



Robert Hunt Memories

Robert Hunt was a machine gunner with the 34th Infantry Division, 133rd Battalion, Company M, serving in the European Theater during WWII. Starting in Casablanca, Robert eventually ended up in Italy, moving from Salerno to Cassino, and ultimately wound up north of Rome. Wounded twice, Robert relates his memories in the following transcription from a previous audio interview. (Minor edits and omissions were made by the Witness to War Foundation in order to make the content easier to follow in this format.)

<p>Wounded <i>July 3 - 44</i></p> 	
<p>ROBERT L. HUNT</p> <p>Pvt. Robert L. Hunt, son of Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Hunt of Union Mills, was wounded in action the second time on June 8 in Italy, according to word received by his parents. The message stated that he has been recovering nicely in a hospital in Naples, Italy.</p> <p>Private Hunt was awarded the Purple Heart for meritorious service and for wounds received during action on the Italian front in December, and was recently awarded the Oak Leaf cluster. Private Hunt is a graduate of Union Mills High school, class of 1941, and was employed at the Kingsbury Ordnance plant before entering the armed forces. He entered the service in February, 1943, and has served in the infan-</p>	<p>try of the 5th army since September 20. He fought in the battle of Cassino and had been stationed at the Anzio beachhead for a time. A brother, Arden L. Hunt, scaman first class, is serving in the South Pacific.</p> <p>Reports are that Private Hunt will soon be back on duty.</p>

Back in November '42 I got my call from (the) Selective Service board to report to the Armed Forces of the USA. My name was Robert Hunt, my serial number 35090735. Prior to going I had a girl and, of course, that sorta made things look different. And I never got married until after the service. I told her goodbye and as it happened a storm came and we were snowed, and I didn't get to go until February '43. Then we left at La Crosse to go to Indianapolis to Fort Ben Harrison. It was a very cold morning that day, around 0 maybe -5 below. There was a nice crowd there to see us off. And who's name to be called first but mine. (I was the) first one on the list. Boarded bus and the rest of them followed suit. We had so-called crying and those leaving, little down heart, but I didn't cry. That morning the new car wouldn't start but the old car did. We had to take the old Model A to go down there, but it made it all right. I went with Ray Lowe from Union mills, we went together. We were going to be buddies from there throughout the service, but surprise came as soon as we got in, why, he was separated from me about the next day. Never saw him. Got down to Indianapolis, took all kind of tests. Got our shots, got our new clothes, began to get the feel of the whole army life. (There) things are a little bit different. We had to mail old clothes back, no more C, civilian clothes. Next day I got detailed to help haul coal. The detail never did materialize; we didn't have to haul it. Then one morning we got KP, had to get up at 3am. Had fingernail inspection and then went over to the mess hall and sat until 6 to wait to the time to serve, and then when time to serve we had the regular KP work of dishes, cleaning, scrubbing floors. It was a big day. Matter of fact we didn't get in until 8 that night. You know, you don't have 8 hours in the army. Three am till whenever you get done. Then the next I had a job that wasn't so bad. It was to keep a fire in a tent for a couple of workmen that were building posts. Course that was pretty nice, sit around there, talk with them. And they were old WWI veterans. Of course they gave us some inside dope. That morning or the morning before we got bawled out by a 2nd lieutenant for not saluting, and while we were sitting there in the tent gabbing, in walks a major. But the major never said anything to us, and boy were we tickled, because we didn't salute him. We were just in there and we didn't know what to do before we knew it. But he was real nice, never said a thing. Then we finally got our orders.

I don't know if I told you, but Ray Lowe left the day before. (I) didn't see him again until we got home from the service. Then we got orders that we were leaving about 6 that evening. We got on the train late that afternoon, sat there until 1 the next morning, and then we finally pulled out for unknown places. As we went along the way we watched the signs, tried to find out what town we were at, and which way we were going; west, north, or south. Well, we went and found out we were going south. We stopped at Chattanooga for about half a day or three quarters sitting in the yard. We finally got going and made our way to Macon, GA. That was Camp Wheeler, beautiful place, and a lot of activity and a lot of soldiers. We got there for 13 weeks basic training. Those were very hard weeks of training. We thought that was the hardest life of army life, but they told us that there were days we would wish we were back in basic training where it was nice. We sorta laughed at them. We knew that there couldn't be anything rougher than basic training. They were right, there were tougher days. We would have given anything many times to have been back there at old basic training. We had one time a forced hike 9 miles in 2 hours. We were supposed to make 9 miles in 2 hours with a full field pack. It was about 80° that day or maybe more. We had 2-3 of them keel over from heat. I walked it, I didn't run. I lived a little longer than the some of them. Little bit more about our training at camp Kilmer, camp Wheeler I mean. We took infantry training, which consists of a lot of hiking, a lot of drilling with the rifle, a lot of machine gun drilling, and mortars, hand grenades,

combat fighting. We used to have to go out and drill with a full field combat on. Bayonet drill, that is the one thing that will really poop a guy out. Then we were ready for overseas duty. Papers told us we would all get to go home before going overseas, but then that wasn't the army's idea. The army says we go overseas first. We ship out to Shinangle, I believe that is in Pottstown, PA. It was just a gathering area, we were there about a week. We were supposed to be there 2-3 days, we were there 10 days, I believe. Then we were to ship on. Well, it was quite a place there; it was a mud hole as far as I'm concerned. It was rainy season and things weren't so nice. Then we left there for camp Kilmore, there in New Brunswick, NJ, which was a very beautiful camp. There we stayed 10 days more than we were supposed to. We used it as a repo/depot, and they took out as they needed. This time I was fortunate enough to be called last, because they all shipped out but about 30 of us. We stayed there for about half a month and all we did was play ball and had to work an hour or two in the morning and clean up the barracks. And one time we got mail detail. From there we got our orders to move to Patrick Henry, which was another loading/staging area which was down at Norfolk, VA. And we were to leave from there. Well, we went down there and it was quite a delightful place. Guards and everything around, began to wonder why. You begin to feel pressure. Overseas duties showing up, and of course, they didn't want you to sorta walk off and forget them. We were down there for about a week or two. We pulled detail down at the dock, which we sorta enjoyed. The only way we could get out of the post was to go down to the docks and work. Well, we didn't work very hard. We helped load boats and we ran little carts and just horsed around more or less, but anyway it wasn't long and we got our shipping orders and we got on a boat, the Mariposa, a civilian cruiser during peace time. They claimed it could hold about 800 passengers, we had approximately 8,000. We had them everywhere that you could put a person. Put em on decks. We were fortunate to be up on the deck. Why, some of them were down in the hole, and I guess they about died from the heat. But we were on the deck where it was nice weather so we didn't mind. (We) slept right on the old deck. (The trip) took us about 8 days to go across. We didn't have no guards. We had airplane followed the last couple days, came out and checked on us. We landed at Casablanca, quite a place to land. We noticed as soon as we got there that I could smell camels, it stinked. We saw the remains of what was out there in Casablanca of a few battles. We could see a couple hulls of ships sticking up in the air. So our boat docked but we didn't get off until midnight. We got off at midnight, walked down the street. A-rabs, we called em, cried out 'cigarettes, cigarettes.' Two years old up to 90, they wanted a cigarette. Nice, new bunch of troops coming in, and they could work them pretty good. They weren't seasoned, so a lot of guys gave em cigarettes and that's the way they made it. And they slept right on the streets, right on the doorsteps, wherever their bones got tired, they would lay down and go to sleep.

We went in to another location area where they gathered together. We were there about two weeks, I imagine. Well, when we got to this assembling area, we got in about 3am. We laid on slats, wood slats for beds. In the morning, the ol' sergeant blew his whistle. He must have blown it at about 5:00 in the morning, because you couldn't see your hand. And some of us didn't fall out. We didn't get in till about 3 and boy o boy was he mad. He was really mad. You thought he was president or something, but he was just a goof-off sergeant. We found that out. Wasn't long, we were there, had a few details, got sorta acquainted with Africa, what to do, what not to do. Then we were finally assigned to an outfit. We didn't know anything about it because nobody was ever allowed to talk about it at the time. Called the 34th Division. Of course this is what we were all looking for and we wanted to be assigned to do our job. Course we didn't know what we were going to do. Good idea. Finally read our names off, company M, 133rd

Battalion. "What's company M?" I didn't know. "Heavy machine guns, 30 caliber, water-cooled." They loaded us up in trucks. Everything was done at night. You know, you never did anything during the day but sleep, and walked around at night. Of course, you didn't know what you were doing. (We) went out here in Africa, someplace in the desert. We joined a group of fellows, were out in the tents, and this was to be my outfit from here on out. At the time I didn't realize it. We got in about one o'clock that night, twelve or one. Laid out on the ground, went to sleep. Next morning the old revelry rang, whistle blew about four o'clock in the morning. My aching back! I say four o'clock, you couldn't see your hand in front of you. They were out raring to go, we just got in. We were bushed. So we tried to get up and get out, cause we know what of a mess we run into before. We got out there and they had roll call and they dismissed them. The old guys came over to us, "hey buddy where you from? You guys don't have to fall out, just sit down here. Where you from? Whereabouts in Indiana? Are you from Iowa? Anybody from Iowa? How's things in the States?" Well, we told them and then found out they had been there eighteen months and had fought in Africa. And of course we wanted to know all about the outfit. Wasn't long they found out what we had to do. They assigned us each new fellow with an old fellow, and I got assigned to a machine gun squad. There was a mortar squad and a machine gun, and I got assigned to a machine gun squad. From there we did desert drilling for amphibious landing. We went over to the lake, er Mediterranean Sea and made artificial landings. (I) Got sick one day. You don't get sick until you have a fever of 102 in the army, which is nice to know. So the fellows carried my equipment for me.

We musta trained there for about a week and then we shifted. Moved out to the desert, I called it. Anyway, we took some more training out there, waterproofed all our vehicles. And, of course, Salerno, uh Sicily beachhead was formed. I'd have been in that invasion had I not been late that first month, so it was a good advantage. Instead, I landed at Salerno. We loaded up on our boats one day, made our way. Of course we knew about where we were going, to Italy. Third Division was up there and they about lost their shirts. So we had to go in and help them. And we made amphibious landing. About drowned, but then we must have carried at least 100 lb apiece on our backs. And we made our landing, and then we dropped half of it off and trucks picked it up later. There were airplanes by the thousands, boats by the thousands, it seemed like. And we had no dock to dock on. We had these amphibious landing craft and we get into them from our big ship and then we land into the beach. Well, we hiked about 10 miles that day, then I found out what a hike was, with full equipment. Didn't know what was coming off, whether someone was going to get shot or what. Fortunately it was a quiet beachhead landing, and we assembled in our assembling area. And then that night they were unloading boats all night. Had these 6 bi-aquiduck trucks. Drive them trucks right out to the boat, and load her up and drive her up to shore, dump her and driver her back out there. Marvelous how they unloaded the boat, we even had a hot meal that night from the kitchen. How they got everything off and unloaded, that's better than they do here. So we took a few more days of training and got sorta zeroed in on what was going and where was going to do. And of course it wasn't long.

We got orders to move out, and of course being new, we didn't know what it was all about. Moved all night, er all day, and then that night we moved up to the front lines. Our first artillery shell I'll never forget as long as I live. I heard that baby come flying in, it missed us by about 500 yards, I believe. There were only about 2 of them come in, but that was the real McCoy. Scared, scared like a rabbit, but didn't do me any good. So we unloaded off our trucks, from there on, we walked to northern Italy. First night, I remember we marched and marched through vineyards and everything. About 3 o'clock the captain says you boys can lay down and

take a nap. So we didn't undress and get in our lovely, little warm bed, we just laid right there on the ground put our rain coat over us to keep the dew off. And then the next day was a little hotter. Began to see the first casualties and wounded, began to play for keeps. From there on, she was one nasty fight; mud, rain, sunshine, and wounded. We continued on through. Don't remember towns now, you'd be surprised how you forget. I remember going into Benavento. We had a tank fight. Our infantry knocked them out. I know one day we had a machine gun fight. (We) musta used 9-10 boxes of ammo without any water in our machine gun. So we had to get a new barrel for our gun. I don't think the last four or five boxes did any good anyway. The Germans were more or less the retreating side at that time, thank goodness. Only I didn't realize they were retreating, I thought they were coming the other way. Until we got up to Casino. There at Casino, quite a fight for Casino. We had to go across a bunch of mountains. The mountains were long, it took us about two days. I think that they had one waterhole and they shot at that periodically. But we managed to slip up there and get water and take off again without too many casualties. A lot of times we just had to melt the snow. We had what we called k-rations. These k-rations were two different kinds of biscuits with a little can of meat and multidextral tablets and a little bullion or coffee or cocoa or whatever happened to be in there. You could make your soup or your drink. Got so we could live on them things, didn't do too bad either, even though I hated it, didn't like it. Just before we got into casino, it was around Christmas time, we were up in the mountains somewhere fighting and we had been up there for about 10-12 days and they were shelling every so often. We were holding a position up there. We got wet and had a lot of trench foot. Guys had a lot of trench foot, where their feet would get wet and then staying with their shoes and socks on with wet feet all the time, sorta like a rot. But a lot of times we would take our socks off and lay on them at night and that would dry them out and the next day we put them back on. I was lucky not to have it. A lot of them had to be carried out.

Up there we had the French Moroccans that relieved us. These people made the goose pimples run up and down your neck. Seemed like they were all tall and they all had mustaches and they loved knives, four or five knives. And with that knife, they could go through the woods there, and almost like a ghost, they could stick that knife in you. I was sure glad they were on our side, anyway. And they relieved us. They put their gun in our gun tripod and we took off.

And then we were down in a valley for about 4-5 days over Christmas and New Year's. New Year's Eve or the day after New Year's, we left to go up to Casino. The wind blew, blew our tents over, and it sleeted. It was just a wonderful Christmas and New Year's time, where we tried to stay in the trucks or sleep on junk to keep warm and dry. As we went up to Casino, we had quite a battle all the way through. Of course, moving into Casino, I remember the night as we were going up there. The officer in charge, as we sat down there on the hill says, "You know, I think I got a feeling we ought to move." So he moved us around a corner and just as we got moved, they threw in a barrage. There wasn't a soul there, but if we had still been there, we would have all been dead. Then we moved up into an old hotel, what was like a hotel. The back of it was up against the mountain, the other side, one side was shot out, and the front was not much left there. And we put up our machine gun and down below was the jail. And there we could see the GI's fighting the Germans, Germans on one side of the jail, GI's on the other side. (It) must have lasted for about a week. We stayed up there with our machine gun, gave overhead fire a lot of times. Here it was where they had the monastery that was so famous. The Germans would sit up in this monastery and watch us and then shell us. We couldn't seem to budge them out. There was a lot of casualties. Wrote them a note and told them that we were going to bomb

the monastery. So after they got the message we gave them a couple days notice to move out, but they didn't. So our airplanes went over and bombed the monastery while we sat down there in the hotel watching it. Of course they told us to watch out for stray bombs and what have you. Maybe we'd get a few of them, but fortunate enough that nothing happened to us. Didn't seem to do much good. Levelled the thing, but they were buried in concrete pill boxes and what have you. So we got orders to move out. We all moved out and then they really bombed it. They just levelled her down. They lowered everything in that town. I would say about 2,000 bombers or maybe more were over there and bombed with their bombs.

Makes me think, before we came up to there, we had a battle one day. We'd given harassment fire from one place to another. This one place, we got up there in the morning and couldn't get any support from artillery. The orders were to move back, we had got too far up. Lieutenant gives us the orders: every man on his own, try to get back best you could. On my way back, there was a sniper there and he was popping at us every so often. So I took off, got down along the way and he fired at me. He plowed the old mud right up on my shoes, two or three shots, and there, brother, there was an irrigation ditch that went down with 1/4 inch ice on there. Well, it didn't take long to make up my mind to jump into that. Two minutes, two seconds I mean, and I was in there. I hunched right down in that nice icy water. It was nice and cool. Cooler than them shells, anyway, or bullets. I walked along the ditch, but he didn't bother me anymore. I don't know why. I got across about half way and I all was bushed. I felt like I was walking at a snail's pace. Had my overcoat sopping wet and part of my machine gun. There was a little ditch about six inches deep, so I got down and laid in there for about ten minutes. There was a bunch of buildings I was heading for. When I could get up to the buildings, there was a little protection. So finally I made it up to those buildings. Found a German dugout, sat in there about 5-6 hours, trying to rest, warm up, dry out. Made a few rations, ate em. That night they had already reported us missing, lost in action, but we got in. And I think the rest of the crew showed up the next morning. Really we didn't do too bad.

I know that one night my water carrier, a guy, had a bullet shot right through the water can for our machine gun. Of course we lost all of our water. We went back to the side there and got relieved for awhile. (We) went in for a little more training. The time I got to Anzio, the battle was already started and Americans had taken so much ground at Anzio that they didn't have enough soldiers. Such a surprise that we didn't have enough soldiers. So therefore they took too much and lost a lot of it. So we were rushed up there to help em. We went into Anzio, stayed there for a month for defense, set up a line. We were out on the plain, as flat as a pool table. We had to go into our dugout. We had foot trenches we stayed there all day, then at night we would come home, come to the rear about every other night or third night and pick up the rations, stay there, wash up, clean up, and shave and then go back up the next night, taking our rations up and another bunch would go down. So that worked out for a month that way. We stayed up in there all day. One fellow shot himself three different times to get out of it - didn't work. Stayed there, made a couple artificial/mock attacks, just put everything in. I remember one night we shot the machine gun there at a pill box and couldn't hear for a week afterwards, shot so long. When we got up there and made a few of these mock attacks and then they had another division come in and pull through us, and then the push was on for Rome. We really worked. There was a lot of casualties, the loss was great. I think we marched the next day for about twenty miles. After laying on your back for 30 days in a slit trench and only going back every three days for rations, we were pretty weak. We had to have strength, but we managed somehow. That's why I say that basic training was mild compared to the real stuff.

Back there before we got to Casino, the experience where we got shelled, we were getting a new officer. We were always attached to a rifle company. I was wounded very slightly. The shrapnel went through my canteen and into my butt. Managed to get a purple heart out of it, but if it wasn't for the officer in charge we probably all would have been killed. He was a new officer, he said he would take the advice of a sergeant. So the sergeant suggests we should get into a German dugout that was sitting there a few feet from us, so that was what saved most of us. So we got in there, the officer checked for every fellow, found em and he soon became head of one of the rifle companies. So everybody liked him, and he showed it by his courage. The Lord spared my life then and many other times, and I praise Him for it.

On our way back to Rome a couple days after we made the break through from Anzio, things were pushing pretty fast. Things were messed up. We marched for 20 some miles or better, then we got behind so they put us in trucks and delivered us up there. And that time is where I was wounded again. Shrapnel in the foot. We were tired, and some of the guys laid on the side of a ditch to sun themselves and instead of in the ditch. And that gave the Germans a chance to see us and they spotted us. Wounded a bunch of them, killed a few. I was fortunate just to be wounded. Got out for a vacation, I call that my vacation in the service. Went back to Naples. Had a ride in an airplane from Rome to Naples, was in the hospital there for about 6 weeks and went back to the front. That was hard! It was the worst thing a guy could do, go back.

And there we headed for Leghorn. Remember that night we come up there. There were three of us. The officer told us where to go. We had to march up this road alone, wasn't a soul with us. Here was a machine gun cackling here and there, an artillery shell here and there. So there's a railroad track. By this railroad track you'll find a guard and down the railroad track about 100 yards you'll find headquarters. Went up, there wasn't a soul, wasn't a guard, was nobody around. So we went back. Well, they told us that they moved into town, into Leghorn. Leghorn is where the leaning tower of Pisa is. We got into this town at this here house and they said to follow the ration truck, get in with the ration truck, and go on up to the headquarters. And so we did. This one fellow wouldn't go, he didn't go. We got up to company headquarters and reported in. (They) asked where this one fellow was, we told them that he wouldn't go. And he says, "well why didn't you shoot him?" Well that wasn't my job, that was his job, if wanted to shoot him that was his business, not mine. Well, he got section 8, went back and did pretty good for himself. He was smarter than we were, wasn't as dumb as we thought.

We were assigned back to our company again. I was with I Company most of the time. We sit there in a broken down house. Wasn't long and we sort of went in this room every once in a while to take it a little easy. Right there in this broken down roof was our machine gun. We were back in this other room and they shelled us and they knocked out our machine gun. Well, lucky we were back in there and nobody got bumped off. Of course, it wasn't long before we had another gun.

It seemed from right there on, that was sorta the final point of the war. After we had gone through Rome, there was the division that landed in southern France, and of course the big spearhead in Normandy that was going on, too, while we were in Italy fighting, had many casualties. Over there in Italy they had sorta weakened their forces and things were beginning to be a little less hotter than they were before. So we began to move a little faster, pushing up towards the top of the peninsula. There was a lot of activity going on, of harassing fire, which sometimes is worse than the other, because you don't know when someone is going to pop at you, when you are more or less off guard.

Remember one incident right up there in the front lines. They had some anti-aircraft guys. There wasn't much aircraft any more, so they put them to work on infantry. It was all new to them. I know one time that we were moving so fast, that an anti-tank company, used to be one of our lieutenants who was the head of that, the Germans got mixed up and they were marching towards us when they thought they were retreating, I believe, and they were marching in a double file. And our officer in charge got the word that here comes a whole line of Germans. So he got his old anti-tank guns out there and here they were, drawing horses drawing guns. There must have been 500 or 600 of them, which wouldn't be too many. He was a pretty brave officer, he waited until they got within about 500 yards of them. They didn't even know. No, I guess it was within a 100 yards of them. He opened up those anti-tank guns on them. Man, did they slaughter them, slaughter em like flies. And horses, why, every soldier had a horse to sell to a Dago. And yes sir, they were selling them for a pretty good piece of change. Anyway, they didn't care what they got, just so they got something because we couldn't use horses anyway. But the Italians wanted the horses back anyhow, because a lot of them were stolen from them in the first place and that was a way of getting them back. Of course, a lot of them were killed too.

From then on we went through cities during the day, and they would snipe at us for a while, until things were pretty well settled. I remember the first time they told us that the war was over; we could drive with our lights on. I was scared stiff riding in the car with the lights on, yes sir. You know somebody was going to pop at you or what, but everything went off fine.

Did I tell you about our chaplain, chaplain Edgar? Wonderful Christian man, Methodist, wonderful chaplain. He preached as many times as he could. (He) had services in the barn or chicken house and out along the hillside. He was a man of God and he really preached the Word. And people, we, or I enjoyed his service. Did a lot of good, I think. And he lived his life. Then one time they had services on the telephone, up there at Anzio. (He) had the telephone. Talked to those that had it. Of course, most of us didn't, so we didn't get to hear it, but some of them did.

And then we had our fun too. Tricks that we played on each other, cut ups, wise cracks about the Germans, and whether our name was on each piece, and what was done. I know a lot of times we had lots of fun. We get back to a rest area, we had rest camp. I know one time there at rest camp, the day before, we went up on this front and we were sending guys one at a time and every guy was getting bumped off and after two more guys it would be my turn. So finally, on the guy before me, the officer says, "well, we're losing them all, so we just as well not go up there." Boy, was I happy, because I was the second guy in line. And one sergeant came from the States, I don't think he lived more than a week. The next day we had to go on up. Of course, being scared and there was mud up to your ankle or better. So I had to run, or I did run, and wouldn't let any grass grow under my feet. Run so hard up there that the next three days I coughed blood. But that night it was my turn to go to the rest camp. So I had to come back down that night. Well, I was mighty tickled to get down and get out of there, didn't lose no time getting out, either. All these things sort of gives you a good feeling to get out and hurry up and get back, just a little bit further so the next shell won't get me, or maybe I get bumped off on my last trick. The Lord was good and I got back safely. Had a nice time at one of the rest camps, Bologna, I believe it was. I never did get into Rome to visit.

I remember one time we were up on this here mountain, the same place a little later in time after I got back from the rest camp. We went on up to a couple more houses there or villages and we stayed in a chicken coup. It was about 5' by 12', maybe it was 4'. There were 10 of us in there, an old barn. And it would rain, and they had grain up above, and the grain would

drip down on us, wet grain, burnt grain. That made a nice mess. Ten of us in this place. We had to sleep in shifts or up on each other. We had to put our feet up on each other in order to sleep because it was so packed. We had our machine gun at the door and (I) remember, (I'll) never forget, one night when I was on guard. I heard a noise and didn't know what it was, at the time I didn't know. It was something, a piece fell off the roof. You could hear the Germans talking. They were out hunting geese and we were hunting chickens. We had chickens at our place. We'd skin and eat em. (We) didn't have water to wash em, so we'd just skin em. I heard this noise. I drew my 45. I had it ready to fire before I even knew I had it in my hand. I never will forget how I wondered afterwards how I ever got that gun in there.

I will tell you about this experience we had. There were a lot of experiences and I'll never get them all recorded. But then, no, I can't. After three years in the service and about 50 years lapse between... But Michael Comit, one of my buddies from over here in Gary. (We) were buddies, I remember after our first machine gun battle with this tank, that I mentioned previously. We went back a ways. (We) sorta got pushed back, you know you can't run up against a tank all the time, push em. So we went back a little ways, sat down under a tree. He was down the road about fifty yards, he was that far. He hollered at me, "Come on down and eat your rations." "Aw well," I said, I was not that hungry. It was about noon, a little after I guess. But I was still shaking pretty hard. He said, "Aw, come on down." He insisted. So I finally got courage enough, walked on down, sat beside him, got our rations. Another fellow came up there and he laid down right under the tree and just about five minutes afterwards they threw in a bunch of screaming Mimi's or mortars and hit the tree and set it off and about blew his leg off, from the crotch on down. (We) had to carry him off. And I was sure thankful that the Lord watches over you, to get you out of the way of danger. We don't always realize that.

I'll tell you about our letters that we got, for I was very faithful to my wife and my girlfriend and my mother. My mother always wrote letters at least once a week and encouraged me and they'll never know how much I appreciated and enjoyed them. Sometimes it was a long time before we got them. I remember Christmas I was the only one to get a bunch of them. The boxes were up on the line and half of them were tore open, but we had a dugout and we got a regular party. About 4-5 of us in the dugout and everybody grabbed a box and opened it and that was the way we enjoyed it and I know that the letters were good. And I was a good writer, too. Matter of fact, I got orders from the company commander to write home a couple of times because the folks thought I was lost or something. They didn't even know that I was in service until they got news that I was wounded. (I) had to write and tell them about that so that they wouldn't worry, because the government always sends a report, and that way they knew that things were a little bit hotter than they anticipated. There are probably a lot things that I never thought to tell you over the three years, there were a lot of experiences, a lot of good times that I won't probably remember right off the moment. But then we did have a few good times. Seen a lot of scenery that I would have never seen, but at the time didn't care about it.