

On Wednesday, May 21, 1941, I reported to the Pennsylvania Hotel at 6th and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. as directed by my Selective Service notice and after much wasted time I and many others were loaded onto Greyhound Buses and driven to Richmond, VA. We reported into the Richmond Armory and there we were given physical examinations and every other kind of examination possible. This went on all day long with many periods of simply standing and waiting. About seven PM we were separated into two groups, one to go back home, those who had failed the exams, and the second group was to be sent to Camp Lee for processing. I was in the group to go to Camp Lee. We arrived at Camp Lee around eleven PM and were assigned bunks for the night. Thursday morning bright and early we were awakened and taken out for calisthenics. The balance of Thursday was spent in clothing issue, processing, marching and everything else imaginable. Friday was a continuation of the same. Saturday, May 24th, was my birthday and I was selected to be on KP that day. A fellow from Washington named Mike Addis and I were assigned to keep the dessert locker clean and straight. Needless to say, Mike and I had our fill of dessert that day, even if we did not eat anything else. Sunday was a day of rest but we were kept busy getting ready to move the next day.

On Monday, May 26th, we were loaded onto a train and moved out of Camp Lee. We had no idea where we were going but headed north and strange as it may seem we ended up in Fort Meade, MD. We were immediately assigned to units and I ended up in the fourth platoon, Company G, 176th Infantry, 29th Infantry Division. I was in what was called the 60mm mortar section of the weapons platoon. Training began in earnest the next day and there was very little time given to do much else.

On July 4th weekend, July 4th was a Saturday, I was again on KP and the cooks were drunk in the barracks, so I cooked for the day. Alice came out to see me and I was able to see her for a short time. The captain came in while I was cooking and wanted to know where the cooks were and I told him that I had not seen them. The captain stayed for dinner then offered me a position as a cook but I politely requested that I be excused from being a cook. We continued training at Ft. Meade and at the end of July the unit went on a three-day field exercise and again I was on KP. The field kitchens were set up in clump of trees and they were ordered to move to another location. Lt. Roberts, who was bucking for first lieutenant was the mess officer and took great pains to see that everything was cleaned up. There was a white shoe-box sitting quite some distance from our position and I was told to go and pick it up. I replied that we had not placed it there but I was told to go pick it up just the same. I went over to pick it up and it was filled with GOLD, golden yellow-jackets. They immediately attacked me and I began running back toward the mess area. Everyone took off and I ended up out in the road stripping off my clothes for they had entered into my clothing and were inside. Someone brought me a blanket and I was taken to the medics for examination. The doctor was a Major Lush who had been the prison doctor at the Richmond Penitentiary. He laughed at me and said I would be all right. I ended up coming home and going to Walter Reed Hospital. This did not set well on my record as I was classified as AWOL until it was proven that I was in a military hospital.

In September 1941, the division went on three month maneuvers in North and South Carolinas. I had completed basic training and was promoted to private-first-class. The battalion I was in was bivouacked outside of Morven, N.C. I was assigned the job of runner between battalion headquarters and the company. The company had a new commander named Ryan who liked to run all the time and he was nick-named "Racehorse Ryan" but his biggest problem was that he could not read a map. He was continually getting lost and the battalion commander would say to me, "█████ Ryan is lost again. Go find him and give him these instructions." I was a city boy and I had never had much map reading except in Boy Scouts but I was able to find him and get him back on track. Needless to say, Ryan was transferred after maneuvers. The men used to sing a song that went this way,

"O Captain Ryan was doing fine until he walked those contour lines."

Carolina maneuvers ended on December 4th, 1941 and the unit started home on the 6th. I was with the advanced detachment and on Sunday, December 7th, 1941., we stopped in South Hill, VA. at the Glass House Restaurant for a cup of coffee and heard on the radio about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The advance party spent the night in the Richmond Armory and then proceeded to Fort Meade the next day.

At this time the Army reorganized from what was called a square division composed of four regiments to a triangular division composed of only three regiments. The 29th Infantry Division had the 115th, 116th, 175th, and the 176th Infantry Regiments and as the 176th was the last regiment organized, it was dropped from the 29th and made a separate regiment. The 176th moved out of Fort Meade and moved into the Anacostia flats off the Eleventh Street Bridge. There they put up tents and dug trenches for out houses and put in showers. The 176th was on guard duty in Washington. In January 1942 I was promoted to corporal and made the squad leader of the 60mm mortar squad. However due to the nature of our assignment of guard duty, we did not do to much combat training at that time. The Army did not forget that we were to be combat troops because every month some units were sent to Camp A.P. Hill Military Reservation to do combat training. The guard duty was not too bad except one was at home in Washington but unable to do what your friends were doing. One Saturday night I was on guard duty on the Fourteenth Street Bridge when █████ drove by in my car with some of the young people from church on their way to Fort Belvoir to entertain the troops.

The unit stayed in tents in Anacostia until May 1942 and then moved into barracks at South Post, Fort Myer, VA. In May I was promoted to sergeant and placed in a rifle platoon. I applied for Officer Candidate School but was turned down on my physical as I had a malocclusion and my teeth did not match up in a bite. I was classified as permanently incapacitated and I applied for a medical discharge. I was turned down and told there was nothing to prevent me from doing what was expected of me. I reapplied for OCS in September 1945 and passed.

In the meantime █████ had gone to Bethany College in West Virginia. I was ordered to report to Camp Benning, Georgia in November and was on leave until that time. █████, a long time friend of █████, was getting married in October and █████ was to be in the wedding. I drove to Bethany and brought █████ home for the wedding and then took her back.

I entered OCS on November 23, 1942 and graduated on February 20, 1943 as a second lieutenant in the Infantry. We were called "Ninety-Day Wonders and it was a wonder we lived through it. The training was rigorous and the hours were long. Every thirty days there was an evaluation and those who had goofed on assignments were sent back to their units. I managed to hang on. Upon graduation I was given ten days leave before reporting to my next assignment. I came home and after being home for a few days I started to go to Bethany College to see [REDACTED]. I got as far as Cumberland, Maryland and U.S Route 40 was closed out of Cumberland going west as there was a terrific hill that could not be traveled. I spent the night in Cumberland and then came home the next day.

My next assignment was at Camp Lee. Virginia where one hundred second lieutenants were assigned to train the Quartermaster Officers in the new basic infantry tactics that were deemed necessary as the concept of warfare at this time was that quartermaster units would have to fight in fast moving situations. This was a waste of time as the only thing the officers could teach was what the QMRTC approved and that was WWI tactics. The assignment was a delightful one for the most part as a second lieutenant was treated with respect because it was a replacement training center and the men coming in were recruits. Another good thing about this assignment was that I could have my car with me even if it was difficult to get gas.

This assignment lasted six months and then I was sent to Camp Wheeler, Georgia, to Advanced Infantry School. This school lasted for sixty days and then I was assigned to the school as an instructor. This was short lived as the school was abruptly closed and all the officers were sent to the 30th Infantry Division on maneuvers in Tennessee. I was assigned the Company K, 117th Infantry Regiment. The unit completed maneuvers in December and then moved to Camp Atterbury, Indiana, for shakedown before going overseas.

In January 1944, [REDACTED] came out to Camp Atterbury to see me and I met her Friday night and took her to the Lincoln Hotel where I had made reservations for her. I had to report back to camp that night but had the week-end off effective noon Saturday until 5:00 P.M. Sunday. I met [REDACTED] back at the hotel and she had been visiting some of the stores nearby. I presented her a ring and asked her if she would wait until I returned. She accepted me and we had a great week-end even if the Army did interfere. We then went out and celebrated with Lt. Russ [REDACTED] and his wife, Daisy, at the Claypool Hotel. Sunday morning [REDACTED] and I went to the church where Reverend and Mrs. Jope attended. After church we saw Mrs. Jope and then went home to dinner with her and Clifford. When I returned to camp the captain wanted to know where I had been as he had called the hotel to tell me to return to camp and he was told that I was not registered.

That night was a hectic night as [REDACTED] was driving around camp waiting to see if I could get off and the captain must have thought something was unusual for he kept giving us additional assignments. [REDACTED], Daisy and Russ left about 11:00 P.M. but I stayed at camp. [REDACTED] brought Russ back to camp about 5:00 A.M. and I went down to see her. I gave her my car and told her if I did not return, it would be hers as something to remember me by.

The unit moved to Boston early in February and sailed from Boston on Lincoln's Birthday

and arrived in Liverpool, England, on Washington's Birthday. The unit moved to Petworth Park in England south of London and had its first taste of an aerial bombardment on the first night there. Petworth Park was a beautiful place and despite the training and weather it was enjoyable. At this time training evaluation of units took place to determine those units that would lead the invasion of Europe. Our unit did not do too well due to circumstances beyond the control of the lower echelons. General Hobbs, the Division Commander, was so incensed that he called all the officers to a meeting in Chichester and stated that the unit was threatened with being dissolved and made replacements for other units. The Division was then moved from its delightful location to towns in England and my unit ended up in St. Albans. We stayed in St. Albans until the unit moved to Southampton to cross the channel following the invasion.

The unit crossed the channel four days after the invasion and landed on Omaha Beach which had been the scene of the heaviest fighting in the invasion. We landed and had to climb a very high cliff and we wondered how the men of the 29th Division ever made it under fire. The unit took up positions along the Vire River and Canal in a defensive posture to hold back reinforcements from coming to the aid of the Germans while the mop-up operations were being done in the region. On July 7th, 1944 the division went on the offensive and crossed the Vire River early in the morning and later that day crossed the Vire Canal. The second platoon of K Company had the responsibility of clearing out an orchard which was protected by huge hedgerows surrounding it. After several unsuccessful attempts and the loss of several men three of us went over the hedgerow at different places and let loose with grenades, killing several of the Germans. The three of us continued the advance and as we crossed the road, I turned to signal the others to follow when a machine gun opened up putting fire down the road.

I was struck in the head and knocked out and left there. Sometime later I came to and found myself lying in a ditch where they had rolled me. I did not know which way to go except to continue on toward what had been our objective, which was St. Jean De Daye. I found the company late in the evening and surprised two of my men who were talking about how I had been killed that day. The company commander was on the way to the hospital as he had been caught in a crossfire in the middle of St. Jean DeDaye. Hank Abbes was now in command. The unit continued the attack the next day and the attack on St. Lo progressed. In an effort to keep pace with units on the right and left a place called Ste. Mare De Cavigny was by-passed and not checked. Later on it was determined that enemy fire came from that place which caused troops to be caught in a crossfire. The day was one to remember as the tank destroyer outfit that was supporting the attack fired in on friendly troops and caused much confusion. With fire coming from three different directions many of the soldiers thought they were surrounded and took to flight. Some of the men ended up all the way back on the beaches. There was quite a shake-up in *command at that time.*

The attack on St. Lo was resumed and the third battalion of which my company was a part was assigned the objective of taking a place called Heights Vents. My company was to be the reserve company and suddenly Hank Abbes received a call from Col. Mac ordering K Company into the whole line as the two leading companies had missed the line of departure. At 8:00am the unit met stiff opposition and Lt. Leland was killed immediately and Sergeant McCormick was badly wounded. I was hit in the left arm but stayed in line to continue with the men. The fighting

continued and the unit was making slow progress until about noon when the Germans threw in a heavy concentration of 88mm shells. I was struck in the right hand and now my left arm and right hand were out of commission. I was taken to the aid station where I was treated and evacuated to the rear. The wound in my arm had become infected and I was sent back to a hospital in England. I remained in the hospital until early August when I was released to return to my unit. When I went to the hospital, all of my mail was forwarded to the hospital and I did not receive it and then when I returned to my unit the mail had to go through all the replacement depots so I did not receive any mail until it caught up with me when I returned to my unit. At Christmas I received a lot of mail that was mailed in August.

We crossed the channel on an Egyptian ship which was filthy. The second lieutenants slept on deck in hammocks while the first lieutenants and above slept in bunks. The ones who slept on deck had the best deal after all. We arrived at Omaha Beach where we first went into France and where the 29th Infantry had such a hard time making a beachhead. By this time stairs had been erected to make it easier to get up to the top. The M.P.s. were there and kept yelling to everyone to keep moving. There was a sergeant from the 29th Division who also was returning from the hospital and he turned and said to one of the M.P.s., "Where were you the first time I came in here?" We were rushed over to the Vire railroad station and put on freight cars to go to the units. We ended up somewhere near St. Lo and were then loaded onto trucks to continue to the front. On the way we went through St. Lo and I actually saw one window in St. Lo that had an unbroken pane of glass in it. We ended up in the rear area of the Division and then went forward with the supply trucks the next day.

When I returned to my unit Hank Abbess was the company commander and since I was the senior first lieutenant I became the executive officer. By this time the Allies had broken out of hedgerow country and were making fast progress as the armor was taking the lead. The first day back the unit road trucks and made good time. We took Cologne and headed for Rheims and then we were called back to head in another direction. The next day all truck traffic was halted so that gasoline could be given to the tanks. The unit made a forced march for the next three days by traveling over seventy miles and trying to keep up with the armor. The armor was able to keep going and good headway was made and we entered Belgium on September 2, 1944.

The armor rolled on until we reached the Meuse River which was heavily fortified. The engineers were unable to throw a bridge across the river and it was determined to send the First Cavalry up river to make a crossing and clear the east side of the river. K Company had been designated the reserve company of the reserve battalion of the reserve regiment and we were sure we would not be committed. The ^{113th} First Cavalry encountered heavy resistance and since K Company had been designated the final reserve the decision was made to attach K Company to the ^{113th} First Cavalry to aid in clearing the east bank. Heavy fighting ensued and the units were held up and I Company was sent to reinforce K Company. The combined units were able to clear the east bank and the main body crossed the river. The attack was now in low or marshy terrain and the infantry had to lead the attack. Despite the terrain the units moved rapidly and entered Holland. The Division set up a rest camp at Haarlem, Holland and after the war I found out that this was the home town of Corrie Ten Boom who wrote, "The Hiding Place". The unit attacked

Maastricht on the Maas River and took it and headed toward Germany. The unit crossed into Germany on September 19th and the fighting became more intense as the Germans were fighting to save their country. Some of the German civilians became fanatical in their defense of their country.

The Division approached The Siegfried Line and it was determined that the 30th Division would lead the attack into the Siegfried Line with the 29th Division on the right to protect its flanks and The 2nd Armored Division on its left flank for the same purpose. In World War I the 117th Infantry was given the job of breaking through the Hindenburg Line and became known as "The Breakthrough Regiment" so as we approached the Siegfried Line the decision was made that the 117th Infantry would lead the attack and go into the middle of the Line and split its defenses. The attack jumped off and the 117th made the middle and turned right with the support of the 119th and the 120th Infantry Regiments. We took a town called "Zu Ubach" which was ^{south} north of a town called "Ubach" However the 29th Division was held up and so was the 2nd Armored Division so the 30th Division was sitting in the middle of the line with no flank protection and was taking a beating from the enemy. About 11:00 P.M. Colonel Mac called me to Headquarters and told me the perimeter had been breached and I was to go out and reorganize the units and close the line. I really did not expect to get back in one piece but with God looking out for me, I made it. The next day fighting resumed and the 29th and 2nd Armored moved in and supported us and the attack continued toward Aachen. It took several days to take Aachen but Aachen was the first large German city to fall to the Allies.

The 29th, 30th and 2nd Armored comprised a group which was called The 19th Corps and actually the attack on Aachen was a Corps responsibility. General Hodges, commander of the 7th Corps complained to General Eisenhower that the failure of the 19th Corps to take Aachen sooner resulted in excessive casualties to the 7th Corps. General Eisenhower ordered General Corlett, Commander of the 19th Corps, to take action against the responsible commanders. General Corlett responded that he would not relieve any of his commanders as he felt they performed in an outstanding manner. General Eisenhower relieved General Corlett and he was sent home. The men of the 30th had great respect for General Corlett because he stood up for his commanders.

The unit move into Aachen and took over houses for the troops. The next day the Germans dropped leaflets on the town stating that the First Army of which the 7th and 19th Corps were a part had so many casualties that General Eisenhower had ordered the Ninth Army into the area to assist the First Army. The next day orders came through designating the 19th Corps as the nucleus of the Ninth Army. The units were told to settle in and rest as they would be here for several days. Orders came down allowing some who had been in the fighting since the landing to have three day passes to Paris. *Captain Hank Abbes was given a pass to Paris and I took command of the company.*

At about 10:00 P.M., I was called to Battalion headquarters and told that the outfit would step off in the attack at 6:00 A.M. and that K Company would lead the attack in our sector. The giving of passes had been planned to throw German Intelligence off guard so that they would not be expecting an attack. Before daybreak it started to rain and we were forced to get out raingear and since it was known that the fields were muddy we were issued galoshes,

The attack started and almost immediately one of the men hit a land mine and was blown up. There was a potato cart out in the field and some of the men ran toward that only to discover that the area around the cart was heavily mined. Many men were casualties to mines and the attack slowed down. When the attack slowed down the Germans started dropping artillery on the position. The next thing I heard was Colonel Mac on the radio screaming, "█████ get those men moving." I immediately took off at a run across the field toward the front line and every moment I expected one of my feet would come flying up at me. By the absolute GRACE of GOD I made it and was able to rally the men and get moving. We continued the attack and took the town of Mariadorf, Germany about five P.M. We moved into the houses for headquarters and set up defensive positions on the perimeter of the town. The Germans began shelling the town rather fiercely and we all dove for our foxholes. One shell appeared to go through one whole row of houses and we nicknamed the town "PaperVillage".

The next morning we resumed the attack toward another town named "St. Joris" There was a large church in the town with a high steeple and we knew that the German Artillery Forward Observer was in there directing fire on us. We called for artillery fire on the church and got a direct hit on the steeple and then the German artillery fire was not as accurate, We did not take St. Joris until the next day and then we moved into the church as our headquarters and again set up a defensive position. We received orders that we would be in a holding position for several days waiting for consolidation of the area. Thanksgiving had passed and the Thanksgiving Dinner food was still in the kitchens in the rear. Hank Abbes returned at this time and he received permission to bring up the kitchen and have our Thanksgiving Dinner. Of course it started to rain and we had Thanksgiving Dinner in the church. However the church had been shelled by both the Americans and the Germans so there was not much roof left on it. We had the turkey, the dressing, mashed potatoes, gravy, peas, cranberry sauce, rolls and ice cream all in the same mess kit and the rain was adding water to it. We got to laughing at the comedy of it all. We continued the attack the next day toward the city of Alsdorf and after heavy fighting the city was taken. We consolidated our position and prepared to hold there. The next day we received orders to pull back to Mariadorf and wait replacements for the men whom we had lost.

The Division started toward the next main objective which was the Roer River and this was the last great obstacle before the Rhine River. The troops moved rapidly and reached the Roer River in good time. The Germans blew the dam farther up the river and the area was flooded so the units had to stop. This was about December 13th, 1944 and we stopped to wait for an opportunity to cross the river. On Sunday December 16, 1944 the order was issued for all company executive officers to report to Division Headquarters with one of the company jeeps. When we arrived there we were briefed by General Harrison as to the situation. The Germans had made a tremendous breakthrough in Belgium and the Division was to make a forced motorized march to repulse the attack on the north and drive back the Germans on the northern flank of the penetration. We followed General Harrison at high speeds all day long and about nightfall we dispersed and were sent to different areas. Our orders were simple, if your companies get here first get them in position to hold the ground. If the Germans get here first you are on your own, get out as fast as you can. We sat there in the dark waiting and not knowing what was going on. About 11:00 P.M. the 3rd Battalion XO's were pulled out and sent to a town called Eupen. Colonel Mac had all the company commanders there and he

briefed us on the situation. He told Hank Abbes to take Lt. Neill and his machine gun platoon plus the company and load them on the trucks outside and head for Malmedy. He said there was a company of German paratroopers between Eupen and Malmedy but we had to get through to relieve the Americans in Malmedy. We made it with some difficulty but arrived in time. Immediately we were ordered to push southward toward Stavelot where the retreating Americans had left a huge gasoline storage area and the Germans were driving toward that to get the gasoline they needed to continue their attack. The Division took Stavelot and continued the advance toward Staumont where the spearhead of the German attack had reached. The spearhead unit was the German 6th Panzer Task Force. The battle at Staumont held up the German advance and kept them from crossing the Amblere River. My unit went through Roanne and ended up fighting for a little town called La Gleize. Intelligence reports indicated that it would not be heavily defended but K Company was unable to take the town and I Company was added but the two companies were still unable to take the town and an armored infantry battalion was added and finally on December 24, 1944 the town was captured. In the town were 170 German vehicles, including 30 tanks, 70 half-tracks, 33 self-propelled guns and 30 miscellaneous vehicles. The Germans were out of gas but not ammunition which accounted for the difficulty in taking the town. Hank Abbes went into the hotel there and opened a drawer in a piece of furniture and was wounded by a booby trap. So I again took command of the company.

Shortly after that I received orders to move the company to a designated rest area to regroup before continuing the attack. On the way a jeep pulled up along side of me and the lieutenant in the jeep said I was to go with him and to turn the company over to Lt. Hickman. At battalion headquarters I was told that General Harrison was forming a task force to take and hold the Amblere River crossing. K Company would be the reserve company and not much opposition was expected. The attack started at 6:00 A.M. Christmas morning and a hole was made in the line and K Company was ordered to move through and take the high ground. K Company moved rapidly and took the defending Germans by surprise and they retreated across the river. The company moved into position and immediately put out panels to designate to the air plane pilots where the front lines were. Air support was called against the Germans and we were glad to see the planes come in, however the planes dropped their bombs on K Company and strafed it by mistake. The pilots had been told that the Germans were using American panels so they disregarded them. My runner and I were on top the cliff when they started strafing and he and I jumped off the cliff. One plane fired directly at us as we jumped but we were not hit. Immediately after the planes left, (Aker) my runner, and I went back up the cliff to assess the damage. One bomb had made a direct hit on a foxhole and the remains of the men in that hole were all mingled together so that you could not identify them.

Considering the intensity of the bombing we were fortunate not to have more casualties than we did. The unit held the crossing and the whole division went into a defensive stand.

The Germans threw their Elite SS Troops into the battle with the division and several thousand Germans were killed or captured. The Germans nicknamed the 30th Division "Roosevelt's SS Troops" because we defeated their SS Troops. The Division stayed in a defensive posture until the forward edge of "The Bulge" was stabilized. On January 13th the weather took a turn for the worst and it started snowing. The Division was ordered to move to St. Vith and take the high ground around St. Vith to allow the Seventh Armored to enter and retake the city. The snow continued without abating and it took ten days for the Division to reach St. Vith. During this time the U.S. Air Corps

could not support ground action and the Germans had the advantage as they were dug in. During the ten day march the Division suffered what was called alarming battle and non battle casualties inflicted by the weather. Men made boots of salvaged blankets and toboggans of discarded lumber or lumber torn off barns to make toboggans to transport the wounded back to the aid station as no vehicles were able to move in the deep snow. The snow was over four feet deep and in some places the drifts made it much deeper.

After the Seventh Armored retook St. Vith the Division was ordered to resume the attack northward and clear out any pockets of resistance. The Division in moving as rapidly as it did had by-passed some enemy elements and so we started back. Much of the action was short lived as there was no organized resistance until we hit what became known as "Road Block 2" which was heavily defended and mined. It took several days to clear that out and then we were on our way again.

On January 15th 1945 a captain had been assigned to K Company and I went back to being XO after he arrived which was several days later as he came up with the ration truck. Captain Hammond was a big burly man but he was direct from the states and had no combat experience. Col Mac asked me to orient him and keep things running. Captain Hammond was gun shy as was to be expected until he got his feet on the ground.

The Division accomplished its mission and pulled up into a wooded area before returning to its original area near Aachen. An interesting side item was The Division was ordered to remove all vehicle markings so that the Division could move without anyone knowing who was moving or where. Later that night Axis Sally, the American broadcasting for the Germans said, "Oh Yes, the 117th Infantry is sneaking back into Aachen and if any of you boys are out late tonight the password is-----". And she was right. Hank Abbes rejoined the company at Aachen and Hammond left.

The attack continued where it left off when the Division was sent to the Ardennes and plans were made to cross the Roer River. The attack across the Roer River was difficult as the recent rains had again flooded the valley. The engineers could not throw up pontoon bridges for the assault as the Germans were continually shelling the area. To prepare for the attack the engineers had sneaked across the river at night and strung cables and submerged them so they could not be seen. On February 23, 1945 the 30th Division stormed across the Roer River Valley south of Julich, Germany. Before the attack the artillery of more than 2,000 guns threw down a barrage for forty-five minutes during which time the engineers were able to fasten foot bridges to the cables to enable the foot soldiers to cross. Immediately following the artillery barrage the artillery threw smoke shells and covered the advance. All in all the artillery fired over 250,000 rounds of ammunition on this assault. By the time the Germans recovered from the artillery barrage the troops were among them and caused great confusion. The Germans continued shelling the foot bridges and the engineers continued to rebuild them. One lieutenant of the engineers said his men rebuilt the same bridge five times and then gave up and moved to another location. The engineers were then called upon to put in bridges to carry the trucks and tanks across to continue the attack. Despite everything the attack moved forward ahead of schedule and the Division using blitzkrieg tactics moved north almost to Dusseldorf on the Rhine.

The Division moved everything up to the Rhine River and we felt the crossing of the Rhine was next. However we received orders that The Division was being relieved by the 75th Division and we were being moved to the rear. We felt it was time to celebrate because we believed some one else would be making the Rhine Crossing. The 117th Infantry Regiment had been school troops at Ft. Benning training the OCS candidates for commissioning as 2nd lieutenants and the main lesson it taught was river crossings. Since the Division hit France the 117th Infantry had led every river crossing from the Vire River, the Seine River, the Meuse River, the Maas River and the Roer River. Our joy was short lived because we discovered that we were going back into Holland to the Maas River and to practice with the Navy for the crossing of the Rhine. The boats were off loaded some distance from the river and we were trained in carrying the boats up to the river under cover of darkness and launching them.

At the same time the engineers were putting pontoon bridges across the river for tanks and vehicles. It was back breaking work. We were told that this would be an unusual operation as the Division would cross with three regiments abreast. Ordinarily one regiment would be held in reserve to exploit any weakness found in the German line but it was felt that any weakness would be on the other side of the river and could be exploited then.

On March 23rd under cover of darkness the Division moved up behind the 75th Division and remained concealed except for reconnaissance flights and observance. Early on the morning of March 24 the troops carried the assault boats up to the river, the artillery laid in barrage after barrage of shells and the crossing was on. We made the crossing under heavy fire from the other side but soon had a small foothold on the other side. We continued the attack and soon moved forward. By the end of the day the 117th Infantry had moved three miles beyond the river and was consolidating its position. It was later reported that the crossing had gone so well that the engineers had a bridge for tanks and trucks just 14 hours and 15 minutes after the crossing started.

The Germans had a series of "Autobahns" crisscrossing Germany which is where President Eisenhower got his idea of interstate highways in the U.S. Our next objective was to cut the autobahn to prevent German reinforcements from getting through. My company was to cross an open field with woods on the other side. As we started across heavy machine gun fire erupted from the woods. The 743rd Tank Battalion was supporting us and I called on the radio for tank support to charge the machine gun nests. The tanks started across the open field and the infantry followed. About half way across the machine guns opened fire and the tanks backed up leaving us exposed to the machine gun fire. Many men were hit and I remember one little medical aid man running out there to treat the wounded when a bullet went right through the red cross on his chest. I would have killed the officer in charge of those tanks if I could have gotten hold of him. We managed to cross the field by using short rushes and hitting the ground frequently until we were within bazooka range and then launched several rounds to where the machine guns were. We must have been successful because the firing stopped and we were able to move again. We were delayed in cutting the autobahn and the Germans rushed in the 116th Panzer Division which had been sent from Holland in a desperate effort to prevent the Rhine crossing. We fought the 116th Panzers for five days before making a breakthrough. After defeating the 116th Panzer Division the unit continued the attack and ended up taking the German city of Hamlin. Hamlin had been made famous by fairy tale about the Pied Piper. The odor in Hamlin was terrible for in it was one of the German ovens for getting rid of bodies by burning

them. One comical incident in Hamlin was that there was a statue to the Pied Piper and on the base of the statue was a gold rat. Somebody stole the gold rat and there was a big investigation to determine who had taken it. As far as I know the culprit was never found although where could you hide a gold rat.

At this point the Company Executive Officers were summoned to Division Headquarters with one jeep and driver. We knew what was going to happen. This meant another wild ride. The XO's were taken up to the Elbe River and told to await the troops. In an effort to cut off the remaining Germans in the area, the 30th Division was mechanized with the 2nd Armored Division on the north and later with the 83rd Division on the south, and given the objective of controlling the Elbe River to prevent German units from retreating across it. The XO's arrived at the Elbe River and were told to wait for their units. While waiting it started to rain and turned cold. The XO's were cut off and had to seek cover until the units arrived. The Division moved rapidly and was held up more because in the march to the Elbe River it took over 24,000 prisoners and captured four large cities.

The Division was then given the mission of taking the city of Magdeburg. This was to be the last great battle for the 30th although we did not know it. We thought our objective was Berlin because on our maps we were heading straight for it. Regretfully I missed the battle for Magdeburg as I had caught pneumonia and was sent to the hospital. One night in the field hospital. We were on cots when the Germans who had been by passed started shelling and some rounds landed uncomfortably close to the tents. One little nurse kept running around saying, "I can't find my helmet, I can't find my helmet." She was looking for a helmet and all we had over us was a sheet and blanket. I ended up back in a general hospital. I was kept several days when I persuaded them I was able to return to my unit. I was given a three day pass to Paris but had a relapse and ended back in the general hospital. Again I had mail trouble and did not get some of my mail until I arrived home

On May 7, 1945 the announcement was made that Germany had accepted complete surrender and the war in Europe was officially over. I was still in the hospital and they kept me there until the middle of May and then I returned to my unit.

Much had happened while I was gone. Hank Abbes had been relieved and sent home. An officer from I Company was now captain and I went back to being XO again. Late in May we were ordered to move south as the area we were in was under British control

The Division set up headquarters at Possneck and we occupied an area along the border of Czechoslovakia. While there I was sent down into Hof, Czechoslovakia, to inspect a manufacturing plant whose owner wanted permission to begin operating. I had to check to make sure he could operate with limited power. I approved the project and later on another trip I was presented a new trench coat.

Early in August there was a swap of officers and men between the 30th Division and the 75th Division. Officers and men from the 30th who had sufficient points were transferred to the 75th Division to remain in Germany on occupation while the 30th was to be redeployed through the states to the Pacific for the invasion of Japan. Although I had plenty of points somewhere my records had been

misplaced between the hospitals and the division and I remained in the 30th Division. I was again given command of the company but the new battalion commander refused to approve my promotion to captain. We moved to Camp Lucky Strike for shakedown and then to England for the trip home. We boarded the Queen Mary on the 14th and 15th of August and sailed from England on the 16th. While on board the ship the officers were briefed on the plan of attack on Japan. The Fifth Marine Division was to make a landing about the middle of Japan and turn south. The Eighth Army was to land behind them and turn north. The 30th Division was to be floating reserve to make a landing wherever necessary to relieve pressure on whichever unit needed help. Thank the LORD that the atom bomb was dropped.

We arrived in New York on August 21 and as fast as we were unloaded we were moved by train to Fort Dix. We remained in Fort Dix over night and the next day we were moved to Fort Meade. We spent the entire day processing records and that night they told us we could stay or go home. We got on the train and headed for Union Station. When I arrived in Union Station I called [redacted] to see if she could come and meet me. I think if she could have crawled through the phone she would have done that. We had a grand reunion and then went to see my mother and step father. We then went to see [redacted] mother and father. [redacted] and I spent much time talking and making up for lost time.

I told [redacted] that I had thirty days leave and wanted very much to marry her before I left for wherever the Army was sending me. She was very glad to do this and so we were married on September 8, 1945. On the return from our honeymoon I had orders notifying me that the Division was being deactivated and that I had ten additional days of leave. We took off on another honeymoon. In October I reported to Fort Jackson, South Carolina, accounted for all property of the company. I returned home and was officially relieved from active duty on December 19, 1945.

Dear Warren,

Thank you so much for the pictures from Magdeburg. Unfortunately, I was in the hospital most of the time after we took Magdeburg.

Picture no. 1, in Mariadorf, nicknamed Paper Village, I remember some of the names but I did not get to know the men as well as the platoon leader. I believe Boykin was one of the drivers. As you know Steve Zelip was killed in the attack on La Gleize.

Lt. Hickman, we called him, Willie, took over as executive officer when I went to the hospital. He lives in Virgie, Kentucky but suffers from Alzheimers disease and does not know anything. I kept in touch with him and Capt. Abbes after the war. Capt. Abbes died last September, five months after his wife died.

In the picture of the four officers, you can see who the natty dresser was, Lt. Simmons. Lt. Simmons and Lt. Johnson were battlefield promotions.

Seeing a picture of your father I remember him but did not get to know him too well.

Again, thanks for the pictures.

Now I will try to answer your questions.

1. Concerning Ubach> We were not in Ubach but in Zu Ubach which was a small town north of Ubach and I understood it to mean Little Ubach. Ubach was our objective but we did not make it the first day. The Nineteenth Corps which comprised the 2nd Armored Division and the Twenty-ninth and Thirtieth Infantry Divisions, was ordered to penetrate the Siegfried Line and close the gap to Aachen and encircle the German Troops and trap them. The Thirtieth Division was ordered to make the main effort and go into the middle of the Siegfried Line and turn right to go south to Aachen. The Twenty-ninth Division was to protect the right flank of the Thirtieth and the Second Armored was to protect the left flank. The 2nd Armored and the Twenty-ninth were held up by strong resistance, but the Thirtieth made it through and turned right. The Thirtieth was sitting out there like a sore thumb with no flank protection. Due to the heavy fighting the line had been breached and there was danger of the enemy infiltrating our position. My orders were to insure that each unit was in contact with the unit on its right and left including the other battalions on line with us. I was not at all happy about the assignment as our men were trigger happy because they were in a

difficult situation. I was able to tie in all units and made it back safely. The 2nd Armored and the Twenty-ninth attacked the next day and caught up with us and relieved the pressure. However, the resistance was stiff and the Nineteenth Corps did not close the gap as fast as General Hodge felt they should and he complained to General Eisenhower who ordered General Corlett, who was the commander of the Nineteenth Corps, to relieve the responsible commanders. General Corlett refused to relieve any of his commanders so General Eisenhower relieved him of his command.

There were many acts of bravery done in this difficult situation and as far as possible every effort was made to see that the men were rewarded. I remember personally writing a recommendation for Cpl. Allen V. Messer, who was the chief medic with K Company. He jumped into a burning tank to pull out the driver and render first aid. I tried to get him a Medal of Honor but he ended up with a Distinguished Service Medal.

I remember the mines of Mariadorf and also how I felt when we went through that minefield.

On the attack of La Gleize. K Company was ordered to attack and take La Gleize. The company attacked from the north but was unable to take the town so the company moved around to the east to attack. It was during this attack that Steve Zelip was killed. K Company was still unable to take the town so an armored battalion was ordered to attack from the north and K Company would attack from the east at the same time. The reason the fighting was so heavy was that there were 154 German tanks, half-tracks and personnel carriers there. They were out of gas but not out of ammunition.

The attack on Christmas Day was to take the high ground overlooking the L'Amblere River and prevent German troops from escaping that way. K Company was not supposed to be committed as not much opposition was expected. However a hole was made in the line and we were ordered through to take the objective. K Company made good time and we were on the objective and digging in. Our panel markers were in place designating our front lines and when we saw the planes we were not afraid. The planes bombed us without warning as they thought we were German troops using American markers. The results were chaos. Aker, who was the commander's runner and I were on top of the hill and we jumped off and one of the planes

continued to fire at us with fifty caliber rounds. We hit bottom and then ran back up to assess the casualties. There were many casualties.

At this point, I do not remember what the new weapon was that your father went back to study.

The German prison camp of Russian soldiers. K Company was ordered to go to Kaunitz and take over this POW Camp of Russians until the M. Ps. Could get a detail there. The orders were to keep them in the POW Camp but not to harm them. These men had been on starvation rations and when K Company got there many of the Russians were already out of the camp as the Germans left in a hurry and they were unguarded. The Russians were foraging and stealing food wherever they could get it. The Germans around the camp were yelling rape but it was never proved. The Military Government sent an investigator down and Captain Abbes and the officers were reprimanded for not keeping the Russians in the camp. The Military governor said the Germans ran the camp with a platoon of men and kept them in. Hank Abbes told him to give us permission to shoot if they went out and we could keep them in. K Company was relieved in a few days and we were glad to leave.

In reference to Roadblock 2, this was a road block set up to prevent the armor from getting through. The area was heavily wooded and the armor had to stick to the roads. K Company was ordered to break the roadblock and due to an error by myself we were late in doing it but the fighting was stiff. Once the roadblock was broken the armor moved through fast.

Col. McDowell's name was Samuel T. McDowell and I remember how he used to say that he was going back to South Carolina after the war but he did not. He stayed in the Army and later retired from it.

I hope this has been some help but *trying to remember after fifty-nine years* is rather difficult but some things remain very vivid.

Dear Warren,

Received your letter on Monday and decided to stop procrastinating and answer it while it was fresh on my mind.

The old Christmas card from the Thirtieth brought back memories and as I look over the names, I do remember some of them.

Clarence Hare was the platoon leader and returned to the states with the unit

William Bogue came home and got married and my wife and I visited them several times in North Carolina. Bill died about five years ago.

Ronald Johnson was a sergeant at that time and in charge of the 60mm mortar section. Later on he was given a battlefield promotion to second lieutenant. He came home and went back to California and I lost track of him.

I remember Harry Weinberg but cannot remember what happened to him.

If I remember correctly, Warren Harbaugh was a tall dark complexion fellow

Steve Zelip was a sergeant and in charge of the machine gun section. He was killed by shrapnel just before we took LaGleize.

Many of the other names I remember but cannot come up with speciics. Names like Hammond, Engel, Dalecki, Feller, Austin, Greenwalt, Sammaritano, Brady, and others.

I will return your card as I know you desire to keep it.

It is difficult to recall some things that happened so long ago and yet others stand out very vividly.

While I am at it, I will try to answer your other letter.

I have gone back over your other pages sent and I know that when Aker and I jumped we landed near the river but exactly where I cannot show. I thank you for all the information from The Devil's Advocate and I shall add it to my army history. If you did not keep a copy, let me know and I will make copies and return yours.

If you ever see "The Bulge" on TV, there is a lot there that is not accurate. Yes, we set fire to ammunition dumps because it appeared that the Germans would get them. However that turned out to be unnecessary as we never lost them.

If you remember, The Devil's Advocate stated that the east side of LaGleize took a heavy beating and that is where we were . Yes, we entered LaGleize on Saturday morning and that is when Capt. Abbes went into the hotel and opened a drawer that was booby trapped.

The battalion came down through Andrimont, Ruy, Moulin du Ruy, and Roanne. Harbaugh may be correct in stating that machine guns were set up near Borgaumont as we originally attacked from the north and were beaten back and went around to the east to attack from that side.

The picture is hard to determine who is who but Harbaugh should be able to name some of them. The first one on the left top looks like Lt. Hare.

Thanks again for all the information you sent and I apologize for being so long in responding. I have no excuse except procrastination and having put it somewhere to answer later. I traveled quite a bit last year and was in Alaska when it came.

Thanks again and I hope to hear from you if I can be of any help.