

To Peter
from Dad
March, 1998

ANTHONY
TIMPANARO



Archie Dad.

May, 1945. Czechoslovakia
With Archie, our platoon medic



To My children:

**Pamela
Peter
James**

I have put together a brief history of my participation in World War II from April 5, 1943 to October 19, 1945. All of my accounts are mostly from my personal experience with the 2nd platoon, E Company, 2nd Battalion, 26 Regiment, 1st Infantry Division (known as the "Big Red One")

Campaigns

Ardennes
Central Europe
Normandy
Northern France
Rhineland

Decorations & Citations

Combat Infantry Badge
Arrow Head
Bronze Star with OLC
Purple Heart
European African Middle East
Service Medal
Good Conduct Medal
Jubilee of Liberty - 1994

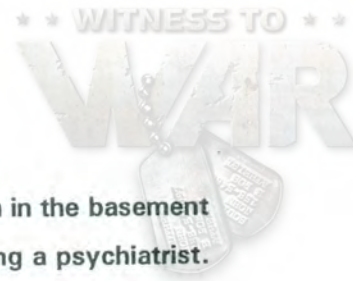
Major Battles

D-Day Omaha Beach 3rd Wave
St. Lo-Break thru
Aachen, Germany
Hurtgen Forest
Battle of the Bulge
Rhineland
Hartz Mountain

Rank at Discharge

Staff Sergeant/**Guide

Anthony Timpanaro
Spring 1997
Age: 74



INDUCTION

April 5, 1943, I reported to the Court House in Hackensack, NJ. Down in the basement an assembly line of doctors awaited you. I went from one doctor to another, including a psychiatrist. I passed my physical and they asked me what branch of service I preferred. I chose the Army.

A week later on April 12, 1943 all Army recruits reported to the Court House, boarded buses and we were on our way to Fort Dix, NJ. Now began the hurry up and wait routine. Every place I went there were long lines. We received our shots, clothes, personal items etc. I was lucky, my clothes fit. Next began the transition from privacy to group living. No private showers, toilet or bedroom, you shared everything. The food was far from my Italian cuisine. We were there about a week before we shipped out. After three days on a troop train, we arrived at Fort Riley, Kansas.

BASIC TRAINING

Now the fun begins. Fort Riley was a well known Calvary outfit. We were stationed in Republican flats which were converted to infantry training school. Our cadre was accustomed to working with horses. Sometime I think they forgot we were not horses. They did not waste any time. We were told that we were going to replace casualties overseas. The next ¹³ ~~three~~ weeks we were going to be transformed from docile civilians to hard nosed soldiers with capabilities to kill with your bare hands.

We had soldiers from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, the southern states and California. I met a Mexican kid that lived down the street from me when I lived in Los Angeles, California. His father had a dry cleaning store. We were surprised to see each other.

Reveille was 6AM and by 7AM we had to shave, shower, eat breakfast, make our bed and fall out for roll call and inspection. Clean shaved was a must. First we marched to the drill field for about one hour of calisthenics, which included running sprints, exercise with my rifle (which got pretty heavy), hand to hand combat (Judo). Other training consisted of close order drill (reacting to commands), five mile hikes, obstacle course, rifle range, map and compass reading. Instructions on how to fire all infantry weapons such as rifles, machine guns, Mortars, 105 canons, hand grenades and bayonet drills were also included.

We returned from the field always at fast march. Once a week we had a parade, we came in, changed from work clothes into dress uniform. Somehow we always had to rush our butts off. One time we came in early, I decided to run over to the P.X. and get a nice cold beer (it was always very hot). I got back and marched off to the parade grounds. While we were standing at attention, my stomach seems to disappear, I woke up on the grass, I had passed out. That was the last time I drank before a parade. Once a month or so we would bivouac for four or five days to get us



accustomed to living in the field. We had night problems, we had to find our way by compass to designated spots. I enjoyed that very much. It was a challenge, and some day it could save your life.

This, more or less, was our basic training routine for 13 weeks. At the beginning we always had an ambulance following us as many recruits passed out from exhaustion. It was those first marches that determined what condition you were in. Some were in poor physical shape and had to be reclassified to other units of the Army.

One day we were having classes in our barracks, it was always hard to keep awake with the heat and they were also boring. Every once in a while the Officer giving the class would yell "attention!" and wake us up. On this day as we were dozing away, somebody started to yell "tornado! Tornado! We all jumped to our feet so fast, us Eastern boys didn't know what it was all about. So we followed the rebels who were flying out the door and heading for the ditch. It happened so fast it was some sight. Dark, windy and debris flying all over. Further away from us it did real bad damage plus some casualties (that wasn't supposed to be in our basic training).

By the end of 10 weeks who survived was lean, mean and a fighting machine. Before the 13th week we had graduation day. If you did not drop dead, you were fit for combat. This day was about the middle of July, and nice and hot. We started with a 5 mile hike which had to be done in 45 minutes, bayonet drill, street fighting, superman obstacle course, overhead live machine gun fire as you went under machine gun fire hand to hand combat drill. We went through everything they had taught us in 13 weeks. We all passed with flying colors. All of us were like a piece of steel.

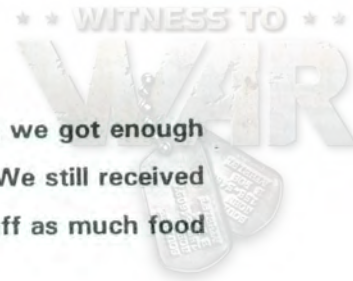
After that day the Cadre showed a lot more consideration for us. Actually friendly. They explained that they had to make it tough on us so that at least we had a chance in combat. Within a week, we started our journey to Europe.

We boarded a troop train, after a few day, we arrived at Camp Butner, Raleigh North Carolina, the home of the 78 Lightning Division. We were attached to them for a while. This was a lot better than a training camp. I had eggs sunny side up, for the first time since leaving home. We got passes to Raleigh. I looked all over for an Italian restaurant. No such luck. The town wasn't too friendly to us Yankees. Next stop was Fort Mead, Maryland, a staging area getting ready for overseas. I got a few days off to go home. The train was so crowded I stood up all the way to Newark, NJ. We leaned against each other and slept.

EUROPE

When I returned, we shipped out to Taunton, Massachusetts, a port of embarkation. We got equipped for overseas. I got a pass to Providence, Rhode Island where my buddy and I found a good Italian restaurant. That was the last, real Italian meal I had until I returned home 2 years later.

Within a few days, we boarded the Maritania, a luxury liner converted to a troop ship. It held 15,000 troops. We were allowed two meals a day. Everything was synchronized with tickets.



I slept in a hammock on the promenade deck. At meal time we were ten to a table, we got enough food for ten. It wasn't too long before some men became seasick and could not eat. We still received food for ten. The more you ate, the less chance you would get seasick. We would stuff as much food in our pockets as we could. As soon as you felt a little nauseous, you ate.

The ship traveled without any escort at a high speed and zig zagged all the way. It was fast enough to out run a U-boat. But there was always the chance of a U-boat hitting us with a torpedo. We wore life jackets 24 hours a day. We arrived in England November 9, 1943. We boarded trucks and were taken to our destination, Swanage, England, the home of E company, 2 Battalion, 26 Inf. Reg., - 1st Infantry Division "The Big, Red One".

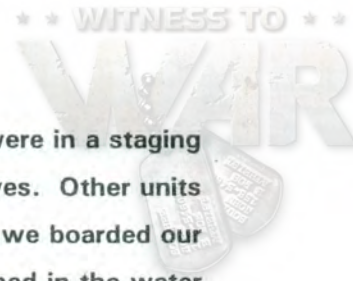
At last in a sense, we had a home and were part of a unit, no more attached unassigned. Captain Smut, our Company Commander met us and gave a nice welcome. Most all the soldiers were veterans of Sicily and Africa. We were replacements for their casualties. All of us were assigned to different platoons. I was assigned to the 1st squad, 2 platoon. My platoon, Sgt. Baffs, came from Washington, NJ. Lt. Chestnut came from Georgia, Sgt. Damb from Massachusetts. My position in the squad, 2nd scout. We were quartered in a large hotel. This town actually was a summer resort. Most of the rooms had three bunk beds and a sink. We ate in a large dining room, each had our own mess kit, no dishes to wash. Plenty of room to hand out, play cards, etc. We were allowed to go to town at night, all that was required, sign the register in and out, be back for bed check. Overall, it was a good set-up. The other side of the coin was the training 5 days a week we had rigorous training. A lot of hiking, exercises, combat problems, leaning to work with the veterans as a team.

BARRS

I learned a lot from the veterans. Five days we worked very hard. On weekends we unwound and went to town or got a weekend pass for a larger town or city. In town, you could get fish & chips, beer, scotch, gin, whatever was available. At the British Canteen, you always could get tea and sandwiches. Some of ^{the} troops met girls and spent weekends with their families.

When I lived in California, I learned the barber trade from my Uncle Jim. I also worked as a barber in Hackensack, NJ. As soon as some guys found out I could cut hair, I had a nice deal earning side money. One day I was order^{ed} to report to the 1st Sgt. He told me he had orders from Regiment to send me on detached service to PX (Post Exchange) mobile unit for training. PX is the unit which dispensed cigarettes, candy, shaving supplies and personal needs. This unit was supposed to serve your needs in combat when you came back for a rest or reserve.

It was a good deal. I got to travel most of Southern England as far down as Lands End. We ate good, slept, no training, it was like a vacation. It was good while it lasted. I was to be assigned to that unit later. The reason they selected me is that I had food store experience. Back to the Salt Mines.

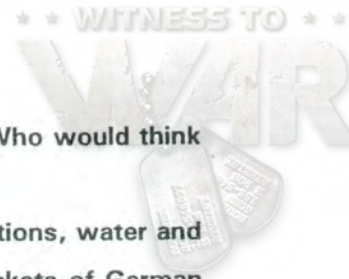


Late in May, we shipped out to one of the ports on the Channel. We were in a staging area ready for the invasion. We were allowed to run around the town and enjoy ourselves. Other units were there also, 29th Infantry-Engineers, Ranger and etc. A few days before D-Day we boarded our landing craft. L.C.I. our ship had gang plank on both sides of the ship. They dropped in the water when you landed. On board we received our instructions for the landing. We were to be the third wave, 16 Regiment, 1st wave, 18th regiment 2 wave. Our assignment was to go through 16th & 18th and take the lead. We all had our bed rolls with us, which were used to sleep on while we were on board ship. We rolled our bed roll very, very tight as they would float and serve as a life preserver (part of our bed roll was 1/2 of a tent which was of canvas & water resistant). Inside the roll you had K rations and other supplies. This was another way we got supplies ashore. The Sergeants did a good job of keeping us calm. We were solemn but no panic. The veterans stressed, very strongly, stay in line, move, move out, get off the beach. Early morning of June 6th we rolled our bed roll and waited to go ashore. Being we were below deck, we could not see anything going on.

All of a sudden we heard the engines roar at full throttle as we headed for the shore. You could feel the ship flying. We realized, this is it!. In a short while the engines reversed and we could hear the ship scraping bottom. The word came down, "okay, let's go, this is it, move out" I grabbed my bed roll and rifle and went top side. I saw a sight I would never forget. From that moment I became a robot. No fear, no emotions, I did what I was programmed to do. Jumped in the water with my roll, followed my Sgt. to the beach, dropped my roll and followed him up the cliff on a narrow foot path marked out by the engineers, which they cleared of mines.

Getting back to the sight I saw--when I got on deck and looked out on the beach. A mass of destruction of mines, tanks, ships that you never dreamed of Enemy artillery was coming blowing up ships, men and equipment. As I jumped in the water our ship was already in reverse. No movie could duplicate this scene. When I got on the beach our Sgt. and Officers kept us moving all the time. When I looked on either side of the path, I saw dead, wounded pieces of human beings, smell of gun powder and death was unreal. We kept moving, so this sight wouldn't sink in.

When we reached the top, we organized and pushed ahead to our objective. Here is one of my first action I remember. We were going from building to building, there was an opening we had to cross which was covered by machine gun fire. Lieutenant Chestnut said, "okay, Timpanaro, move out". I replied, "Lieutenant, there is machine gun fire covering that opening." He replied, "I know, just run across!" I timed the burst of fire, when he ended one burst, I ran across. He just missed me. I can't explain the feeling. It was like, "Ha, Ha, you missed me." It was the beginning of the deadly game. Lieutenant Chestnut was a veteran of Sicily. I don't think he knew what fear was. We were pretty close. I even used to give him haircuts. We reached our objective and dug in for the



night. Our casualties for the squad was one dead. This was my first day of combat. Who would think that I would be part of the greatest day in American History?

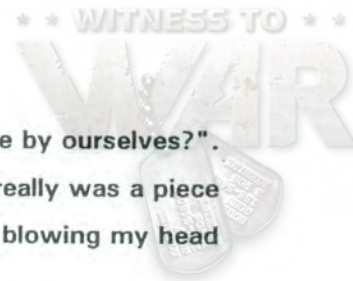
I have no idea how I slept, dried out or ate. The main thing, I had K-rations, water and a rain coat to keep me warm. Daylight we started our assault inland, we met pockets of German resistance as we moved ahead. We did not have any tank support yet. Things got pretty rough without them. When we encountered the enemy we would try to get them to surrender. At that time I was second scout. I and Housennan the 1st scout were the first to engage the enemy. We tried to con them to surrender. We told them they were lucky, the war was over for them and offered cigarettes.

One of the towns we came to the resistance was tough. They where in this building on the 2nd floor shooting down at us. They did not want to surrender. As 2nd scout I carried Ant. Tank rifle grenade. I had quite a bit of training shooting them. We came up with a system, we used a small nail in the side of the stock as a rear sight until the front end of the barrel. While Houserman kept them pinned, I fired two grenades right through the windows. They put out a white flag and surrendered. For that action I received the Bronze Star. That action saved lives on both sides.

From the beach to Caumont, fighting was about the same, hard, slow progress. We learned some valuable lessons as we went along. Some soldiers would have grenades on their combat harness. One soldier was going through a hedgerow and the pin got caught and came out. He blew himself up. From then on, all grenades were taped or carried in our side pockets. Side pockets were made that way for a reason, when you hit the ground you didn't get hurt by anything in your pocket. This was hedgerow country, unless you marched on the road, you went through fields. These fields were sectioned off by hedgerows. Hedgerows were mounds of dirt with thick underbrush which formed a natural barrier. ^{CRIPES} At first only the Infantry was able to go through them. Later the tanks mounted blades like bulldozers and pushed their way through.

(June 12, 1944)

We finally came to the outskirts of Caumont. Everything looked good as we went across the fields. As Houserman, our 1st scout, climbed through a hedgerow the German's opened up with machine gun fire, Houserman was hit and died instantly. We took cover behind the hedgerow and returned fire. As artillery support we had a French cruiser in the channel with a 20 mile range or more. Our battalion Commander must have called for artillery fire. It wasn't too long, we heard a sound overhead, like boxcars going end over end in the air. I'll never forget that sound. The cruiser must have fired a broadside. The Germans retreated and we took over the town. We set up our defense on the other side of town and dug fox holes. We were told we would be there until the rest of the Armies caught up. That night Lt. Chestnut visited us in our positions to see that we were alright. While he and I were talking, we saw flares in front and to the left and right. I asked "are those



flares ours or Germans'?" He replied, "Germans'". I gulped and said, "are we out here by ourselves?". He replied, "that's right, Timpanaro, and stand up straight and stop crouching" (he really was a piece of work). I wasn't crouching, I was keeping a low silhouette. I didn't want a sniper blowing my head off.

We finally were going to stay put for awhile. We didn't wash, shave or have a hot meal since D-Day. Next morning the German's counter attacked us to take the town back. We repulsed that one and many others. Each and every one of them was costly, we always had casualties. During daylight hours we could not move around very much. Their artillery and tank fire would constantly harass us. Until our ammunition for our heavy artillery was plentiful, our targets were limited. Like 3-or more tanks, or heavy attack with tanks. Our 60 + 81 MM mortar platoons did a good job supporting us against infantry attacks. D-Day 14 we got our first meal. It was the most appreciated meal of my life. It was corned beef hash and fruit cocktail and coffee. For the next two weeks they tried to give us at least one hot meal at night.

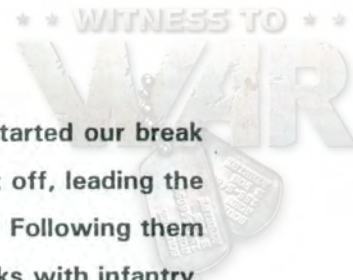
After about 2 weeks another division took over and we went to the rear and became the reserve unit. We lost our Lieutenant Chestnut plus two or three who did not even get to the front lines. Sgt. Barr, our platoon Sgt. Plus many privates. Most of our casualties were from artillery fire.

It was great being in reserve, we got to shave, wash, get a new change of clothes, write a few letters and relax a little bit. We were in a large cow pasture. We dug big, deep fox holes. It's amazing how nice you can fix up a fox hole. You still had to stay under cover, be cautious and be alert as we still were under artillery and motor fire. Every so often some would land by us.

Most of the time, you could hear the artillery shells coming in, they had a whistling or whining sound. The mortars had a different sound, more like a fluttering of feathers like a bird taking off in flight. Very little warning. When you heard that sound, you would kick out and hit the ground on your stomach, before the shell would hit. When the wind blew sometimes you see a guy hitting the ground thinking that a mortar shell was coming in. The rustling of leaves sounded like mortars coming in.

We rested up, got new replacements. About the middle of July we moved south near St. Lo. July 20th we, the second battalion, were attached to the 3rd Armored Division. We formed combat teams, a battalion of Infantry, tank battalion, armored artillery. This was to be the way we were going to break through the German lines. How this worked is a column of tanks with infantry riding on top of each, taking main roads go as far as you can taking as many towns as you could secure and cut off supply lines and form pockets. We would also have air support from fighter planes. The P-47 became my favorite plane.

As we waited for our assault to begin, we watched our Bombers going over ^{ON} our bombing missions. One day one of the planes was hit by anti-aircraft fire. We all yelled, "ball out, ball

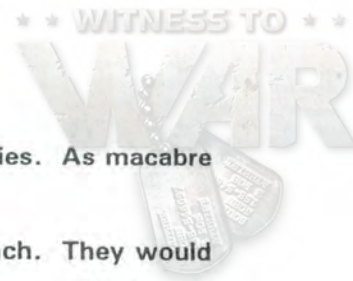


out!". Next instant, the plane blew up. It was very sad to watch, July 25th, we started our break through. We did not stop until we reached Aachen, about mid-September. We took off, leading the column was reconnaissance car and jeep. They would go until they hit any resistance. Following them would be infantry riding on top of tanks. Next, jeeps with mounted machine guns, trucks with infantry, support troops with motors, artillery and supplies. Almost like the old west wagon train. We also had airplanes to spot targets way ahead of us. They played a major roll in the break through, especially the P47. As soon as the point would spot any enemy movement or were fired upon, they would radio the commander in charge and return. The infantry would dismount off the tanks and take over. Using the tanks as support, we would fan out each side of the road and engage the enemy. This was basically our method of operation with air support when required.

I will give you an account of an action that happened on the way to Aachen, Germany. I was 1st scout for my squad and as I said earlier, we always tried to have the German's surrender, rather than fight. One day we met enemy resistance. We jumped off the tanks, fanned out from the road through the brush to engage the enemy. I was leading the squad cautiously through the brush when I came face to face with Germans in a fox hole. I had my rifle trained on them ready to shoot. I told them "okay, give up, give up" and tried to make them understand we were not going to hurt them. They put their guns down and came out. As they came out they called to someone behind me to give up. Behind me was a German well concealed with a machine gun trained on my back all the time. I was talking to their other soldiers. Had I shot those soldiers, this one would have cut me in half.

As the so-called "The Falaise Pocket" was forming, sometimes there was no front lines. There was all kinds of small pockets. Sometimes the rear echelon had to engage the enemy. At night, we set up a quadrangle defense. One night some Germans got through somehow, shot and killed a couple of our men as they slept. August 2nd our platoon (Lt.) And a few others were wounded. Our platoon Sgt. Took over as Platoon Leader. We didn't get an officer to replace him until we got to Aachen, Germany.

One day we ran into a concentration of Germans that were trying to retreat to Germany. Our Company was reserve company for that day. We heard a lot of shooting going on up front. We took cover on the side of the road and waited. Soon we saw 4 of our P-38 planes come over and started to strafe up front. They strafed for about a half hour or so then left. We got orders from our Commanding Officer to move out and take point. We went through the other company to take the lead, as I went down the road it looked like a slaughter house. The planes destroyed everything in sight, men, horses, trucks, tanks, there wasn't a thing alive. Throughout the war, that was the largest concentration of dead German soldiers I saw. The 50 caliber machine guns did some job. There were



pieces of bodies all over. I had to step over, through them, pick my way over dead bodies. As macabre as this scene was, it did not compare to D-Day with dead Americans.

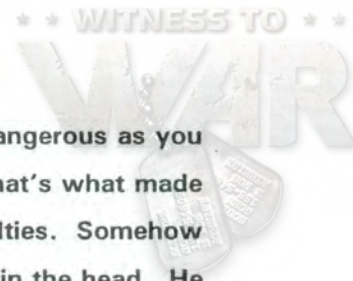
As we went flying through the towns, we were greeted by the French. They would stand along the side of the road and hand out food, wine & whatever to show their appreciation. It was really a sight to see, people so happy and grateful. I think the front line troops got the best welcome of all. In an effort to close the pocket, we were required to march cut cross-country, day and night for a short time. At night, we held on to each others backpack so we would not get lost. We covered as much as 28 miles a day.

One night in Belgium we dug in for the night. For some reason I was concerned where to dig. I dug in a nice large bush, with good concealment. When I woke up in the morning we found out the Germans captured one squad right in the middle of three squads. Lucky for them the Belgium Freedom Fighters rescued them. We rode our tanks through Saisons, Mons, Liege to the outskirts of Aachen, Germany. We had traveled through France, Luxemburg and Germany.

When we captured the town of Mons, we completed a pocket with thousands of prisoners. We crossed the German border September 12th. Once we crossed the border, we realized things would be much tougher, the Germans were now on their soil and resistance was sure to stiffen. Aachen would be the first big city to fall to the Allies. We had moved so fast that we had to wait for supplies to catch up to us. Don't believe that B/S about General Patton could have rode right into Germany. We all were short of supplies and had to wait. We were around Aachen September 12 and did not go in until October 13th.

On October 13th the 2nd and 3rd Battalion were committed to go through the center of town, street fighting was new to us, we learned in a hurry. My company began the battle by running across a railroad yard. I remember stepping over rails, that never seemed to end. It was a good 100 yards, as we were running bullets were flying at us. Our tanks were giving us overhead fire. When I came to the end of the yard, there was like a 15 or 20 feet drop. I took one look and jumped. I landed on my feet and rolled over a couple of times, any minute I expected to get shot. I got up and ran for the first building.

We operated with one squad on each side of the street. The third squad was in reserve with a tank. We had to take building by building. As the 1st scout, I was always the lead man for my squad. Somehow, every time I ran to the next building, they were just a bit late and missed me. We had to clean each building, top to bottom. Sometime we could get to the next building over the roof and come down from the top to the next building. One time I lead my squad to the next building over a 12" plank stretched across this building to another. It was 3 stories high. I am afraid of height, somehow I walked right over that plank like nothing (that's why I remember it so well).



It was very stressful fighting. Going down into those cellars was dangerous as you didn't know if soldiers or civilians were there. Many times I almost shot civilians, that's what made it so nerve racking. You didn't want to shoot innocent people. Each day we had casualties. Somehow they would miss me and get someone in the rear. I saw my platoon Sgt. Get shot in the head. He was across the street from me behind the other two scouts and squad leaders.

One morning as I moved the squad from the building we stayed in that night, as I ran across the street I tripped and fell in the middle of the road. My squad all held their breath. I got up and ran to the next building. We couldn't believe I did not get shot. On October 21st we finally took the city. I read that my Regiment the 26th Inf Suffered 498 casualties including 75 killed and 9 missing in action. We were in almost continuous action since D-Day and we were pretty damned tired. We pulled back to the outskirts of Aachen, slept in decent buildings, clean clothes, shave, cooked food, little recreation new replacements.

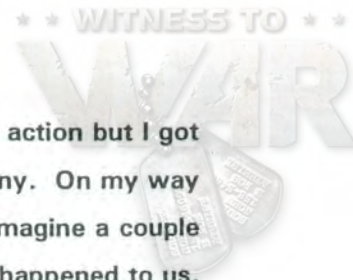
Huertgen

The Huertgen Forest was our next objective. November 16 we were all ready to go again. The Huertgen Forest, another miserable battle, this time it was tree by tree, inch by inch. Overhead the thickly intertwined canopy of green was soon stripped to shell splintered branches that stabbed the sky. German mortar and artillery shells exploding high among the tree tops cascaded millions of lethal fragment killing and maiming our troops.

The weather was lousy, wet, muddy, cold and damp, plain miserable. My squad leader came down with malaria (he caught malaria in Sicily) and had to be evacuated. The corporal became Sgt. and I became corporal. We kept inching our way forward. Within the next few days the Sgt. got wounded and I became Sgt. A new recruit became corporal. That lasted a couple of days. We both were in a trench with logs over it. A shell hit the @tree tops above us, killing him and wounding me. I made it back to a hospital in France. I finally got some rest. The wound was really not that bad, it looked worse than it was. We had so many casualties they threw a bandage on you and shipped you out. Before I knew it, I was in a hospital in France.

The battle of Huertgen Forest, 33,000 American casualties. More than 24,000 of these were killed, wounded or captured, another 9,000 succumbed to the misery of the forest itself. The wet, cold, respiratory disease and trench foot.

It states in one of the history books that the 1st Infantry Division captured all of its' objectives. Also the 2nd battalion (mine) was the most depleted in the fighting at the eastern edge of the Huertgen Forest near Merode in early December. Company E & F had been virtually annihilated and just about number 100 men each. December 7th the 9th Infantry relieved the 1st Division. The Division went to Viervier, Belgium for a much needed rest. The 1st Division had been in action 182 days during which it had been out of contact with the enemy only 5 days.



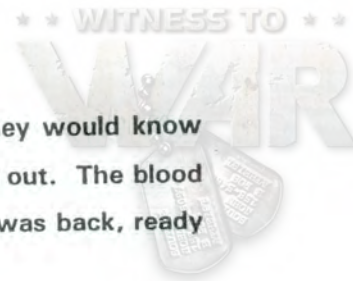
My wound wasn't serious. It was a gift. I not only missed some of the action but I got to go to town in France for fun and rest. Soon I was on my way back to my company. On my way back, in one of the camps, one night we all came down with dysentery. Can you imagine a couple hundred guys running for toilets in the middle of the night? We did not know what happened to us. Everybody was so mad we almost rioted. At the breakfast chow line the cooks were shaking in their boots. Medical doctors were investigating and calming us down, we also got plenty of cheese. In all the time in the Army, that was the first I had dysentery.

December 15th

I got back to my company. I got my squad of replacements. My buddy Sgt. Bill Stelma and I were celebrating my homecoming. We were discussing the Huertgen Forest battle. We were up pretty late that night. Before we knew what happened, we were on trucks moving out to the front lines. Who knew where the front lines were. The area we were going through had been occupied by the U.S. Army before. It looked like they just picked up and ran. We got to a town called Don Butgenbach. We then were told about the German breakthrough. My first assignment was to take a patrol down the road. I got off the road to the side, I worked my way cautiously down the road a couple hundred yards. I heard sounds of motors, tanks, trucks, vehicles in general. I didn't know whose they were. As I crept closer I heard them talking in German. Good thing German's never speak quietly. I got my butt out of there fast and reported to Lt. Carl Jenson and Sgt. Bill Stelma. We set up a road block down from the intersection. My squad split on either side of the road. The anti-tank company set up anti-tank mines in the road. They also covered the road with anti-tank gun and tank destroyers from the intersection. A short time later, a German foot patrol came up the road. We spotted them coming up. When they got closer we opened fire. They shot back with their machine guns and yelled at us to give up. We responded with choice words and kept firing until they retreated.

A while later a small tank and recon car came flying up the road. With two guys hanging on to the back of the tank. We all opened fire, including the tank at the intersection. Between the mines in the road and the anti-tank crew, we blew them away. We had a big ball of fire going, which meant the Germans knew our position and would be zeroing their artillery on that spot. We moved our position about 100 yards down, along a row of trees.

As it got dark the enemy started to shell the hell out of that area most of the night. It was very cold that night and we could not dig real good. I managed to dig a decent hole. I fell asleep in sitting position with my raincoat over my head to keep warm. Early morning when I woke up I stumbled out of my hole. I could not feel my feet, they felt like stumps. I walked over to our first aid man. He said "Tony, I think your feet are frozen". He helped me to the aid station. The doctor stuck my feet with a pin to see if I had any feeling in them. They put me on a stretcher and shipped me out. That is when I met Lee D'Armino from Hackensack, NJ, my home town. We both were very surprised



to see each other. When I arrived at the hospital I was told within a few days they would know whether I would lose any toes. They turned black and hurt like hell as they thawed out. The blood was rushing back into my toes. In a couple weeks they were fine. Within a month I was back, ready for the Roer River.

CROSSING THE ROER RIVER

I rejoined my company late January. I got there in time to prepare for the crossing of the Roer River. Late February we started our offense, we crossed in boats. You had to be very careful where you walked. They had plenty of personal mines waiting for us. These were small mines, just enough to blow your foot and lower leg off. They were meant to maim you. The terrain was flat open country. So most of our attacks would start early before dawn. The artillery would start with a rolling barrage lifting up every so many minutes. We would ~~we~~ would follow it very closely. The idea was to keep the enemy pinned down while we advanced. It was very successful most of the time. Occasionally a round would fall short and we would have casualties from friendly fire. The German's were fighting on their own land and resistance was much stiffer then in France. We fought this type of offensive all the way to the Rhine River. We ended our drive in the town of Bruil (Stephie Grafs home town - Tennis star). We rested there and ran patrols to the Rhine River. Our next objective was to cross the Rhine.

CROSSING THE RHINE

March 15

We got word that the 9 Armored Division had captured a bridge at Remagen, and that for us to move out fast and get across the Rhine. We were trucked to Remagen. When we arrived the engineers already had pontoon bridges across the river, the Navy or Coast Guard had small landing crafts, ferrying troops across as fast as they could. We were trying to get as many troops over and enlarge the bridgehead. We were very successful. The 26th Regiment hooked up with the 3 armored division and became a combat team. Enemy resistance was determined, but we made steady progress every day. We used the same tactics as we did in France. After we took a town, another Regiment would push through us and keep the attack going. We did not give the German's time to rest or regroup. We crossed the Rhine March 15th and by April 7 we were ready to take the Hartz Mountains.

HARTZ MOUNTAINS

The Germans had massed a force of 200,000 into the rugged mountains. They were supposedly fortifying a redoubt from which guerrilla typed gangs, termed "werewolves" were to prey on allied units. Most of their troops were die-hard SS troops. This was going to be another rough battle like the Hurtegen forest. The roads were narrow and winding, which meant the infantry had to go ahead of the tanks because the German's were able to conceal themselves in the brush and knock out our tanks with panzeifust (bazooka's), anti-tanks guns. We proceeded slowly, it was strictly an



infantry battle. Whenever we encountered the enemy, it was a battle to the end for them. Our 60 MM mortars were a great asset as they were able to put shells right in front of our nose and get direct hits on the enemy. That's the way it was most of the way. It was slow progress but when we had the opportunity we traveled into the night to our objective. One night as I was leading the squad up a road, up ahead I could see lit cigarettes and hear talking. Thinking only American's would be doing something like that, as I got close I started to cuss them out. I suddenly realized they were German soldiers, out of their tanks smoking, drinking and talking. I started to yell like a nut, "hands up, hands up" yelling at my men surround them. (If you ever watched "Cops" you know what I mean.) They were so surprised and shocked they all surrendered without a fight. I ran in the house, found the cellar and herded them down the cellar. I threatened them that I would throw hand grenades down if I heard any crap from them. We captured a tank and about 20 prisoners. Everything happened so fast they didn't know what happened. I don't know myself, how I reacted to the situation so fast. All the while my stomach was jumping up and down. Next morning, we let them out of the cellar, one of the officers looked at me and just shook his head. I was given the Bronze Star for that action.

Another action of mine, I was to far ahead of my squad when I got pinned down by machine gun fire. This was like a scene from a movie. I was behind a large fallen tree. Every time he shot at me he would chop the wood over my head, I would roll over and return fire from another position. This went on for a while. I don't know whether I killed him or he ran. When the shooting stopped, my squad came up. They thought I was dead for sure. The Army sent a couple more divisions in and we finally got out of there.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA - VE DAY, 5/9

When we got out of the Hartz Mountains we were supposed to get a rest. However, new orders directed us to relieve a division on the Czech border. On April 27 we took a 100 mile trip to the vicinity of the Cheb Gap. On April 29 we commenced combat action in Czechoslovakia (we knew the war was near the end so we all were afraid of getting shot so close to the end). As we mopped up the town, we were very careful.

Here is another action I remember vividly. Thousands of civilians and soldiers were trying to escape from the Russians by coming over to our sector. We set up road blocks, directing them to this hillside were we set up a command port. We separated civilians from soldiers. The soldiers were sent to prison compounds and the civilians were kept on the hillside. We set up some sort of camp with water, toilets and etc. We also had soldiers from headquarters who spoke German which made communication a little bit easier.

Our company acted as military police. It was our job to maintain the peace among the refugees. As a Sgt. the people looked to me to protect and solve their problems. There always were some who tried to steal and intimidate others. One time, this old man came running up to me crying

that someone was stealing his team of horses. I went where this was going on and listened to the story. This other group had taken his team of horses and cart. I called a couple of my men over and told the other group to return the horses or I would shoot them right there on the spot. They returned his horses and cart in a hurry. The man and his family couldn't thank me enough. We had to settle quite a few disputes. Many whole families were running away from the Russians.

Nuremberg

We moved from that town to another for a rest and replacement. We more or less took things easy. It was a nice town. I got a 5 day to Parts, France. I had a good time seeing the sights and riding their subways. I was impressed how simple it was. It felt good being in a big city, it was like New York City with department stores, cafe's, restaurants, shows, etc. The people treated me very good. They liked the infantry soldiers.

Five days went by in a hurry. While I was on pass, my Company received replacements from rear echelon units which were disbanded. From there we moved to a P.O.W. camp outside of the city of Nuremberg. We lived in tent city outside the stockade. Our Battalion was designated to guard and work prisoners. I remember vividly the troops that arrived from Italy. They felt far from being defeated. They were the Mountain troops from North Italy Alps. They were clean shaven, clean uniformed and proud.

When we got our replacement I moved to Assistant Platoon Sgt. which was a little bit easier. I rode in a jeep with the Lt. and Platoon Sgt. Checking up on our work crews. We made sure they had food, water, etc. and if there were trouble makers. It wasn't bad at all. At night we were able to go in town if you weren't too tired. We worked like 8 to 5.

Nuremberg was a pretty wild town for awhile. Drinking, prostitution, fighting and shooting. Everybody was blowing off steam from the long, stressful war. Life was pretty cheap for awhile. It finally tamed down. By October I had enough points to go home.

HOME

The trip home was no picnic either. We rode trucks from one processing area to another. Some places were nice towns, in buildings, some tents, floors of warehouses. We also rode in box cars to the Port of Embarkation in Nice, France. I sure was happy to get to the Liberty ship for the trip home. I don't remember how long it took to get home. The good thing about the trip, I was detailed as cook. I remember making spaghetti sauce. I put the good Italian touch to it. We landed at Newport News, VA. From there to Fort Dix, NJ and home.



OCTOBER 1945 - 1997

October 19, 1945

Discharged from U.S. Army. Purchased 1936 2 door Chevy. Went job hunting. Tried all major companies. All were impressed with my war record but could not use me. Got a job with Alum Co. Of America in the remelt department. One day hot, molten metal came flying out of the small feeding door, just missing my face. I took off my gloves and quit on the spot. I did not live through the war just to get wounded in a factory. I applied for the 22-50 club benefits for GI's.

1946 - 1947

Bartender in Saratoga, NY in summer. Sold Christmas trees in December, used car salesman, worked produce in Paterson NJ sold and delivered produce.

1948

Got job in Paramus, NJ re-conditioning used office furniture (cabinets, lockers, etc.)

1949

July 23, 1949 got married. Wife worked for NJ Bell Telephone. Purchased new home.

1950

Sold home, moved next to in-laws. December 1950 daughter Pamela was born.

1951

Company began manufacturing office furniture. Moved up to foreman.

1952

Moved from in-laws to veteran's project (cheap rent) in Teaneck, NJ. Plant went bankrupt, got job in Union City, NJ as Foreman. Black and Spanish employee's.

1955

February 1955 son Peter born. July 1955 purchased new home in Washington Township (Bergen County). Union City plant closed. Out of work 3 weeks. Got job, Newark, NJ Warehouse Foreman.

1956-57

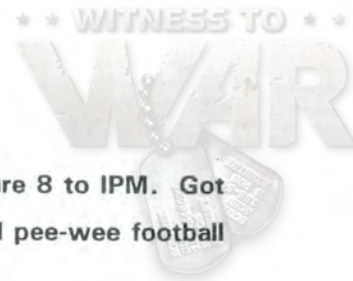
Worked part time Post Office. Took real estate salesman test. Passed. Had 3 jobs at one time. Warehouse foreman, part time P.O. and real estate weekends. Went full time nights in Post office.

1958

Quit, Warehouse foreman. Worked full time Post office and full time real estate days, for one year.

1959

Full time post office. Part time produce, department store, lighting manufacturing company set up man. July 5, son James born.



1960-70

Worked nights 10:30 to 7AM - part time, set up man manufacturing lighting fixture 8 to IPM. Got charter for local - Union President, U.F.P.W. local 568. State Treasurer, coached pee-wee football 1966-1969.

1970-1983

Quit part time job. Went on days in post office. Took typing lessons. Got job in Superintendent of Mail Office as classification clerk; moved up to Office Manager. Joined bowling league (Tuesday). Meadowlands race track (Thursday club (finally a little fun).

1983 - 1997

September 2, 1983 retired from post office (60 years and 9 months). Sold home in Jersey (5/84) moved to NY state. Vacations: Spain, Cancan , Hawaii, St. Martens, Aruba, Antigua, Florida three times.

Lifetime new cars:

1966 Comet, 1968 Cougar, 1972 Olds, 1987 Taurus, 1996 Escort.

How I keep active:

Sons helper Spring& Fall - Pool Maintenance business. Stock Market, Horse racing, Upkeep house & 1/2acre plot, Garden, shopping, traveling to NJ, keeping up with grandchildren and exercise daily.