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*Trained and went across with the 70<sup>th</sup> Ren. Troop  
of the 70<sup>th</sup> Div.*

It was from Camp Miles Standish near Boston Mass. that I started to realize that I was soon to be on my way overseas to join the fight against the Germans. There was much snow and ice on the ground and very cold in our low black barracks but it was here that I started out the New Year of 1945 and wondered in my own mind what this next year would have in store for me. I knew that I was in for a lot of new adventures.

On the morning of the 8th of January they got us up real early and we all struggled with our heavy loads down to the train tracks where we were loaded on and started out for Boston. It didn't take very long and soon we were unloading from the train onto the docks right beside what seemed to me an enormous ship. We were lined up alphabetically and served coffee and doughnuts by the Red Cross. While the band played swing music and our spirits were pretty good. Then they started to load us on and up the gangplank I went and in through the door # 13. It seems that 13 has followed me all through my army life ever since I entered on Friday the 13th. Any way we went into our rooms and boy were our quarters crowded. The bunks were 5 deep and 18 inches between them and they said crawl into your bunk with your duffle bag and your pack and everything on. Well I managed but how I don't know and I thought I'd never be able to get out. Then they gave us all life preservers and told us to put them on and make ourselves comfortable. That was impossible to be comfortable. About dusk we started to move out of the harbor and I went up on deck to watch the lights of the good old US as I didn't and still don't know when I will see them again. I was up till after midnight watching as we went down along the coastline all night. and the water was very smooth and nice sailing. Shortly before morning we must have turned out to sea as I suddenly awoke in my bunk and felt like I had never felt before. I knew that this must be seasickness and it was! About 10 in the morning they had what they called fire drill and everyone had to go on deck. Well that is when I really found out what seasickness is. I thought if I can only get back to that bunk they would never get me out again. But it seemed that it was no better in my bunk either and my steel helmet came to its first good use. It was part of my permanent equipment from then on. \*

As the days passed by I would venture out onto the deck and try to make myself feel good and about once a day I would get hungry enough to try to sweat out that terrible chow line but inevitably as soon as I would hit the kitchen and get my mess kit filled I would walk straight on through and dump it all in the garbage and head for fresh air and the railing as fast as I could. Finally after the 8th day it smoothed down and that night we started to see the lights of the coast of Africa and about midnight we passed through the Straights of Gibraltar into the Mediterranean Sea where the waters were once more peaceful and I felt like myself again. All the next day we passed ship after ship of tankers and supplies. Hundreds and hundreds of them. I wondered where they had all been as we had never seen anything coming all the way across as we came across unescorted and all by ourselves in our converted Luxury Liner. (MARIPOSA)

The coast of Africa was very barren and the small villages were not very nice looking. They were merely a few shacks stuck up on the side of the rocky hills that came right down to the water line.

Just before night we turned North and headed for Marseilles France. That night we stopped for hours with our motors silent as a submarine had sighted us but evidently gave up as just before morning we went on. Soon we were coming into little islands and were going along the coast of France. We passed a very small island and were told it was The Chateau Dief where the Count of Monte Carlo was imprisoned. It must have been a terrible place. As it certainly was a small island but you could see the prison part. Then we came into the port of Marseilles, where many of the ships both German and French had been sunk in port. We docked and quickly unloaded and loaded up on trucks to go to our new camp Delta Base. As we rode through town I was certainly disappointed as I had always heard of the beauty of this town. But where it was I certainly couldn't see it. \*

After leaving Marseilles by truck we rode for about 20 miles out into the country and finally found our camp Delta Base, which was merely a big muddy hill where you could pitch your tent and that's about all. We managed to get our tents up and from tin cans and such everyone made a makeshift stove in his tent to keep warm by as it was cold, rainy, and windy. The only trouble was that troops there before us had done the same and there was not much fuel for miles around. Then our vehicles and equipment, and guns came in on the boat and we unloaded them and uncrated and cleaned them up. This gave us some fuel, but most of the wood was used to enclose the vehicles in preparation for the long cold trip we knew we were about to make. Mail was coming in slowly by now but it sure was appreciated and we found it so darn hard to write back. Midnight Charlie as we all called him made his usual bedcheck each night. It was a big German plane who came over each night, for what I don't know except to get us all out of bed each night and send us running down over the hillside. After about the 3rd night of this they couldn't get me out for anything and I was to near frozen.

Each night a few boys could go in to town and so I decided to go in see Marseilles but really there's nothing there for me. You can buy some wine in a dirty old wine shop and walk the streets for hours and listen to the street salesmen jabber to you about something I don't know what as I sure couldn't parlay Francise very good. Then one afternoon to get away from the hill a few of us walked 15 miles over to Aiz I liked it better than Marseilles as it wasn't quite as dirty. But still you couldn't seem to find anything to buy except wine. Here is where I finally persuaded a store keeper to sell me a tam for my little girl Jennie.

Just before the 1st of Feb. we started out on a long convoy towards the front and it was a miserable 3 days travel. The first night our camp site was a field of mud about 1 foot deep and the whole troop slept in a house instead. The second night was spent in a park full of slushy watery snow. The 3rd night was in a large building where we slept like almost on top of one another. Our trip took us up the Rhone River valley, up through Dijons, Epinal and we finally ended up in a town called Merlenbach in Alsace Lorraine. The front lines were only about 5 miles from here and I couldn't believe it as it was just as peaceful and quiet as could be. The people were very nice to us and almost fought to see who got to have us in their houses. They gave us the best beds, did all our washing for us and made us comfortable as they could. It was here that I first got acquainted with the German language as this is what they spoke and I found it much easier to understand than the French.

From this town we first made our operations and the first time anyone went up to the front lines just for observation a boy stepped on a mine and sent two of them on their way back to the states badly wounded. This scared me out, but the second day I was to make my first night patrol, along with Lt. Mitchell and two other boys. So we went up to look the things over and I couldn't believe my eyes. The guides let us drive right up to within about 300 yds of their front lines and here we dismounted and boldly walked over the top of the hill with him saying and pointing out to us that the Heinies were over there in that town and on that next hill. I thought you fool wont they shoot at us and I asked him and he said Oh they might but if they do they know we will find out where their gun positions are for sure and knock them out with our artillery. So our mission was to go down to this town that night and find if we could where some of their positions were at. That night it rained some more and the ground was muddy as we went down over the hill toward the town. So far I had never heard a shot fired or seen a Jerry and so my confidence was pretty good and I had no fear as I couldn't believe there actually was someone out there who would shoot at me. We went down to the edge of the town and sat down and listened for about  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour and never heard a thing. So we decided to go back. We went back and said to the boys I don't think there ~~is anything down there~~ is anything down there. And they said, Yeah just try to take that town and you will find out like we did. About that time about 3 machine guns opened up and sprayed the side of the hill we had just been down over and up went a group of flares. Evidently they had heard us, but waited too long to open up. So we got out of there and went back to town and went to bed. We pulled quite a few of these kind of patrols and finally they told us we were to go up to

a town called Emerswiller Germany. It was just inside the German border and was sort of a pocket as the Germans were still back in France opposite us. We pulled our platoon into the town which consisted of about 100 houses, and took over the Infantry's position. We were all up at dawn to get our 1st look at what lay in front of us as we didn't know what to expect, and you didn't have to beg anyone to be on guard as everyone wanted to be up for his own good anyway. In the morning we looked out across about 500 yards of open field with a small river running down it and on the other side was a set of RR tracks which was supposedly the German front lines. Just beyond this lay another small town called Marineau, France and about 500 yds farther lay the town of Forbach which the Infantry was trying so hard to get at this time. It looked as though we were to have a ringside seat for the forthcoming battles for these towns and such was the case. In a few days we thought nothing of being on the front and we walked boldly up and down the streets and didn't think anything of the mortar shells that they shot at us unless they happened to get too close then we would just duck in a house and wait and laugh at them and maybe cuss them out a little too. Each day we would all take out our weapons and at the same time everyone would fire all we had at them just for the fun and then run for cover and laugh as they sent round after round of mortar and artillery at us. These stone houses could sure take a beating and stand up under it. It seemed that if you let them alone they wouldn't fire at you, but if you fired at them it was just like stirring up a nest of bees. We used to spend our days going from house to house and breaking open secret compartments after another to find their wine and liquor and what loot there was. Usually we discarded what we picked up in a few days. We lived very well here as we did our own cooking on the stoves and had the houses fixed up very nice. Rations were plentiful and we had more than we could eat most of the time. We ate off of dishes then threw them away and went to another house and carried out some clean ones for the next meal. It was a regular show to see our P47 come in and bomb and ~~safe~~ the Hienes and only once did I ever see any planes for resistance and it was only one and didn't last long. The pilot bailed out and was captured by the outfit behind us.

It was here that I did have a couple of wild experiences for me, The first was on one of my patrols at night when there was 6 of us went across the river and the open field to the tracks. We were to go on across and up on the hill behind and find out just what was there. As we were all strung out along the tracks, suddenly about 3 machine guns opened up from just across the tracks and then they started throwing hand grenades at us. We tossed some back and headed for a small sewer ditch or creek which led from under the tracks down across the open field to the river. It was our only means of cover or route of escape and they were pouring in the mortars now all around us and we weren't laughing at them now as there were no houses to duck in to. But boy I sure could get down chin deep in that sewage water and love it. By the time we got to the river the water was so deep that you just could walk and we knew that we would have to try swimming it. Everyone said they could swim so we said lets try it. It was very cold as there was ice on the ground and we all had on our clothes, guns and ammunition. Shugart the first one to try it said be careful there is a lot of current there and He didn't think he was going to make it, but one by one we crossed. I went next to the last one and I saw what they meant. As I reached the bank, Woleslagle had started to come across and in the middle of the stream I saw him start to sink and call for help. I jumped back in and made a desperate catch at him under the water, only to come up with his wool cap in my hand. Waiting he soon came back up near me and as he started down again I grabbed his coat and managed to get him to shore. Here we rested a few minutes and went on back. The only accident was McCaffery who got a bullet through his elbow just as we were passing our outpost into our own lines. I guess he is back in the states now too.

This old mill or factory across the way had us baffled too and we pulled many patrols out to it but never could get up enough nerve to go into it. After about 3 nights of patrolling it we decided to make a raid on at dawn so 10 of us went across the river and went in. At first all was quiet then one came up out of the cellar hollering Nix Sheetse or Ish sheetsen We didn't ask him to find out, but then all

hell started to break out from every corner of the factory and we could see more coming down from the hill in back. We accounted for about 4 before we left and then we made a hasty retreat back to our own town. No one got hurt. But the next day when the Infantry had taken the hill and all we found that the field that we had been on so much was full of shoe mines and many others, and no one had set them off. Thank God. We then moved our CP over into the town where the Germans had been, but our front had moved up to the next town Petit Roselle where we filled in a gap between the Infantry and the Combat Engineers. Here we caught lots of artillery as it was there last stand before the Saar River where the main Siegfried line was at. It was here that one day I left my hole to see how some of my boys were and when I returned the hole was greatly enlarged by a direct hit of an artillery shell. As the push went on from here we shot out in front with our cars and we lost one bantam and one AC by mines. No one was killed but several were wounded but we went on and never contacted the Germans until we reached the Siegfried line. Here the General ordered us to take our vehicles down on a road right along side of the river and run them up and down to determine where their gun positions were and where their weak spots were for a crossing had to be made. There was plenty of fire allright as I took my section down over the hill headed for the river and right at the pillboxes on the opposite side of the river. We made it to the river allright and stayed behind a few scattered houses most of the time as everytime we stuck our noses out we got it shot at. Just before dark they ordered us to come back out and when I got out I said Boy they'll never get me to do that again. But the next day the orders were the same and down we went again. This time there was no firing and inspite of our firing at the pillboxes we could get no return fire so the General said we cross tonight and they did. The Inf. Crossed and the Engineers put up a bridge for us and we started off through the Siegfried line with no opposition at all. The mission for my section carried me through Saarbrucken and I was very suprised as I was the first to be in Saarbrucken on that side of the river and the German civilians there were very helpful in telling me where I could go and where I couldn't. At first I was afraid to take their advice but I soon found out they were telling the truth. As I headed out north from Saarbrucken we went about 2 miles when my point bantam said Krauts ahead in the house as he had seen them. We coveredd the house with our Armored Car and went in after them. They came out willingly and it turned out they were 6 high ranking Germans Officers and I still have the Luger of one of them with me as a souvenir of the 1st German I captured. From here on my mission was to keep going until I contacted the enemy but as I rolled through town after town all I could find was white flags coming out of windows and soldiers coming out with their hands up. We would disarm them and kick them on back towards Saarbrucken and go on. We had lost radio contact and ran off of the maps but like fools having fun we went on and on the ten of us in our three vehicles. Finally as we came on a big hill above a rather large town we saw an enormous lot of traffic and we all said here it is boys, but we looked again and it was American vehicles. We went on down and made the first contact between the 3rd and the 7th Armys. I was taken to Regimental Headquarters and they had to know my story and we got communications back to my outfit finally. Message came through to us Mission completed Remain there for the night, and we did. This was actually the last of our actual contact with the enemy as from here on out we were always kept back in reserve behind the lines. And we started what you might call our occupational work, such as guarding valuable places. Being the Military Police for the civilians and searching the areas surrounding the towns for possible hidden enemy and guns and ammunition etc. Our work followed this line from St. Wendel to St. Ingbert and then to Kindsback near Kaiserlautern and from there to Bad Munster and Bad Kreuznack where we lived in a hugh lens factory operatd by Scheineder. This was near the Rhine River and we had plenty of drinking material for time off. Soon they started a large PW cage right behind the factory and it was a pitiful sight to see all of these Prisoners coming in but We knew what had happened to the boys of ours that had been captured and most of the Germans were glad to be prisoners to get out of the war. T

There is not too much more to tell as the rest of the time as I said was all spent doing occupational duties which were almost always the same everywhere we went. I will name off the towns as we moved along. F

From Bad Kreuznach we moved through Frankfurt to Hanau on the Main river. It was here that the end of the war with the Germans came and we all started wondering will we go to Japan and how long will the war last with them? From here we moved north to Eohr-Grenzhausen near the Rhine again and from there I went on a Pass to the Riviera France at Nice. I sure never enjoyed myself there and it took me right back down that Rhone river valley I had came up from Marseilles on. When I returned to my platoon we soon moved to a very little town called Arzback where I spent the 4th of July shooting colored Very Pistols. And I think we sent 4 men to the Hosp because of them I even carry a scar on my lip from one of them. From here we were moved out by the French coming in and we moved over to Wielburg. From here the outfit started to break up and part of us were sent up to the 3rd Ren Tr. at Bad Wildungen where we lived in tents but did the same kind of work yet. From here we moved to Treysa and then I went to NCO School for 10 days and when I came back they were in a little town called Rhunda and it was here that the end of the war with the Japs came about finally and we all started sweating out when do we go home??? On the 10 Sept we moved back up here to Bad Wildungen for our winter quarters and we are still here waiting to go back to the lights of the good old USA once more. We have gained and lost a lot of men by this redeployment and I have worked myself up to the job of 1st Sgt. but that sure isn't what I want. Yes you know it. I want that white sheet of paper that says I'm entitled to be a civilian once more and a free man.....

I know this doesn't cover very much of what all has happened over here but maybe it will give you a rough idea of what all goes on. And will help me to remember a few things some day.

1st Sgt. DALE H. ILIFF  
3rd Ren. Troop  
3rd Inf. Division.

I had my training at CAMP ADAIR OREGON near CORVALLIS OR then transferred to Ft LEONARD WOOD MO, before going overseas

Each Platoon has 3 Sections. The lead JEEP was ARMED with a 30 Caliber machine gun; The Second was an 8 TON ARMORED CAR with a 50 Caliber machine Gun and a 37 millimeter Cannon mounted on RUBBER wheels instead of TREAD LIKE A TANK HAS. VERY FAST AND MANUEVERABLE, THE 3RD was a Jeep armed with 60 mm MORTAR. The Section had 10 armed men.

We could move fast. Hit HARD, AND retreat fast. OUR Mission Always to locate the Enemy, Estimate their Fire Power and hold them till the foot Soldier INFANTRY could eliminate the problem. As I stated in the letter, which wrote while I was still in GERMANY. After 30 days & nights on a HIBERT SNIP I ARRIVED HOME on my wife's BIRTHDAY. I do not have the LOGER, but I CAPTURED One Hitler Civilian