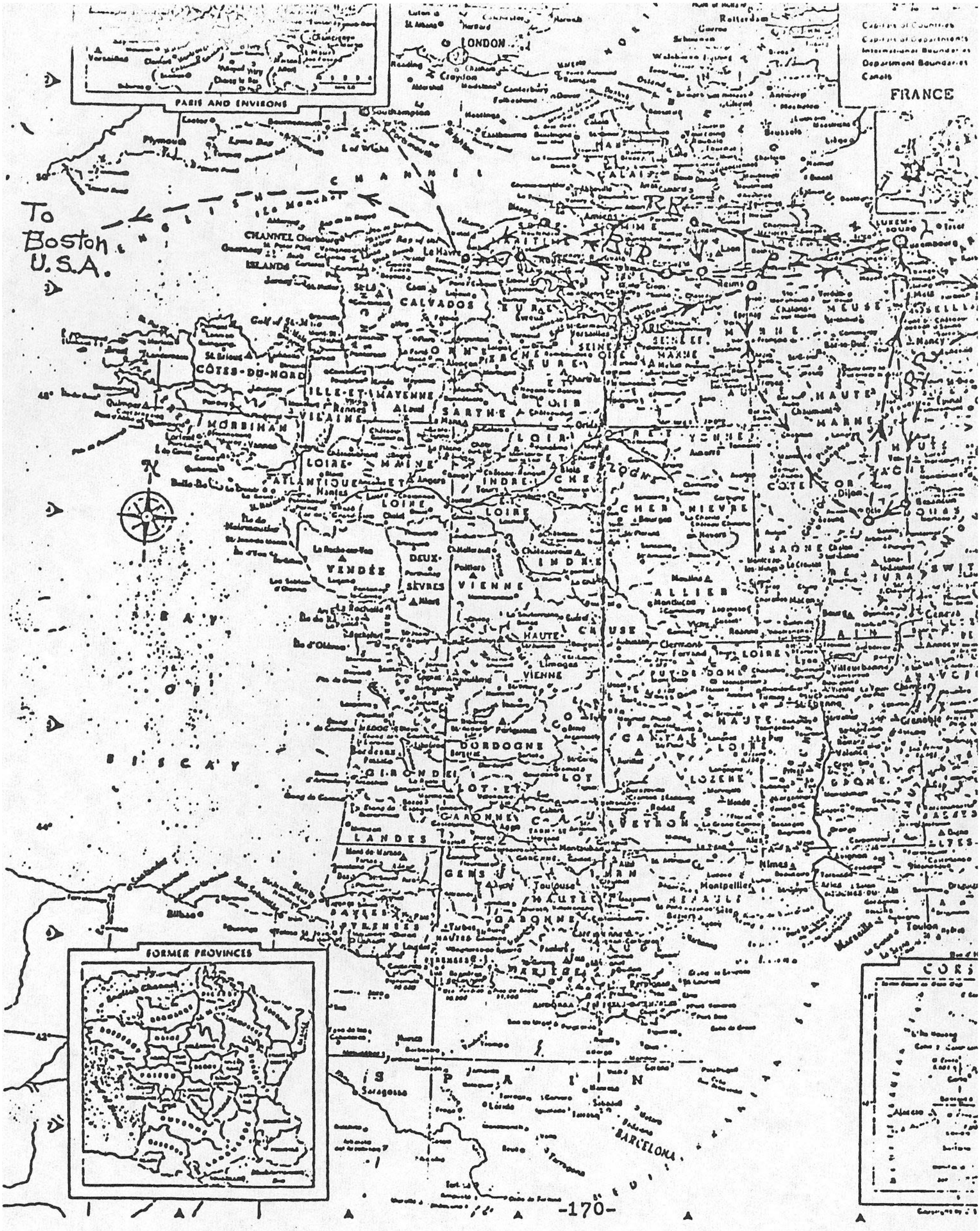
Winchester was one of my favorite English towns and the people were very hospitable. This is one of the places that Nannie and I visited years later and I found that I still remembered enough to show her around. We even had a look at the legendary King Arthur's round table which was on the wall in one of the gate towers.

By the last of April and the first week in May 1945 Germany was finished. Allied forces had met up with Russian troops at the Elbe River and the country was cut in two. The Russians had captured Berlin and Hitler had committed suicide. The German armies on all the fronts were breaking up and the Third Reich, which was to have lasted a 1000 years, came to an end. It was a joyous time for everyone. On May 7, 1947, in Reims, France, General Alfred Jodl of the German high command signed the terms of unconditional surrender and the war in Europe was officially ended. This was known as "V.E. Day" (Victory in Europe).

Everything happened fast after that and two weeks later we got our orders to join that part of the regiment that was already in France. Our regimental commander, Col. Sherburne had gone to another assignment and another career officer, Col. E. A. Rudelius, took command of the regiment. We were sorry to lose Col. Sherburne. He had been a fine C.O. and we had been together for a long time.

By this time moving was just a way of life with us and we were soon packed and assembled with the other units of the regiment in a tent camp just outside of Southhampton, England. In two days we had taken our typhus and yellow fever shots, loaded aboard a transport and sailed for Le Havre, France, which was a short voyage across the channel about 100 miles to the southeast. We arrived outside of the breakwater of the inner harbor just before dark and dropped anchor for the night in the estuary of the Seine River.

At daylight the next morning we moved through the channel of the breakwater and disembarked at Le Havre, which is at the mouth of the Seine River, about 125 miles to the northwest of Paris. We now had to



To Boston U.S.A.
FRANCE
LONDON
PARIS AND ENVIRONS
CHANNEL
CALVADOS
CÔTES-DU-NORD
ILLE-ET-VILAINE
MORBIHAN
LOIRE-ATLANTIQUE
VENDÉE
DEUX-SÈVRES
VIENNE
HAUTE VIENNE
CREUSE
ALLIER
DORDOGNE
GIRONDE
LANDES
GERS
HAUTE GARONNE
BAY OF BISCAY
SPAIN
BARCELONA
FORMER PROVINCES

learn how to get along in yet another country. We had been in England and Ireland for almost two years, but we had adjusted well to the British way and, of course, we spoke their language which made it easier to get along. In France it was a little more difficult, since few of us spoke French. I had taken a French language course in school, but had forgotten most of it.

The waterfront at LeHavre and what we could see of the town showed considerable war damage, partly by the retreating Germans but mostly, I am afraid, from our own aerial bombing.

The regiment headquarters and two battalions went by rail from LeHavre to the small village of Caudebec, which is on the north bank of the Seine, about 35 miles from Rouen, where we joined our other battalion in a tent camp on the high hills overlooking the river. Our train ride was a short one. Passenger cars were in short supply in France at that time and we became acquainted with the little freight cars known as 40 and 8's that were the common means of transporting troops during both World War I and II. They got their name because they could carry 40 men or 8 horses. The French railway system had been a good one but had sustained considerable damage during the war, mainly from bombing. Many bridges and much track had been destroyed. The engines were much larger than the British and resembled our steam engines at home. Riding freight trains is not the most comfortable way to travel, but it did get us there.

There was a large P.O.W. (prisoner of war) camp containing several thousand German officers and men nearby. This was enclosed with concertina barbed wire and the engineers had bulldozed a ditch around it which had partially filled with water. The camp was guarded by a company of Negro engineers armed with carbines. Shortly after our arrival, we heard shots coming from the direction of the P.O.W. camp. It wasn't what we thought it was -- the guards were shooting rats. There were a good many around feeding on the accumulated garbage.

We found that all of our work details and the K.P. (kitchen police-- peeling potatoes, washing up, etc.) could be done by the P.O.W.s by requisitioning them from the camp commander. In fact, most of us needed haircuts and we asked for, and got, about a dozen Germans who had been barbers and put them to work. They were willing enough workers, since they knew we would feed them while they were with us. It did seem a little strange though to have your hair cut by a man in a German uniform.

We were only at Caidebec for about ten days but during this time I went with our battalion adjutant, Capt. McGinty, to Reims, France to get our new orders and discuss our move and mission. Since the trip took us through Paris I was able to see all the sights I had only read about. Afterwards it was easier to understand the words of that World War I song -- "How you gonna keep 'em down on the farm, after they've seen Paree".

We left camp early in the morning and made an overnight trip of it. This gave us a good bit of the day to see the the sights of Paris. Paris is, of course, a very large and very beautiful city and an effort was made by both sides to declare it an "open city". There was little evidence of war damage -- nothing like London. We went directly through

the center of the city and, while we didn't have long in one place, we drove along the Champs Elysees Avenue, which is the main street of Paris, and stopped at the Arc de Triomphe (Arch of Triumph), under which is the tomb of France's unknown soldier of World War I, an eternal flame burning over it. All soldiers in uniform saluted as they passed. French civilians placed their right hand over their hearts. We drove past Notre Dame Cathedral but didn't have time to stop. It is a very beautiful old church on an island in the Seine River. We had a good look at the gargoyles on top of the high buttresses. These are stone statues with animal heads, which were made famous by the hunchback of Notre Dame in the "Phantom of the Opera". We stopped for a short while at the Eiffel Tower which is made of steel and is 954 feet high. Unfortunately, we did not see the view of the city from the top since the elevator was broken that day and we didn't have time to climb but a little way up. We then went to the Place de la Concorde (Place of Peace), which is a world famous square in the heart of Paris, and ate lunch at a transit mess in one of the buildings on the square. In the square is an unusual statue called Cleopatra's Needle. It is a tall slender four-sided stone pillar. The square had also been where the guillotine stood where King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette were beheaded in 1793 during the French Revolution.

After lunch we crossed the Seine again and spent a short while in the Louvre, which is the largest museum and palace in the world and covers 49 acres on the north bank of the river. In it are paintings such as the Mona Lisa and statues like Venus de Milo. Many of the art treasures were still in storage when we were there. This was to protect them from war damage. While we toured Paris we had a chance to take a look at the people and were surprised at what we saw, particularly the women. Everyone seemed well dressed, considering the shortages and years of German occupation. The women amazed us with their hair dyed many colors -- red, purple, green and yellow -- not mixed but all one shade. I would have liked to have gone back again but have never been back to Paris. I don't think you could say we were qualified to write a travel brochure on how to see Paris in less than a day, but we did see many of the sights and considered ourselves fortunate to be able to make the trip. I suppose it was one of the unexpected benefits of staff work.

After we left the Louvre we had to get on the road in order to reach Reims before night. Reims was about 85 miles northeast of Paris and was Allied Headquarters at that time. At Reims we learned that our next mission was to be part of the army of occupation of Germany and were to go by train to Mannheim, Germany as soon as possible.

We spent the night at Reims and the next morning, after stopping for a short while to look at the beautiful Reims Cathedral, we started back to Caudebec and the regiment. We took a more direct way back, north of Paris through Soissons and Compiegne and made good time. In driving through rural France we got the feeling that there were two Frances and two types of people -- one in Paris and one in the rest of France. Most of the farm houses we passed had a compost pile in the front and often the cows and other livestock pens were built onto the house. At least it was easy to milk on a cold winters morning. We crossed many of the streams and rivers on pontoon bridges because the original bridges had been blown by the retreating Germans, or had been destroyed by our bombers. We passed a number of burned out German and Allied tanks and vehicles along

the road and on several occasions long convoys of newly arrived American units moving back to the channel ports for redeployment to the Pacific area and the war against Japan.

When we got home -- we thought of the regiment as home since it was the only home we had known for several years -- we found everyone packed and ready to move. They weren't sure where, but knew they were going. In another day we loaded again on the same cars we came on from LeHarve and started east. This far west the cars had not been used to carry DP's (displaced persons) from the concentration camps and it had not been necessary to wash them down inside with disinfectant. We spread new straw on the floors of the 40 and 8s to sleep on, and strung telephone wire between cars with a field phone in every fifth car for communication. We left a little slack in the wire where the cars coupled to prevent snapping when we went around curves.

It took us three days and two nights to reach Mannheim. Ordinarilly it was an overnight train ride but because of the bomb damage to the railyards at the cities, and the missing bridges, we had to make many detours and it seemed as though we were wandering all over northern France. For most of our meals we ate C and K field rations, but stopped for one good hot meal once each day at transit messes set up by the Transportation Corps at the stations of the larger cities.

Our rest stops in the country were a little hazardous at first. This was because the French engineer and trainmem claimed to have little or no knowledge of English and, after a short stop, the engineer would blow his whistle and almost immediately start the train moving slowly forward, causing many of the men to have to start running to catch up with their cars. I'm not so sure he wasn't doing this on purpose just to see the men run. After this happened the second time we put an abrupt stop to it by putting two men with rifles in front of the engine. These men sat on the tracks until we, and not the engineer, were ready to move. Of course, the men would not have used their rifles but then the trainmen couldn't be sure of that, could they?

Riding freight cars was not as smooth as a pullman, ofcourse, but it was summer time and warm, and we could leave the doors open, and sleeping on the straw was fairly comfortable.

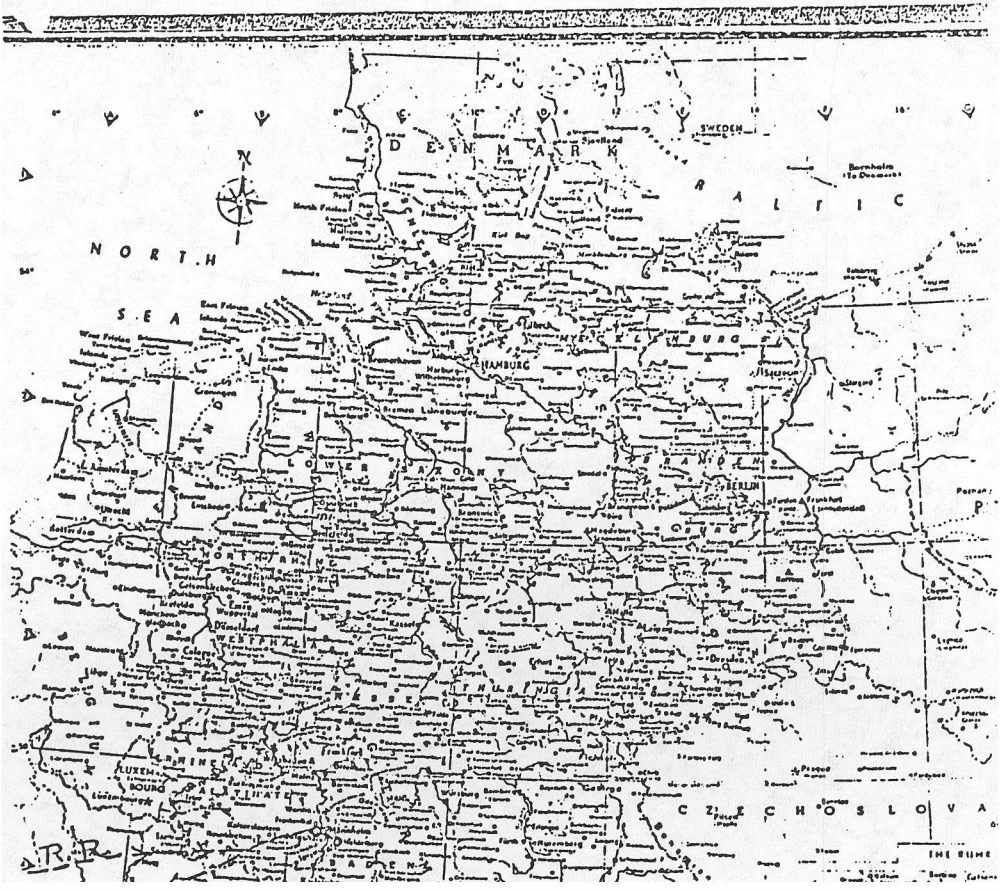
In our round about route through northern France we went through Amiens, St. Quentin and that part of Flanders which is in France. As we approached the open rolling fields of Flanders, I remember standing in the doorway and seeing in the distance large areas of blood red flowers, which in the breeze seemed to ripple like water. These were poppies and brought to my mind that sad and beautiful poem written by the Canadian doctor, John McCrae, during World War I.

"In Flanders Fields

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses row on row
---------"

You may remember it from your English classes in school. Incidentally, I

GERMANY


DENMARK
SWEDEN
BALTIC
NORTH SEA
HAMBURG
BERLIN
LOWER SAXONY
NORTH RHINE
WESTPHALIA
HESSE
THURINGIA
SAXONY
LUXEMBOURG
CZECHOSLOVA
IME RUHR

always thought that it was"--- the poppies grow", but on reading thepoem again recently I found it was "---- the poppies blow." I suppose it was with reference to the breeze.

As we passed through Metz, France, crossed the German border and began to move through Germany we saw more and more evidence of the effectiveness of the allied bombing of railyards and of the towns we passed through, which had disrupted the German supply lines. At every stop our train was surrounded by hundreds of German civilians hoping for food -- old men, women, and children, a few with their hands out but most just standing looking at us, hoping that we would give them something. Food seemed to be the greatest need of the German people at that time. The allied government forces were doing their best to organize a food supply and restore water and electricity in the towns, but it was a large and slow task.

The further we travelled into Germany the more distruction we saw. It was almost indescribable. The railyards were filled with craters, twisted rails, and destroyed and burned out engines and freight cars. What we could see of the towns we passed through were mainly rubble, and when the tracks ran through forests they looked like tornadoes had passed through, with the trees splintered and broken off about six feet above the ground. We could see many burned out tanks, vehicles and artillery pieces from the open doors of our freight cars. There was little doubt why Germany was defeated. The German Tiger Mark IV tanks and 88 artillery pieces were perhaps better than anything the allies had -- we just had more of everything and literally overwhelmed them.

Our journey ended at Ludenhiem, Germany, which is a western suburb of Mannheim on the Rhine River. The station was a burned out shell, but the regiment loaded on trucks and moved through rubble filled streets to temporary quarters in a slightly less damaged part of town. For a few days we stayed in large empty apartment buildings, an undamaged part of a truck factory, and tents in the open ground of a park. All around us were German civilians and soldiers working to clear the streets and make some of the houses liveable. It was strange to see so many German soldiers wandering around, but with the disintergration of the German army many just wandered off and, while many were still in barbed wire enclosures, they were being released daily after it had been determined they were not hard core SS troops.

Shortly, we moved from Lundenhiem across the Rhine to more permenant quarters in Fuedenhiem, which was an eastern suburb on the road to Heidleberg. Fuedenheim was about ten miles from the center of Mannheim and surprisingly had sustained little damage, so our quarters were very comfortable and we came in close contact with the German people. Actually, the American army had a non-fraternization policy at that time, but this was all but impossible to observe or enforce. This was because our battalion was quartered in German homes in which the family members still lived in the attics, or basements, and sometimes shared the same bathrooms. The non-fraternization orders required that we not socialize with the German people or even talk to them except for business purposes. In public it was perhaps workable but not the way we were situated.

The battalion staff was quartered in one of the better homes

which was undamaged and one of the medical officers, Captain Manuele, and I had a large bedroom on the second floor with a balcony overlooking a garden in the rear and a large comfortable double bed. The bathroom, which was just outside the door, still had running water with a gas operated instant heater for hot tub baths. We even had electricity for lighting in that part of town. The family who had lived there consisted of a mother and two children, a ten year old boy and a little girl of three. They were well educated and the mother and little boy spoke fair English. Their names were Morgensen, and the father had been Oberlieutenant (1st Lieutenant) in the German army, who Frau Morgensen said they had heard nothing from in eight months. The mother and children lived in the attic where they slept on a cot and pallets on the floor. Fortunately, it was summer and heat wasn't a problem to them. Frau Morgensen made the beds and kept the house spotlessly clean, washed our clothes and occasionly put flowers from the garden on our dresser. I suppose that in a strange way, even though the house was hers, she was thankful that we let her and the children continue to live there.

Before we moved in the people were told not to remove anything from the rooms and, being German, they followed these instructions literally. Frau Morgensen had even left her hand mirror and comb and brushes on the dresser and her clothes, the childrens toys, one of her husband's uniforms in the closet, until we told her that she could remove them. The officers and men of the headquarters company were quartered in town houses in a long row on both sides of the street for two blocks.

We set up our mess in tents in some open ground at the base of a tall water tank built like a stone tower at the end of the street. The families where we were quartered had little to eat and their children took cans and pails and waited at the mess each meal to get what our men didn't eat. There is a picture in our den in our house in Hartsville of the mess with the water tower in the background, and the little children waiting with their cans. You can also see one old man with a larger can behind his back. When I took the picture I watched to see what would happen. The old man had apparently come with several of the children who, when their cans were full, would empty them into his larger can and, when it was full, the man and children then left together. I think that everyone realized that American soldiers could never resist the appeals of little children. The picture is one I have looked at often during the years since the war and each time I am again thankful for our many blessings here in America. I think it would be worth your time to look at the picture yourselves.

This period of our service was filled with all the comforts of home, and plentiful food. Although we had no love for the German people, who probably expected us to live as they considered victors should, it was impossible for us not to feel some compassion for what the ordinary German civilians were experiencing, especially the children. We realized, of course that many atrocities had been committed by the hard core Nazi of Hitler's regime on the other peoples of Europe and would have to be punished, but I think that we were beginning to realize that now the war was over the time for healing was at hand and many of the Germans were ordinary people like ourselves.

There was a large sitting room on the second floor overlooking the street in our house, and occasionaly after mess and Frau Morgenson had put the little girl to bed, Capt. Manuele and I would sit with the mother and little boy in the cool of the evening and try to answer her questions

about what might be in store for the German people. We were surprised at the rumors that she had heard. For instance, she asked us if it was true that the allies were not going to permit the German people to marry for a period of five years, and that schools would not be permitted to open again for a similar time.

We established a 9 PM curfew, patrolled the town with motor and foot patrols, and furnished guards for the POW (prisoner of war) stockade in the flack towers and underground air raid shelters on the edge of town. Time went slowly for us and we had no trouble at all with the Germans in all the time we were in Fuedenhiem. The Germans were war-weary and defeated and they wanted no more of it. We could see it in their faces. I hope that I have given you some idea of what it was like in Germany at the end of the war.

Since our duties as occupation troops were light, Capt. Manuele and I were able to take a sightseeing trip to Heidelberg, which was on the Neckar River and about 15 miles to the southeast of Mannhiem. Heidelberg is a beautiful ancient German city and is the site of Heidelberg University, which was founded in 1386, the oldest university in Germany. The town itself is at the base of a low range of mountains and, since it had been declared an "open city", had sustained no war damage, except that the Germans had blown the Neckar bridges when they retreated. We crossed the river on a pontoon bridge.

Heidelberg castle overlooked the city from the side of a low mountain and Capt. Manuele and I decided to take a look at it. It was a very old castle, dating back to 1500-1600's, and we found its architecture very interesting. In the cellar we found an unusual sight -- an enormous wine barrel which the English speaking custodian said would hold 49,000 gallons and was the largest in Germany. The custodian also told us that when it was first built it was tended by a dwarf, who it was said could drink fifteen bottles of wine a day -- what a "middle man" he must have been.

Those of you who have studied music will recall that Heidelberg was the setting for that classic musical operetta "The Student Prince". We didn't find the Golden Apple Inn where Prince Karl met with his fellow students to drink beer and sing, but we did stop for some beer and cheese at an inn that must have been similar, with dark heavy beamed ceiling, stained glass windows and an old world atmosphere. With a little imagination you could almost see the prince in his little red round cap, with his foot on a chair and a beer stein in his hand, leading his friends in Romberg's rousing and lively musical score "Drinking Song", or even hear the prince sing to Kathie, the little barmaid, the musical score "Deep In My Heart".

Before leaving Heidelberg we walked around the town looking for a place to buy some momentoes to send to our families, but found little we wanted. Deutsche mark was practically worthless, so the allies had issued paper occupation script marks as monetary exchange, which were, of course, readily accepted by the Germans. I did buy a pen and ink sketch of the castle and have it still around the house somewhere. Everywhere we went we saw German soldiers in uniform wandering around the town. They had recently been released from nearby POW camps. Some probably didn't want to be freed since food was so scarce at the time.

Before leaving for "home" we rode a little farther east into Germany along the banks of the Neckar River through a valley in the wooded hills. It was very beautiful country and almost completely untouched by the war. There were many barges on the river with people living on them, as some had all their lives. The Neckar, while not as large as the Rhine, is navigatable and freight was carried on the barges. It was such a quiet, beautiful part of Germany we hated to leave it.

When we got back to Fuedenhiem we found everyone smiling. It seemed some of the men had found and "liberated" a large warehouse at a brewery on the edge of town which was filled with beer and liquor, some of which had been bottled in France and had printed on the labels that they were for the use of the Wehrmacht, which was what the German army was called. We loaded 2½ ton trucks and dropped off barrels of beer at each street intersection, and had one big "beer bust". I suppose that it was more like a big political block party and for once everyone had as much beer as they could drink. The bottles of German gin, which was dark brown in color, and the cognac were divided up and each of us ended up with several. It was probably just as well, when the supply ran out, that there was only one warehouse.

There was hardly an evening passed that we didn't see several German soldiers with their knapsacks and blanket rolls walking along the streets returning to their homes in the neighborhood. When their homes were in our block the wives and children would run out of the houses to greet them with happy shouts. I think that this alone made us realize that at last the war was finally over and that soon we too would be re-united with our own loved ones.

In the first week in July 1945 the regiment received orders to move by train from Fuedenhiem to Dole, France, which is in east-central France on the Saone River and about forty miles from the Swiss border. Actually we were to detrain At Besancon and move by truck to Dole. Each of our battalions was to make up a train and, as operations officer, I was the loading officer. There is a copy of our movement orders framed and hung on a wall in the Longbranch house. You might find it of interest since it is in both French and English.

Since many of the undamaged 40 and 8's (freight cars) in the Mannhiem rail yards had been used for moving displaced persons from the concentration camps in Germany, Capt. Manuele and I decided there was risk to the men from lice and typhus infection so we arranged to have the insides of the cars washed thoroughly with a strong solution and fresh sleeping straw loaded. When we found enough cars to make up our train the battalion was soon loaded and away.

As a troop train we had priority and passed many sidetracked long trains parked with DPs (displaced persons) moving back to France. Because they had no other way to decorate, the people had covered their cars with tree branchs and green shrubbery and when we passed we were greeted with happy shouts, which we returned with equal enthusiasm. We were both finally starting in the direction of home. Even the straw we slept on seemed a little softer.

When we arrived in Dole we found that the men were to be quartered in several large three story buildings surrounded by a high brick wall.

This had been a mental hospital from which the patients had been moved. Actually, it wasn't as bad as it sounds, since the buildings were very clean and new mattresses had been provided for the beds. Except for duty officers, the officers of the battalion were quartered in a hotel a mile or two away in the center of town.

Dole was a typical little provincial French town and was the birthplace of Louis Pasteur, who is considered one of the greatest bacteriologists of all time. Those of you who are interested in medicine will remember him as the discoverer of the process for pasteurizing milk and other foods by preserving them with heat and cold. He also developed vacines for the prevention of anthrax in cattle and for rabies in humans. When I took a walk in the town the first afternoon we were there I discovered that Pasteur's laboratory was on the same street as the hotel and only about 100 yards away. It had been maintained as a medical museum. I had an interesting time in going through it and learned, among other things, that Pasteur was one of the first to recognize the importance of using antiseptics in operating rooms.

I had a large room on the second floor overlooking the street, with soft, comfortable double bed and a hand basin with hot and cold running water. It was nice having a room to myself.

There was a canal behind the hotel and when the landlord found out I liked to fish he offered to lend me tackle and furnished bait which, surprisingly, consisted of a small bottle of boiled corn kernels. There were a few old Frenchmen already fishing when I got there and I watched them to see how it was done. One showed me how to bait the small hook with the corn and got very excited when I got a bite and lost the fish. He tried to tell me in rapid-fire French what I was doing wrong, but it was no use. My French wasn't up to it. Later he caught a small fish and I went over to look at it. It seemed to be of the carp family and had a small mouth, which was probably why it was hard to hook. I stayed for about two hours, but had no luck. No matter; it was quiet and peaceful and I thoroughly enjoyed just sitting on the bank and looking. I suppose the word is tranquil.

With no real mission and few duties we had time to learn something about the French people. There was a garrison of a battalion of French troops in barracks at the edge of town. They had a drum and bugle corps and it seemed that hardly a day passed that they didn't have a parade through the town. The people of the town lined the streets and cheered them as they passed behind their colors in their kepies, white gauntlet gloves, blue scarfs and short white leggings. Both the town people and the troops seemed to thoroughly enjoy themselves. We learned the French loved a parade. One day there was a wedding in the town, which gave another excuse for a parade. The drum and bugle corps came first, followed by the bridal couple and the wedding party. It was like a fiesta. I suppose it was their latin blood.

About ten days after our arrival in Dole we were sleepingpeacefully in our hotel rooms when about two o'clock in the morning the night was shattered by a loud explosion which shook the whole front of the hotel. A moment later there was another explosion a short distance away, then two more farther away in the town. We ran into the street and saw that the front of a store across the street had been blown in. What had happened was that Dole had been the headquarters of a unit of the German occupation forces and some of the town people had collaborated with them. The other

town people were taking reprisals and blowing up the front of the collaborators stores. The French, being French, hadn't bothered to tell us ahead of time. No one had been injured and the next day there was another parade.

With plenty of time on our hands our men spent their evenings drinking weak French beer and strong French cognac and wine in the taverns of the town. Nothing serious happened but often the MPs (military police) had to step in. Some "eager beaver" at sector headquarters decided that when this happened the MPs were to call the duty officer of the offender's unit, and that officer would have to go to the police station and escort the man back to his quarters. When this happened to me twice late at night, when I was duty officer of the battalion headquarters company, I decided to do something about it. When this happened to me again what I did was to have the offender's platoon dress and marched them all to the station to pick up the man. At first I got a few hard looks but then I think the men began to realize what the officers had been having to put up with. At any rate, the men began to police themselves and, whenever I was duty officer, I had no more trouble. Oh, well, I suppose Kipling was right when he wrote "---Single men in barracks don't grow into plaster saints".

We needed another 37 mm antitank gun and ammunition for training the low point men who were being transferred into the regiment and I went with the supply officer to the depot at Rethel, France to pick it up. We took a jeep and two 3/4 ton weapons carriers. Since Rethel was only 30 miles from the Belgium border it was a roundtrip of about 500 miles, so we got a chance to see almost all of central and northern rural France. If you are interested and have a map of France, you can follow our route. From Dole we traveled through Dijon, Chatillon-sur-seine, Troyes, Chalons, to Reims and then on to Rethel. We stayed in Reims for 36 hours and had a chance to spend a little more time to visit the beautiful cathedral there. I thought it surpassed Notre Dame. It was far more ornate than the English cathedrals. The flying buttresses(side supports on the outside) were built higher from the foundation. We shopped a little in Reims and I bought two little bronzes of a man and a woman in Norman dress and carrying yoke buckets on their shoulders. They are still around the house somewhere. I also bought a bracelet for little Margaret and some earrings for Nanny. The trip back to Dole took a little longer since we were towing the gun behind one of the trucks and we met or passed many long convoys of units moving to and from Germany and to the southern debarkation ports on the Mediterranean. It was an interesting trip and we had no trouble with our vehicles. I couldn't pronounce the names of some of the French towns that we passed but we had no trouble finding them on our maps.

In the last week of July 1945 I left the regiment and became a military policeman. I received orders transferring me to the 380th Military Police Battalion, which was classified as a Category IV init. This is how it came about.

Going back a little to mid June 1945, with the war in Europe over and things moving pretty much our way in the Pacific, the army established a system of credit points for officers and men, and classification of units which would determine how units would be used and the order in which officers and men would be released from the service. It was a pretty good plan, even if a bit complicated, but you may be interested in

knowing how it worked.

Units were classified in four categories. Category I units were scheduled for occupation or other duty in Europe. Category II units were scheduled for movement to the Pacific, either direct from Europe or for a return to the United States for additional Training and then on to the Pacific. Category III were units waiting to be classified , and Category IV were units waiting for transportation to the States to be demobilized.

The point system for officers and men was based on so many points for each month of service in the United States, so many for each month of overseas service, and so many for decorations, campaign stars, and wounds. Because of our long months of service, both at home and overseas, and because the regiment was elligable for two campaign stars on our theater ribbons, almost all of the older officers and men had high point totals. My own point total was 111. Since 85 was considered high, I had more than enough for a transfer to a Category IV unit and an early return to the states as soon as ships were available. Actually, my score was a little higher than that, since I had been awarded the Bronze Star medal in the fall of 1944, but didn't know it at the time. The long months and years had finally paid off for us.

The 118th Infantry Regiment was classified as Category II by the War Department and all men with over 85 points and non-essential high point officers would eventually be transferred to Category IV units with the opportunity of returning home sooner. The regiment would then be brought up to strength with low pointers, brought back to the states, and then on to the Pacific. So many low pointers had been now transferred into regiment that we were overstrength and it was time for some of the high pointers to leave. I was one one of these. Thus I became a Policeman. It wasn't easy for me to leave the regiment which had been home to me for so long, and good-byes were difficult.

My orders called for me to proceed by government transportation to Luxembourg and report to the C.O. of the 380th M.P Bn. there. I got a jeep and driver and started out through France again. Luxembourg was about 175 miles from Dole, and I had been through much of the country before, so finding my way didn't present much of a problem. However, I had never been to Luxembourg before. I will tell you more about the city and the Grand Duchy a little later on, as you will see.

When I arrived in Luxembourg city I found Company C of the 380th stationed there, but the battalion headquarters had moved to St. Quentin, France about a week before. After eating and gassing up, my driver and I started for St. Quentin which was about 125 miles due west. By this time I was beginning to feel like the young army officer of Edward Everett Hales short story, "The Man Without a Country"; destined to travel forever. At long last, I reached St. Quentin and reported to Lt. Col. Burke, who commanded the 380th. After he had welcomed me to the battalion, he told me that he would like for me to stay at the headquarters for a day and learn something about the paper work and reports that would be required, after which he was sending me to the battalion's D Company for two weeks indoctrination in military police operations. This suited me fine -- if I was going to be a policeman I might as well start learning how to be one. Co. D was located in Soisson France, which was about 35 miles south of St. Quentin. When I arrived there, everyone seemed pleased to see me, particularly after they saw the six overseas bars on my sleeve. They told me that they thought if men with as much overseas service as I had were being transferred into the battalion it was a sure sign the unit would soon be

going home. I had to chuckle when they had a special formation to introduce me to the company and the captain told me to be sure and wear my blouse so everyone could see the service bars. It was certainly a good example of "clothes making the man".

My two weeks indoctrination failed to materialize. After four days, the battalion adjutant brought me orders from the battalion to proceed back to Luxembourg City and take command of C Company, with a battery of field artillery attached also to be under my command. The same orders designated me as Provost Marshal of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, a small section of France to include Thionville and a section of eastern Belgium around Arlon. I had been an infantryman for almost five years and here I was in five days time to be commanding a military police company, a battery of field artillery and to be Provost Marshal of a whole country, even though a small one. The company motor pool furnished me with a jeep and driver, M.P. arm band, white web belting, pistol lanyard, and all, and away I went through northern France to Luxembourg again. My travels were getting to be pretty much like riding on a merry-go-round, as you can see. It was about a 130 mile trip. The weather was sunny and warm, and even the roads were fairly smooth, and I soon dozed off. We hit a bump and I awoke with the jolt and noted that the driver had floor-boarded the accelerator and we were barreling along about as fast as the jeep would go. To show you how green I was I turned to the driver and said in my most fatherly manner, "Son, you had better slow down before the M.P.s get us." He replied in a most reasonable voice, "But Cap'n, we are the M.P.s." Time passed quickly after that and we soon arrived in the city of Luxembourg, which is the capitol of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and which you will know from your geography studies is a small independent country located where France, Belgium and Germany meet. The country has an area of approximately 1000 square miles, which makes it slightly smaller than the state of Rhode Island, and is about 35 miles east-west and 55 miles north-south. It is a very old country and filled with ancient fortifications and castles. I later read that there were 130 old castles, some dating as far back as the Roman Empire. I was able to see a few of these. Their architecture reflected many different nationalities and cultures. Luxembourg was probably a part of more countries than any other in Europe. Many people may not know that the Grand Duchy was once a part of Spain. Over the years it was also ruled by Austria, Holland, Belgium and France.

The countryside is rolling and hilly with some low heavily forrested mountains in the north. These are called the Ardennes, through which the Germans attacked during the "Battle of the Bulge". The country is called a "Duchy" because it is ruled by a grand duke or a duchess. During the time I was there Grand Duchess Charlotte was the ruler. She and her two grown sons, Prince Felix and Prince John, had returned from refuge in England, after the allies had liberated Luxembourg for the second time after the Battle of the Bulge, and now headed the government again. After four years of occupation by the Germans, it was a happy time for all of the people. I found them more open and friendly than the French.

To get back to my story -- the city of Luxembourg had a population of about 60,000 at that time and was situated on a plateau at the junction of the Alzette and Petrusse rivers. Steep rocky cliffs dropped down to the rivers on three sides of the city. It was first built as a walled fortress city in the middle ages and, as we drove over the high stone bridge over the Alzette River and into the center of town, we could see parts of the wall's ruins along the tops of the cliffs.

We had no trouble finding the military police station, since it was the second time in only a week that I had been to the city. I was received with all the "snap, crackle and pop" military courtesy that only military policemen and marines seem to be able to achieve. The C Company commander that I was relieving was a low point man and was moving on to the Pacific. We spent the afternoon and next day inventorying the company property and my learning about the disposition of the units and how they were operating. There was a squad under a technical sergeant located at Thionville, France about 20 miles to the south, and two squads under a lieutenant, who were operating a detention stockade for American troops awaiting trial in Arlor, Belgium, about 15 miles to the west just across the border. The rest of C Company and the field artillery battery was located in the city of Luxembourg, with two C Company lieutenants and two with the battery. Only one of the four lieutenants wore the crossed pistol insignia of the Military Police Corps. The others were Infantry and Artillery, so I wasn't alone in my ignorance.

On the plus side, the accomodations, facilities and other arrangements were set up for a full battalion of military police under the command of a Lt. Colonel. When the battalion headquarters left nobody thought to make a change and I wasn't about to. Except that I didn't know "beans" about how to be a policeman. It was a "honey" of a set-up. For example, the officers lived in a big apartment house in the best section of town, with 6 large bedrooms, two bathrooms, a living room and a kitchen and dining area. We even had a housekeeper, a blonde woman of about my age, who came to work early each morning and cooked our breakfasts. After breakfast, she made the beds, cleaned the apartment, and I sent a jeep around at mid-morning to take her to the commissary to pick up food to stock the apartment. She left in the early afternoon. I think she was pleased with the set-up, since she could eat lunch before she left each day. The only drawback was communications. She spoke almost no English, but with a little high school French, a little "pig English", and a lot of sign language we managed. Except for breakfast, I ate my other meals at the company mess which was across town.

As company commander I had my own jeep and driver. As Provost Marshal of the Grand Duchy I had also assigned to me two black sedans with civilian drivers in regular chauffeur uniforms. They worked in shifts, with one reporting to the apartment at 6 AM and staying on duty until 3 PM, and the other reporting to the station at that time and staying until 11 PM. Again the problem of communication. The chauffeurs spoke only French and German and, of course, their native language called Luxembougeois, which sounded to me like a mixture of the two. It was a real challenge but, with the help of three English speaking Luxembourg policemen, who were assigned to the company, I usually managed to make my wishes known. My usual practice was to get the Luxembourg policemen to tell the chauffeurs where I wanted to go and what I wanted to do. After that, we were on our own and it usually "boiled" down to "Bon Jour", "Bon Soir" and "Arret ici " (good day, good evening and stop here.) When I wanted to get away from the pomp and ceremony, I usually drove my own jeep. It wasn't really all that bad. The people were very friendly and cooperative and I could almost always find a Luxembourger who could speak a little English to help me out.

When the old company commander left early on the second morning,

the only real military policeman left with the company was the executive officer, Lt. Irick, and I depended on him to get me off on the right foot. He was a good officer and I don't know what I would have done without him. The sergeants and other non-com were old hands too and, as usual, did a good job of running their part of the company in spite of my inexperience.

I soon learned what a desk sergeant and a duty sergeant was and how a police blotter was kept. We had vice, traffic, investigation (detective), and regular patrol squads -- some on foot, some in jeeps and some on motorcycles. It was learning the hard way all over again for me -- even the little things. For example, I soon found that the motorcycle mounted patrol members were fiercely proud of their motorcycles and, when I had trouble getting them to remember to wear their protective helmets, all I had to do was threaten to take them off motorcycle patrol and "presto" the helmets were always on. Of course, they weren't forgetting, they were only trying me out. One of the first things I had to learn was that while most people move away from trouble, a policeman has to always move toward it. One thing for certain, there were few dull moments, which made time pass rapidly.

After a few days I began to try a few things on my own so the others wouldn't think all infantrymen had two left feet. The desk sergeant sat behind a desk in the front room of the station and kept the police blotter, which was a record of arrests. I had been noticing that when patrols brought in soldiers who had one too many, they would sometimes brace themselves unsteadily, with their two hands on the sergeant's desk, which caused them to be looking down at the sergeant. I remembered that all the desks I had seen in large city police stations, and in the movies, had been elevated and the person being booked had to look up at the desk sergeant. I figured this was good psychology and had a sobering effect. I had the company carpenter build a raised platform and put the desk on it. It seemed to work, and the sergeants seemed impressed. Officers are fairly easily impressed since most of the time you just have to throw in an extra "sir" or two, but when you have impressed a sergeant you have really accomplished something. I like to think my stock went up just a little bit, and several said they wondered why they hadn't thought of it before. Oh well, such are the little things in life.

Because of having to spread the officers to cover a fairly large area, there were only four officers available for duty in the city proper, Lt. Irick and I in the MP company and two in the artillery battery. As a result our hours were pretty long. I usually went to work at 8 o'clock in the morning and stopped at 10 o'clock at night. Every fourth night, as duty officer, I had to remain at the station until 2 o'clock in the morning. The next day I slept a little longer, and the housekeeper cooked me a late breakfast, which I ate at my leisure, so it wasn't too bad.

The days were usually fairly quiet, but in the evenings, when leave trucks started coming into town, the cafes and bars filled quickly and the streets were crowded with soldiers from the many units stationed in the vicinity. That was another thing I learned -- when work stopped for others, the MPs work began.

Some things that happened were serious and some were almost humorous. We had a sobering-up cell in the basement and I remember one

evening I was sitting in my office when the duty sergeant ran in and told me that a soldier they had recently put in the cell was threatening to hang himself if we wouldn't turn him loose. I hurried down to the basement with several of the duty squad and found the soldier standing on a cot with one end of a strip of blanket he had torn off tied around his neck. He had thrown the other end over an overhead pipe and was holding the loose end in onehand. There wasn't much chance of him hurting himself if he jumped off the cot -- he would only pull the loose end out of his hand. When I pointed this out to him he saw how silly it was and sat down on the cot and began to laugh. I told the duty sergeant to take him for a cold shower and some strong coffee.

I remember another evening when a patrol brought in a group of about eight soldiers who had gotten into a fight in a cafe and had broken up some furniture. I could hear them milling around in the main room. Ordinarily I left such things to the desk sergeant to handle but, after a few minutes, he came into the office and told me that he thought I ought to see one of the men, so I told him to bring him in. When he came in I could see what the difficulty was. He was wearing the ribbon of the Congressional Medal of Honor. It was our usual practice to book offenders, hold them until they sobered up, if needed, and then turn them over to their units for disciplinary action. However, I couldn't bring myself to follow our usual proceedure with this soldier. The war was over and I felt that this man had done more than his share to end it. What I did was to tell him I wasn't going to book a man wearing a medal like his and would make a bargain with him -- which was to collect enough money from the other men to pay the cafe owner for the damages they had caused, then load the men on their truck, and I would have one of my jeep patrols escort them two miles out of the city and he was not to return that night. He gave me his word, and that was that. With the war over and so many men with idle time, I suppose that it was inevitable that some steam had to be blown. Don't get the idea that military policemen were cream puffs, they weren't. That's why they wore sidearms and carried night sticks. The use of force was a matter of judgment, to be avoided if possible but, if needed, to be applied promptly and unhesitatingly. It was my observation that if a policeman hesitates or shows indecision he loses control of the situation. It is not an easy job but I am happy to say that at no time I was in Luxembourg did any of the men have to draw his pistol.. A clean scrap with fists is one thing, but if knives are drawn it's something else again. It was also my observation that more fights were broken up by whistles than with nightsticks.

No two incidents seemed to be the same. I remember one evening we received a call that a soldier had fallen off the high stone arch bridge over the Alzette River. The bridge was at least 200 feet high. I called an ambulance to meet us under the bridge on the road at the bottom of the cliff. I didn't think the man had a chance to survive the fall. When we got there we found that the soldier had fallen from the bridge approach rather than the center over the rocky river. The approach had about a 30° slope and was covered with moss growing over the stone. He hit near the top and slid on the moss all the way to the bottom. Apparently the moss slowed him up and, as luck would have it, he ended up in a bog. He was sitting looking around when we reached him. I was amazed. All he had was a badly skinned face and shoulder and a twisted ankle. I think that perhaps the drinks he had made him so relaxed that no bones were broken.

The medical officer with the ambulance gave him first aid and took him to the hospital for a night's observation. I learned that he was released the next day. So ended another typical day.

A few nights later we got a call that a jeep had run off a bridge over a small stream about ten miles north of the city. The ambulance had gotten there ahead of us, since the call reached the hospital first. We found that the driver had been killed but the soldier riding beside him hadn't been hurt very badly but was intoxicated and couldn't tell us very much about what had happened. He did tell me that there was another soldier riding in the back seat. The aide man from the ambulance had searched, but had not found him. I went to the bridge rail and looked over and saw the jeep on the rocks of a swift flowing stream with one headlight still on. The other MPs went with me under the bridge and we began searching around the jeep and along the banks downstream, but could find nobody. By that time a number of Luxembourgers had gathered and they helped us look. One of them told me that there was a platoon of the Luxembourg army stationed about 1½ miles down the road, so I sent my driver to get more help. A short while later about 20 men showed up with lanterns and flashlights and we organized a search along both sides of the stream. It was rough going in the dark. After about two hours of searching downstream and going about 3/4 of a mile it was about 1:30 in the morning and we had found nothing. I thought about how confused the injured man had sounded when I talked to him and I thought he might have sobered up enough by then to remember more about what happened. I sent the duty sergeant back to the hospital in the city to talk with him again. In about 45 minutes the sergeant returned and said I was right. The man had been able to remember what happened and had told him that there had been another soldier with them, but they had let him out at his unit a short while before the accident. Thus ended our search , and we were relieved that it turned out not as bad as it might have been. I thanked all those who had helped and, after having coffee at the Luxembourg army camp, we went back to the station where I notified the injured and dead man's unit, wrote a brief report and turned in. It was 3 o'clock in the morning. It had been a long day.

When pay day came around I thought it was going to be just like the many others. It turned out to be a little different. Our usual proceedure was to prepare the payroll roster with names, ranks, serial numbers, lengths of service, allotments, deductions, etc., and submit this to the finance officer. The net pay for each man would then be calculated and the total payroll money would be placed in canvas bags. I would then pick up the completed payroll roster and the money and pay the soldier in cash in the currency of the country we were in when he stepped up to the table, saluted and gave his name. Sounds simple, doesn't it? I usually had another officer or senior sergeant sitting beside me to watch everything I did so that I wouldn't make a mistake when I counted out the money. What made this payroll different was that I had to pay off in three countries, in three different currencies, with slightly different rates of exchange -- French francs, Belgium francs and Luxembourg francs. To help me keep things straight I used three different watchers so that I wouldn't forget what country I was in. Since I had to sign for the money I drew from the finance officer I was glad when this payday was over and everything balanced out.

You may be interested in what my pay was as a soldier.

My base pay with longevity was $230.00 per month as a captain, with ten years commissioned service, which meant that I got $10.00 extra for each three years of commissioned service, or "foggies" as they were called. To this was added my overseas pay of $20.00, subsistance pay of $42.00 and a rental allowance of $90.00 (because no family quarters were assigned). Thus my total monthly pay was $392.00.. Of this I sent Nanny a monthly allotment of $300.00 and had deducted $7.50 for army life insurance. This left me with $74.50 per month for food, clothing, P.X. (post exchange), supplies and incidental expenses. As strange as it may seem to you, this was ample and I actually saved money while I was overseas and even sent a little extra money home to Nanny. You must remember that a dollar went a great deal further in those days. There was little for me to spnd my money on, and a coco-cola cost a nickle and a 1/2 pint of beer a dime. Other ranks were paid comparably. For example, a private's base pay was $60.00 per month, but was furnished food and clothing without cost. Officers had to pay for their food, which we did by paying to the mess fund each month. To give you an idea of how much that amounted to, I found in old records that during the period July 1st through September 8th, 1945 , I paid the government $52.50 for 210 meals, which was 25¢ per meal. Nanny told me that she and little Margaret lived comfortably while I was away on the $300.00 allotment and the money she earned when she worked part of the time, and even paid off part of the house mortgage and went on vacation to the beach. Besides being a beautiful doll she was always smart and a good manager.

Something new seemed to happen every day. One morning a mayor of a small village in the northern part of the country telephoned to tell us that there was a small group claiming to be from the Free French army going from village to village confiscating personal property from people they said had collaborated with the Germans during the occupation. The mayor could speak fair English and, when I got him to slow down, I could understand him pretty well. He said that his people had not been collaborators and wanted our help in running down the gang of robbers. I told him to sit tight and I would send a patrol up right away. It took the patrol a day and a half to run the Frenchmen down. When they returned they had six men dressed in mixed uniforms, one woman, two trucks loaded with loot and one sedan. The leader was wearing a French army officer's kepi (cap). The loot consisted of clothing, furs, radios, cameras, phonographs, framed pictures, small pieces of furniture and food -- quite a haul. When the bunch came into the station they were all jabbering at me in French and what they thought was English. I soon got tired of listen- to them amd told the sergeant to lock them in the holding cells. They wanted to keep the woman at the station too, but I took a "dim view" of that. I put her in one of the spare rooms in the officer's apartment. with a guard on the door. The next day I turned the gang over to the French legation, and asked the Luxembourg police to try to return the loot. Just a typical da,'s work in the life of a policeman.

Another day one of the city patrols came in and told me that the Luxembourg police had found a warehouse filled with Nazi banners and flags and wanted suggestions as what should be done with them. I took a look and there were hundreds of the large banners used to line the streets and for Nazi rallies. I suppose they were in readiness for a triumphal visit by Hitler after the war. Boy, were they wrong. I suggested that the men of the M.P. company and the battery be allowed to help themselves to souvenirs and the rest be given to any of the city ladies who might want them to make drapes and dresses out of. The Luxembourgers thought that this was a good idea. I even brought one home myself and gave it to

a son of one of my friends.

In the middle of the country near Ettelbruck there was a large prison in which a number of the Nazi leaders were being held for war crime trials later held in Nuremberg, Germany. These included such men as Hermann Goering, Rudolf Hess, Von Ribbentrop and Hjalmer Schacht. You will recall from your history studies that Goering was later sentenced to death, but committed suicide before he was hanged. Although the prison was within my area of responsibility, they had their own security forces, which suited me fine. I had enough to do as it was. One of my patrols stopped by the prison one day and on its return the sergeant, who was leading it, came in with a double handful of medals and told me that they had a large box full of decorations they had taken off the high ranking prisoners and that a sergeant friend of his told him to help himself. He told me that he wanted to share them with me, so I picked out an iron cross and a German cross (given for civilian as well as war service). I gave the iron cross to a young friend when I got home, but the German cross is on the wall of my den. I wouldn't know which one of the Nazi rankers wore it but you might be interested in looking at it.

On August 6, 1945 we heard in radio announcements that a new type of bomb with the explosive force of 20,000 tons of TNT and with 2,000 times the blast of the biggest bomb ever used had been dropped by our Air Force on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. This was the first atomic bomb we had ever heard of, and we instinctively knew that this was the beginning of the end of the war with Japan. In spite of the many questions raised over the years as to the justification for its use, there are many service men living today who wouldn't be here if we had had to invade the main islands of Japan. It should probably also be remembered that there would have been no Hiroshima if there had been no Pearl Harbor. A few days later a second such bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, and on August 14, 1945 Japan accepted the allies surrender terms. The war was over and there was peace throughout the world for the first time in many years.

It was rather strange in a way how we took the news of the war's end. I didn't see a crowd gathered or a voice raised. I doubled my town patrols, as a precaution, but things seemed even quieter than usual. Everyone, including our soldiers, seemed to be filled with a quiet happiness. Of course we had our usual nightly drunks and cafe fights, but I supposed most of the soldiers, like myself, were thinking mostly of home and the days to come, and thanking God.

With the end of the war with Japan, all movement of troops to the Pacific was halted and priority went to the high point men for their return to the States. On August 19, 1945 I received a telephone call from battalion headquarters telling me that I was relieved from assignment with the 380th M.P. Battalion and was to report to the 16th Reinforcement Depot at Compiegne, France for processing and return to the U. S. I WAS ON MY WAY HOME! My 111 points and three years overseas had "paid off".

I wasted no time and, after inventoring property, I turned the command over to Lt. Irick, with my thanks for his help, and drew a jeep from the motorpool. The last thing I remember was driving away from the apartment with the housekeeper standing on the curb waving good-bye with tears running down her face. I wondered how many other soldiers she had waved good-bye to.

It wasn't just a matter of getting on a ship and going home. With the many millions of men in both theaters of war I had to wait my turn. As it turned out, I didn't sail until three weeks later. During this time I stayed in various holding battalions, moving always closer to the channel debarkation ports. I had no command responsibilities and absolutely no duties to perform. All I had to do was eat, sleep and grow "fat and happy".

The Compiegne depot was on the Oise River on the grounds of an old chateau. It was quiet peaceful surroundings and the special service forces went all out to make our stay a pleasant one. They arranged sight-seeing tours for us to nearby historical sights, barge rides on the river and canals, ball games, picture shows twice a day and just about anything we asked for. After the rush of the last few years it was the proverbial "Life of Riley". I remember there was an open air beer garden surrounded by a split rail fence, and tables and benches under shade trees inside the enclosure. There were colored lanterns for night. The beer garden opened at 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon, about an hour before evening mess, and opened again after we had eaten. I made friends with an officer about my age who had arrived at the depot about a week before I did. He offered to show me around and invited me to join him at the garden for a beer. He said he thought I would enjoy something he had been watching all week. He wouldn't tell me what it was but said that I could see it for myself. We arrived at the beer garden about five minutes before opening time and stood in line with the others. I noticed there was a little wire haired Scotch terrior lined up and waiting also. My friend told me to keep my eyes on the little fellow. When the gate opened he trotted right in and sat down between two tables near the center of the enclosure. We ordered our beers with an order of chips (fried potatoes), which were served in a small card-board container. I kept watching the little dog. Pretty soon one of the officers finished his potatoes, filled the container from his beer mug and put it down on the ground. The little dog pricked up his ears, trotted over and began lapping up the beer. When he had finished, another card-board container full was waiting for him. After awhile he wasn't so much trotting as weaving between containers, occasionally pausing to make use of the trees. Sometime later, as was bound to happen, he stumbled against a table, fell down, crawled under it and passed out. I suppose it would be more considerate to say he went happily and peacefully to sleep. My new friend said that he had been watching the little dog all week and each evening, at five minutes to 5:00, he was always waiting in line, as he was every evening I was there also.

I enjoyed the barge ride on the Oise River very much. It was about a twenty mile trip and the weather was sunny and warm. We spent all afternoon just sitting on the deck and enjoying the scenery. It gave me the chance to see rural France away from the noise and traffic of the roads. Our barge was towed by a French canal tug boat, with a tall funnel hinged at the base, and everytime we passed under a bridge one of the crew took hold of a rope attached to the stack and pulled it down. We went through several locks where the water raised and lowered the boats. When we approached a lock the tug boat would give a "Toonyville toot" on its whistle and the women and young girls who operated them hurried to open the gates. Many of them wore wooden shoes like the Dutch, since the banks were damp and wooden shoes were excellent in keeping out the water. The women and girls also brought apples and grapes, along with big smiles, as were passing through

the locks. These people seemed very different from those in large towns. We passed over candy bars, cigarettes and chewing gum, which were received with many "Merci beaucoups" (Thanks very much).

Another trip that I enjoyed very much was to the chateau Pierrefonds which was built in 1390. It was an impressive sight and more like a a fortress castle, or a palace, than a chateau. It was enormous. There were about 25 officers in our group and we went in two trucks, with sandwiches, coke and beer for lunch, and made a day of it. Who said you couldn't have a picnic in the army? You might call it a pleasant interlude; to us it was a grand relaxing time.

It was time to move on closer to the channel. Before leaving Compiegne I got my last command. Actually it wasn't really a command, but a group of 65 enlisted men from all branches of the service and all ranks, that I was to take home with me. They were a good bunch and a happy one, and gave me something to occupy my time. Being the only officer, I got to know the men pretty well and we had a pleasant time in the short while we were together. The senior sergeants were real veterans and all I had to do was let them know what I wanted done and forget about it. After a few days when the men found out how long I had been overseas, and that I wasn't going to throw my rank around, I got the feeling that they made up their minds to see that I had a safe and pleasant trip home. We really just looked after each other. It was a good feeling and you won't find it much outside of the army. Another thing that made the assignment easy for me was the large number of non-coms and the skills of the various branches. All had homes in North and South Carolina. In looking over a copy of our travel orders before writing this, I noted that there were two master sergeants, two technical sergeants, four staff sergeants, sixteen sergeants or tec 4's and sixteen corporals or tec 5's. The branches represented were infantry, field artillery, signal, ordinance, quartermaster, transportation, air force, cavalry, medical, chemical warfare, military police and two I didn't know what branch they were from. I meant to ask them but never got around to it. Bl/was by their branch designations. I don't think we could have gotten more of a mixture had we tried. What I didn't know it was easy to find someone else that did.

We left Compiegne by train in the afternoon and traveled about 100 miles to the channel. This time we traveled more comfortably in one baggage car and one half passenger and half baggage car. As C.O. I had a seat in the passenger section with the senior non-coms. We arrived shortly after dark at a hold battalion a few hundred yards inland from Dieppe, France, which was the town where the British and Canadians made their unsuccessful raid on the continent before D day. It was raining when we arrived and very muddy. Being so near the channel there was also a heavy fog. We were quartered in tents with canvas cots, so were soon out of the weather and dry. However, I don't think anything could have dampened our spirits this near home. Perhaps near is not quite the word, since we still had over 3,000 miles to go. We found out the next day that we were at Camp Lucky Strike and about 45 miles from LeHavre, France , which was to be our embarkation port.

We stayed at Lucky Strike for two days and, on the morning of the third, went by truck to the docks at LeHavre to board our ship, the "S.S. Pachaug Victory". So ---- Here I am back at the beginning of my

story, boarding the troopship that was to take me home.

The "Pachaug" was about 8,000 tons and of the Victory ship class, which meant that she was built during the war and fairly new. As each man came aboard he was given a red or blue card with a number on it. Not being a large ship, there wasn't enough room for each man to have a bunk of his own, so it was necessary for two men to take turns sleeping in one bunk. As an officer, I shared a cabin with three others and did have my own bunk. The army had gone all out to stock the ship with the finest food available for both officers and men, including fresh meats and vegetables, fresh eggs, fruit, ice cream, white bread baked daily and, probably best of all, fresh milk. There wasn't a can of Spam in sight. With my first meal I drank a quart of milk and ate six slices of white bread. I thought, "So, this is what fresh milk tastes like". It tasted more like vanilla milkshake and unsweetened angel food cake -- no fooling, it really did. Each meal was a real pleasure and we all stuffed ourselves. I remember one evening we even had eggnog. The food alone made the trip a pleasant one, and Lord knows the men deserved it. Because of the number of people aboard the mess stayed open day and night, except for a few hours in the middle of the night. When the cooks and mess attendants finished serving one meal it was almost time for another.

The weather cleared up when we left the channel behind and, except for a little rough seas two days out, it was warm and sunny, and all we had to do was sit on the decks with our backs against the superstructure, soak up the sun and daydream. How different it was from the trip over, with no blackouts at night nor the possibility of submarine and air attack. We were traveling alone since, of course, no escorts were needed. It was a little strange not to see other ships around us.

Carrying little or no cargo, the ship rode high and when we ran into the rough seas and she rose on a swell and dropped into a trough, it sounded like a ton of bricks falling through the forward hatch. When this happened the first time it sounded to me like the front end had broken off, but I soon got used to the noise and the swells soon flattened out.

Time passed quickly and in no time at all we were passing Cape Cod and heading to Boston harbor, where a homecoming surprise awaited us. The first thing we saw on a grassy hill to starboard (right side) were large white painted wooden letters, eight feet high, spelling out "Welcome Home". Next two fire boats met us, one on each side, with all of their nozzles shooting jets of dyed water, in several different colors, into the sky. There was a small band on each and a number of WACs waving and shouting greetings. I remained at the rail with the others, watching in awe. I could feel the moisture coming in my eyes and thought, "There now, you're a soldier and soldiers don't cry". Then I glanced at a sergeant standing beside me and saw tears rolling down his cheeks. I knew then that I wasn't alone in my feelings. We continued on into the harbor, past many ships all sounding their whistles in salute as we passed. It was a grand feeling! It is a shame that the Vietnam veterans weren't given a similar welcome home.

and

When we tied up at our dock/went ashore we were given coffee and doughnuts by Red Cross ladies, and boarded a real train which waited on tracks right on the dock. It was September 16, 1945 when we landed,

exactly five years to the day since I entered Federal service. We were soon moving through the middle of Boston and on to a staging area on the outskirts named appropriately as Camp Myles Standish. We exchanged our French francs for good ole American dollars, had a good night's sleep and were on a train heading south in thirty hours time. Everything was well organized and went smoothly. After over four years of war and moving millions of men the army and navy had become professionals. No more 40 and 8's -- we rode in pullmans on the overnight trip to Fort Bragg near Fayetteville, North Carolina. As we passed through Virginia and North Carolina we really did feel that we were almost home.

When we arrived at Fort Bragg, we were given physicals, received our pay and were kissed good-bye. Well, not exactly kissed, but I don't think that we would have minded if they had. We were only at Fort Bragg for two days. I said my good-byes to the men who came home with me, and we wished each other well.

A young air force officer, who was going through Hartsville on his way home, offered me a ride, which I gladly accepted. When we stopped in front of my house he declined to come in. He knew how long I had been away and was an understanding man. I got out of the car, shouldered my duffle bag and started for the front door. The outside light came on and my two dolls came out to meet me -- the big one and the little one. I won't try to describe what my feelings were -- for the simple reason that I couldn't if I tried. It had been a long journey, but I was home at last. Thus my story ends.

NOTE: I was in the army for four months longer after I returned to the United States, but all of it was spent at home on terminal leave. In fact, I went back to work while I was still in the army. This came about because I had taken no leave for four years and had accumulated 120 days of leave time, with full pay and allowances. I was released officially from the Federal service on January 19,1946.

I remained in the South Carolina National Guard and helped reorganize it. When I left the guard in June 1948 I was commanding the 2nd Battalion of the 118th Infantry with the rank of Lt. Colonel.