

Memoirs of WWII –97th Infantry Division

It has been the experience of all veterans that time brings a blurring of detail, that memories are less exact after events, and that first hand recordings in print on the spot serve best to put down in black and white what happened. ~ Unknown writer.

REFLECTIONS ON THE 97TH INFANTRY DIVISION

On his 90th Birthday

Brigadier General Sherman V Hasbrouck

As Told to J.W. Redding

18th June 1988

PREFACE

The 97th Infantry Division was originally organized in September, 1918, and saw action in France during WWI. It was demobilized 20 November of the same year and reconstituted as an organized reserve unit.

The Division was reactivated 25 February 1943 at Camp Swift, Texas, under the command of Maj Gen Louis A Craig. Brig Gen Julien Barnes was the Division Artillery Commander. The 303d Inf Regt and the 303d FA Bn were the only units with the reactivated division that can boast of battle streamers from World War I.

The Division went through basic and unit training at Camp Swift. It took their physical fitness test there. The artillery battalions took their AGF firing test at Camp Bowie, Texas.

During the latter part of October, 1943, the Division departed Camp Swift for the Louisiana Maneuver area, spending the next 3 months in the field on division exercises.

Following the Louisiana Maneuver period, the Division was transferred to Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri where it continued with unit training. While at Ft Leonard Wood, Gen Craig was assigned to the command of the 23d Corps which he relinquished to take command of a combat division in Europe. Gen Barnes was transferred to another unit. They were replaced by Gen Milton B Halsey and Gen S V Hasbrouck respectively. Late June, early July, the Division was transferred to Camp San Luis Obispo, California, for amphibious training.

Late that fall, the Division prepared for assignment to the Pacific Ocean Area where it was to participate in the invasion of the Philippines at Leyte. Instead, it was assigned to the European Theater in February, 1945 to reconstitute the theater reserve which had been committed in the Battle of the Bulge.

It is essentially here we pick up Gen Hasbrouck's "Reflections"

During this brief combat history, the 97th captured 48,796 prisoners and occupied more than 2000 square miles. Among cities captured by the division were Dusseldorf, one of the great industrial centers in the Ruhr-Rhine Valley; Solingen, one of the world's largest cutlery centers; Siegburg, home of the Glockner Machine Works; (Correction: Troisdorf Kloeckner-Mannstedt Works) Leverkusen, location of the I.G. Farben Industry, one of the world's largest chemical works; Cheb (Eger), the first major Czechoslovakian city liberated by American Forces.

Although what follows includes accounts of fighting, it is not a military report. The "After Action Reports" were filed some 40 years ago. Rather it is the reminiscences, reflections and perhaps a bit of philosophy of a professional, career officer – including contacts and conversations with civilians and soldiers of both armies – on his participation in the final stages of the defeat of Hitler's Third Reich. He has called it "A worm's eye view of war."

In addition to the General's remarks, credits are given to The Army Almanac, First Edition, 1950, The Story of the 97th Infantry Division prepared by Special Services Section of the 97th Division and the S-3 Journal of the 303d FA Bn.

J.W. Redding

Col FA Ret

18 June 1988

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Brigadier General Sherman V Hasbrouck

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I suspect that no division ever entered combat better trained than the 97th. In addition to the conventional training, we had had amphibious training on the West Coast; climbing down rope ladders with full packs into bobbing landing craft, landing on a "hostile shore", etc.

The Division Commander and his Assistant were seasoned Infantry Officers as were the Infantry Regimental Commanders. As for the Artillery Commander, when I graduated from West Point I was assigned to the Infantry School, served with two Infantry Regiments and, as an Aide to the CG, on the staff of the 3d Brigade, I was assigned to the Field Artillery.

I had served with two artillery regiments, on the staff of the First FA Brigade, and served two tours as a gunnery instructor at the Artillery School. If I was not competent by that time, it was too late.

Words cannot express my delight on assignments to this fine Division. I had served the first two years of the War in the G-1 Division of WDGS where, daily, I was assigning my contemporaries, and the young artillery officers I had trained, to combat while I sat in Washington, frustrated. At last, I was going to see some combat myself.

I joined the 97th Infantry Division from the 23d Corps where I was deputy Artillery Commander and Test Officer. We had a half-dozen test teams on the road. I don't remember how many artillery battalions were scattered over the South West but every day I visited one of the battalions undergoing the AGF Tests. With this experience, I might claim to be a bit of an authority on the test results. I can state unequivocally that the 97th Div Arty was the best. I can say this without being self-serving since I had no part in its training. When I took command, the Artillery had had its training and taken its test.

When I received my orders, the 97th was packing up at Ft Leonard Wood to move to the West coast. I could join them either place. As there didn't seem to be any point in my packing up twice, I went on out to San Luis Obispo to join the Division. They were unpacking when I arrived.

The Division Artillery personnel were great. My Executive Officer was then Colonel Benny Heiser (now General Heiser), a sound and experienced artilleryman. My S-3, or Operations Officer, was Lt Col Ted Sawyer. He was a young and devoted officer. These were the only two Regular Army officers on my staff. The rest were all Reserve officers and a credit to the ROTC System.

Sawyer's assistant was Maj Taylor, a Texas A&M graduate – an excellent staff officer.

The communications people were outstanding. My memory is that the basic load of telephone wire for the Div Arty HQ was 17 miles. However, the Division Commander insisted on wire

communications and he had it. Sometimes we had out as much as 100 miles of wire – some of it German wire, wire fences – anything that would conduct electricity. (Sometimes we had a bit of trouble with our own people shooting out insulators.)

All of the artillery battalion commanders were good. They were all different.

Lt Col Benny Fenton, CO of the 922d FA Bn, was a hail-fellow-well-met. He had been an All American Football star at the University of Florida as I recall.

Lt Col Gene Graham, CO of the 365th FA Bn. Was from Oklahoma. He was very aggressive, a fighter, always up front, needed a bit of restraint. One time when I visited him I said, “Gene, what in the Hell are you doing ahead of the Infantry lines?” His reply was “What the Hell are you doing here. Get back to your Headquarters before you get yourself killed. I’ll do all of the fighting around here.” As you can see, I had a real discipline in my command.

Lt Col Lawrence Keily was the CO of the 389th FA Bn, the medium battalion. He was studious, devoted but a bit tense. He needed a pat on the back now and then.

Lt Col J.W. Redding, CO of the 303, FA Bn was independent. His men came first. He got things done “with orders, without orders and sometimes in spite of orders.” He operated by direction – in other words, “this is what I want done, you figure out how to do it.” I didn’t worry about him. He didn’t need any help from any one.

As I have said, these were all university and ROTC graduates and a tribute to the system.

With staff and unit commanders such as these, I would be free to visit the infantry units while the artillery preparations were in progress to observe first hand their accuracy and effectiveness. Since I spoke German I would be able to interrogate some of the first prisoners to get from them how they felt about our fires.

I might mention at this time, that as a part of our procedure to inform our infantry when the preparations were completed, we adopted a policy of including white phosphorus in the last volley of artillery preparation. That was the signal to “Jump Off.”

I always maintained there was no reason why artillerymen should not keep themselves cleaned up. I wanted the field artillery to be the best looking outfit in the Division. One or two men could always get away from their guns to take a little nap or shave and clean themselves up a little bit. With the infantry, that was more of a problem. They were right up on the front all the time. I told everyone “I’m going to set the example for the artillery and anybody in this command that doesn’t look better than I is going to be in trouble.”

As I mentioned earlier, the Division was well trained and the artillery had completed all of its tests when I joined it. The first firing tests had been held when the Division was at Camp Swift. They had their second test on the West Coast. Again the Battalions did very well. I had nothing to do with their success as the Battalions took their tests shortly after I got there. I hardly knew the names of the battalion commanders.

During the training of the artillery, provisions were always made for a safety officer at the battery position to assure that the guns were laid within their safety limits. The safety officer had to move fast to make sure the guns were safe to fire without slowing down the operation of the firing battery.

At that time there were no regulations defining the duties of the executive officer – although he is in command of the guns at the firing position. However, it was generally understood that it was his responsibility that the data are properly set on the guns. It's the executive officer who must be concerned with the safety of his men and guns, not the safety officer.

Sometime later I was charged with re-writing the regulations and I eliminated the safety officer. You don't have any safety officers in battle and we're preparing for battle. I think my position was entirely sound. Not only that, the executive officer shares with the fire direction center at the battalion headquarters the responsibility for the accuracy of the supporting fires for the infantry. Firing errors tend to destroy the confidence of the infantry in the artillery.

To demonstrate confidence in the accuracy of the artillery was one of the reasons why I always went up to the infantry front lines. My experience in the infantry, taught me that it is a nice thing to see the Artillery Commander up forward.

Even now I hear from infantry privates. One told his friends he had seen the artillery general more than once up on the front lines. And his friend said, "Hell, I didn't know that you were that far back."

While we were in California, under a War Department directive, the Artillery had exchanged all of its larger men over 5' and 165 pounds, as I recall – with smaller men from the infantry rifle companies. The reason apparently was that the larger men in the rifle companies would have a greater psychological effect on the enemy.

This meant we had to retake the physical fitness tests. Part of the test was a five mile forced march which had to be done in one hour. During one of these tests, I remember very well one of the battalion commanders going around with his battalion. The Catholic Chaplain was going along with him. They made a point of coming back through the infantry area. They were going to march in step, quick time. In other words, they wanted everyone to see that in spite of the exchange, just being in the artillery made you better (pure conceit). I clearly remember the men coming in at almost a slow trot. As a matter of fact, the artillery did very well. The Battalions came in 1st, 2nd and 4th.

THE BATTLE OF THE RUHR POCKET

The Division landed at Le Havre, France, 2 March 1945, and moved to Camp Lucky Strike. (It is interesting to note that at time cities in the US from New York to Kansas City were “blacked out” but Le Havre was lighted up like a church.) Here we drew our general purpose vehicles and equipment to move into the combat zone.

We were surprised by the unfriendly and somewhat hostile attitude of the French. When we allowed our men to go out on pass, they had to go in pairs for mutual-protection. We the Allies – were blamed for all of the destruction incidental to retaking the country from the Germans.

On 28 March, the Division crossed the German border west of Aachen and took up a defensive position along the west bank of the Rhine River opposite Dusseldorf. Here the 97th saw its first action.

The 389th FA Bn, Keily’s medium battalion, fired the first round against the enemy, demolishing an installation in the suburbs of Dusseldorf.

The 303d, Redding’s battalion, fired on an enemy gun emplacement across the Rhine in the Div Arty’s first combat mission.

Both the 922d and the 365 fired numerous missions across the Rhine, destroying road junctions and neutralizing enemy gun emplacements.

During the first week of April, the Division entered the battle of the Ruhr Pocket. The Division moved south, crossing the Rhine near Bonn to occupy positions along the southern bank of the Sieg River which runs at right angles to the Rhine. Siegburg was just across the river from our positions.

Siegburg had a monastery located on a high hill overlooking the city and, of course, our positions. Although it had a Red Cross on it, I am sure the Germans had a OP up there. There was no question in our minds that it was being used as a military installation in spite of the Red Cross. However, we didn’t fire on it because of the Red Cross, even though it put our position under observation.

As I recall, we were part of a three division corps, the 97th, 78th and the 13th Armored Divisions. The left flank of the 97th was on the Rhine and the 78th was on our right. The 13th Armored was behind us.

After three of four days, in a defensive position, we received orders to secure a bridgehead for the 13th Armored to cross the Sieg River.

The crossing of the Sieg was made against medium resistance. However, the clearing of Siegburg, fighting street-to-street and the buttoning up of the Glockner Works (Troisdorf Kloeckner-Mannstedt Works) at Troisdorf, (Correction: Troisdorf Kloeckner-Mannstedt Works) near Siegburg, was one of the toughest battles we had in closing the Ruhr Pocket. The infantry lost a lot of people at Troisdorf.

At this time, the Sieg River was not particularly wide but it had precipitous banks and it was quite swift and usually deep – four to five feet sometimes. I had gone up the autobahn but the bridge across the Sieg had been blown and a dozen or so of our trucks had been shot up there. The engineers were trying to make a crossing.

As the artillery preparation fires were over and the Germans were on the other bank firing at us. I saw we couldn't make a crossing there. So Niles Chubb, my Aide, and I went up the river five miles or so to a little town of Hennef. The bridge there had been blown but the ends were still on the abutments. The center was down in the water but the infantry could cross and had crossed – a great many of them.

I sent for the Division Engineer and told him to get that bridge in so we could get the guns across. He got out his engineer manual trying to figure out what he needed. So I said "Son, look over there, what do you see?" He said "it looks like a lumber yard." I said, "Does that suggest anything to you?" He replied "That's all private property." "Well," I said, "Send the bill to Hitler and get this bridge in." And so he did and we got across the river.

(Some years later, while stationed at Sandia Base, NM, I received a letter saying he was being reclassified and asking for my remarks. I could say only that I had this one contact. He seemed very young for the job – a 2nd Lt, Regular Army promoted to a temporary Lt Col – and needed guidance.)

There was a castle across the river. It was much like a great manor house, not a fighting castle. It had two beautiful towers at the ends and there was a terrace in front of it where Germans had been firing on us to keep us from working on the bridge. I called for fire from one of the battalions. The second volley bracketed one of the towers and the tower collapsed – the crystal chandeliers waving back and forth from the blast – plaster falling down. The two volleys killed about 20 Germans.

My Aide and I crossed over to the building. The occupants were a Doctor and his wife. They had gone into the cellar during the shelling. When they came out after the shelling, they said they didn't blame us for firing as they knew we had to. The lady told me the castle had been in her family for 500 years. As it had no military value whatever, they had pleaded with the German troops to leave. The place could not be defended and they were just going to die. But they insisted in staying there until we started firing. When Chubb and I arrived the Germans already had some people burying the dead. One was a young man in a fatigue uniform. I asked him why he wasn't on active duty. He raised his jacket and you could see the scars from machine-gun bullets.

An interesting thing was this doctor said he had treated Franklin D Roosevelt when he was at Marienbad, which the 303d FA Bn occupied sometime later. (A small world)

I returned to Siegburg and went up on the hill where the monastery with the Red Cross was located, to see how the crossing was progressing there.

I looked back and I could see the 13th Armored all over the country on the other side of the river. The men were out of their vehicles – vehicles blocking the road – the men smoking. I said “Oh My God!! Oh My God!!” If the Germans got one plane in the air they could ruin that whole Division.

About that time I got a message from the Bn CO of the 303d that the Commander of the armored division, Gen Wogan, had been shot and evacuated.

His two combat command commanders had been transferred the day before and there was no command at all. I debated for a few minutes whether or not I should go back to get that Division back on the road and get it going but I knew if Gen Ridgway, the Corps Commander, had not received the word himself, he certainly would have intercepted Redding’s message and would know what was going on. Sure enough, Ridgway sent Matty Mathewson – he had just been made brigadier that day – to take command.

As we moved up, I could see why there had been no attack by German aircraft. Just across the river, there was a great open field. It must have had about 100 German aircraft, all blasted down the middle. Apparently they had no gasoline so they had put explosives in the cockpits and blown them up.

After securing the bridgehead across the Sieg, the Division pushed on toward Dusseldorf. From then on up to Dusseldorf it was more a practice march. However, the Division did encounter heavy resistance as we approached Dusseldorf. Densely wooded areas made the terrain difficult. The Division captured Soligen a week or so after Siegburg. Dusseldorf fell on the next day and the Ruhr Pocket was eliminated.

As I mentioned, after the schedule of fires were prepared, I had a practice of going forward to the infantry positions to check on the artillery fire. On one of these occasions, my Aide and I had just crossed a bridge when up went the bridge. I could see where the wires went up the embankment into an inn near the bank. I went over and got hold of the owner, or the inn-keeper, and said “You are a civilian and you are taking military action.” I said to Niles, “We have a rope in the car, haven’t we?” The Inn-keeper said there were soldiers here. “They did it.” I said “Nonsense, there are no soldiers here. You detonated that and damn near got us killed. Send for the Burgomeister and the city engineer.” That he did.

That was early morning – about 9 o’clock. “By one o’clock I want this bridge repaired. If it isn’t, there will be some hanging and burning. “I gave every indication they were going to hang. Chubb had the rope in his hand. I am sure they thought I really was going to hang them and burn the town.

At one o’clock the burgomeister and the engineer came back. They said they came to be hanged. Just like that (German discipline). They said “We can not possibly get the bridge in by one o’clock. It will take us to five o’clock this afternoon.” I could hardly keep from laughing. I knew they couldn’t get that bridge in by one o’clock.

But they had done a most ingenious job. They had put down two I-beams on the bottom of the river and the put cross-bucks over the I-beams ready to put the planking in. But they didn't have time to get the planking in before one o'clock.

Near Dusseldorf, the Division preempted the artillery's trucks to haul PW's. About that time, Redding, CO of the 303d, got a call from Col Forse's Headquarters. Col Forse, Co of the 303d Inf Regt, had just received a delegation from the city of Dusseldorf who told him that the German forces in the city wanted to surrender but we would have to make a show of force. Since the city was at the maximum range of Redding's guns, this meant he had to displace the battalion. He managed to do this with his kitchen trucks, the maintenance section trucks and ¾ ton trucks.

After we captured Dusseldorf, it appeared we were going to setup military government there. As a matter of fact I had already moved into a place –a beautiful manor house. The owner of it came in to make up the beds himself because he was scared the Russians were coming in. Everybody was scared to death of the Russians. He had hoped we were going to be in permanent garrison there.

However, the "appearance" was no prediction. We were alerted for a move to Czechoslovakia. I was detailed to check the Division out.

After the last unit had cleared the check point, we – my two aides, my driver and I – started East. It was late afternoon, bitter weather – snow and sleet. We had the top down and the windshield down and covered in case of air attack. We saw no enemy air. It was soon dark so we stopped in a pine forest to camp for the night. My aides always had a few cans of "C" rations under the seat of the jeep so we fared not too badly for supper. We took turns, one sitting up on guard while the other three slept. A half dozen bayoneted corpses nearby indicated that others had not taken that precaution. At dawn, we moved on to Waldsassen where I found Heiser and the Staff had Headquarters all setup and all battalions in position.

At this point we were re-enforced by a battery of anti-air-craft commanded by a captain who was an old friend. He had been the Sergeant Secretary of the Gunnery Department at Ft Sill when I was an instructor.

WALDSASSEN

After the battle of the Ruhr Pocket, the Division was ordered initially to the Ninth Army Sector along the Czechoslovakia Border. Our assignment was to protect the right flank of the Ninth Army's drive toward Berlin. Later we were transferred to the Third Army to protect Patton's left Flank on his drive toward Hitler's Redoubt in Southern Germany. After this move, the major offensive action of the Division was the seizure of Cheb (Eger). Cheb was an important administrative center and site of a large airport.

The only real fight we had in this offensive action was at Waldsassen just a few kilometers from Cheb but on the German side of the border.

Once the prepared fires had been laid out for the attack, there was nothing for me to do at my headquarters. As I mentioned, it was my custom to move up to the infantry front lines to

observe the effectiveness of the artillery fire and question any of the prisoners I could get hold of. Things were so fluid at that time I could move all around the country with no more than an aide and a driver – I thought.

On this trip, because of the blocking of the main road leading to the line of departure, I had to use forest trails, which were also road-blocked in some places. Eventually I reached an unguarded road block in the woods. Since it was about time for the artillery preparations to start, I left my jeep and driver at the road block and with my aide set out on foot for the high ground where I could observe the artillery fire.

For about 5 minutes at the conclusion of the preparations, there wasn't any sound except the crackling of flames from the town which was all on fire. It was a most eerie experience.

Suddenly we became the recipients of small arm fire from the German side of the road block. The country was swarming with Germans. Here we are, just the two of us. After taking a few pot shots they put down a mortar on us. This got pretty uncomfortable, so we returned to my jeep which we had left behind the hill. It and Brooke, the driver, had disappeared.

There was nothing for us to do except to try to get back to Col Long's – the Infantry Regimental CO – headquarters. We were armed with nothing but our pistols and three clips of ammunition and the Germans were making it pretty damned hot for us.

We'd run a hundred yards or so and I'd flop down alongside of Chubb and he would run a hundred yards or so and flop down along side of me. I got along side of him one time and he said "General, I can't run any farther, you're going to have to go on by yourself." I said, "Get up you son-of-a-bitch or I'm going to shoot you with my own gun." He was so startled got up and ran and we made it to Long's Headquarters.

After we arrived at Long's CP, the first words Chubb said to me were, "General, you never talked to me like that before." I said, "Niles I couldn't love you anymore than if you were my own son. I was damned if I was going to let you be captured or killed. And by the way," I said "you knew I didn't have any more ammunition." So we both laughed about it.

I was very upset over the loss of my driver, and I wanted to find out what had happened to him. I borrowed a rifle squad and returned with them to the place where I had left Brooke and my jeep. It was pretty apparent the roadblock had been removed and the vehicle driven northward in the direction of the German positions.

I took the rifle squad on down to the village which we had shelled and entered it. We found Brooke's carbine but it was apparent that the jeep and Brooke had been captured and were beyond reach. Today this is only an incident, but it was real and earnest then. It was the joke of the infantry that I was the only general officer who had ever expended his twenty-one rounds of pistol ammunition at the enemy.

After the capture of Waldsassen and Cheb, I set up my own headquarters in the second story of a building in the town. Looking out of the window I saw a cortege of cars coming toward us. In

the lead was an ancient Mercedes all polished and shining. It drew up in front of my headquarters and out got a German Lt General with his aide.

This officer was the most immaculately dressed person you ever saw. His uniform and his aides were clean and pressed. Their boots literally glittered. I felt they must have saved one uniform in which to surrender.

He was pretty much at ease. He was a professional officer. He was licked and he knew it. He stood erect and was respectful but not at all subservient. His aide, a young major, stood just like a statue, stiff with his hands at his side looking right straight forward. I rang for Chubb who came in and I told him "Take this boy out and give him a hell of a good slug of whiskey." We got rid of the aide. I asked the general, "Why did you come to me to surrender?" He replied, "There are several reasons. In the first place you are the only General Officer who speaks German so I came in to surrender to you." (He spoke English quite well, not fluently but well enough.) He continued, "That's not the only reason. So far as you were able, you did not allow any abuse of my people and you didn't allow any wanton destruction and looting. I realize, of course, that soldiers will loot, both Germans and American's". He asked me if I had any trouble finding a place for my headquarters. I told him I didn't. He said "I moved out one hour ahead of you." He continued "You must realize I am fighting in my own country. I knew where you were every minute of the day."

After the most interesting conversation with him, I sent him to Division Headquarters and had him formally surrender there. His name, I believe was Wiessenberger.

He was a professional soldier but allowing him to sit down in my presence was strictly non-regulation. But how are you going to learn about your adversaries if you can't even talk to them?

FLOSSENBURG CONCENTRATION CAMP

Just south of Waldsassen the Germans had established a large concentration camp near the town of Flossenbürg. (Correction: Flossenbürg Bavaria) Although Flossenbürg and Dachau were probably about the same size, for some reason Dachau is the one that got all the publicity.

I think I was one of the first senior officers to visit the camp. I remember the heaps of dead. It was a horrible sight. The incinerators had not been able to handle all of the dead. Some of the incinerators had partially consumed bodies. I gave orders to the burgomeister to turn out every able-bodied man and boy to dig graves and bury the dead.

The burgomeister told me the camp was off limits and the people had no idea what was going on in there. That doesn't seem possible but it could be. They told me it had been a particularly cruel camp because it had been a maximum security prison and they made the inmates guards over the men and women confined there. This seems pretty doubtful. The guards were probably SS Guards and the inmates Jews or intellectuals.

END OF HOSTILITIES

The Division had advanced to Konstantinovy Lazne, Czechoslovakia, when it received the cease-fire order on 7 May. Actually, we received information that the Germans had a cease fire order as of 12:00 noon on 6 May 1945. That particular morning – a Sunday as I recall – the Germans had been holding their own as we were spread out pretty thin. But about noon time, the whole German resistance seemed to collapse. We began to get all kinds of strange and conflicting reports from the forward observers. They did not make any sense.

One of the forward observers of the 303d FA Bn sent a message that there was a German brigadier who wanted to surrender but he wouldn't surrender to the forward observer because he was only a 2nd Lieutenant. He wanted a field grade officer and would his Battalion Commander come up and accept his surrender? The German confirmed they had a cease fire order as of 12:00 noon.

His headquarters was in a monastery near Chodova Plana, Czechoslovakia, In addition to obtaining the surrender of about 250 to 300 Germans. We also discovered that the Berlin State Library had been moved to this monastery for protection. The Battalion Commander passed the news of the surrender to Division Headquarters about 5:00 that evening.

THE OCCUPATION

After the surrender of Dusseldorf it looked as though we were going to do some occupation duty. We tried to setup some kind of civil government but a major problem turned out to be the great fear the Germans had of the Russians, particularly some of the Russian slave labor that had been released as we closed the Ruhr Pocket.

That had been a continuing problem. Every time we went through an area, the local owners wanted us to stay behind and protect their property. As I mentioned, I was in a manor-house near Dusseldorf. The owner was so scared of the Russian's he came in and made up the beds for us. He was hoping to influence us to stay and protect his property but we didn't have people for this purpose. We still had a war to fight. They had to take care of themselves.

I think we, by we I mean the Allies, made some unnecessary mistakes in the occupation activities right after hostilities ceased. When we left the Dusseldorf area for Czechoslovakia, in some instances there was no one to replace us or take over the civil governments we had set up.

THE OCCUPATION OF JAPAN

In June the Division returned to the States for redeployment to the Pacific Ocean Area. We were given 30 days TDR&R to be followed with 45 days training in the Japanese type of warfare.

After the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and the Japanese indicated they were ready to surrender, the training was cancelled. We shipped out of Fort Lawton for the Philippine Islands where we arrived about the middle of September.

We went into Leyte but there was no one around that seemed to know what we were supposed to do. I didn't know where to locate the Division Commander, as he was on another

ship. In fact, I did not know where the rest of the ships were, but there I was, with a ship load of troops and no orders of any kind.

Since I was the senior officer I went ashore where I got a plane and flew up to Manila. I personally knew the Commanding General there as well as 11 of his staff. I said, "General, we're lying off Leyte and we have no orders." "Well," he said "you're going to Japan so get going for Yokohama."

I put out the word to everyone I could get ahold of to aim for Yokohama and that's what we did. I think we lay off Tacloban about a week. From Tacloban we joined a convoy carrying the 101st Airborne Division. They went on up to Hokaido. When we came into Yokohama Bay we thought again somebody would be there to tell us what to do. But there wasn't. We finally located someone in I Corps Headquarters who gave us disembarkation instructions.

Later we received orders that the artillery was to go up to northern Japan. The orders assigned me as Military Governor of the Nagano and Niigata Prefectures but I never knew where those orders came from.

Once we got settled in the Nagano Prefecture I had a command again. Until then I didn't know where my people were. I didn't have any orders about anything and such orders that I did get just seemed to materialize out of the thin air. There was a time when I didn't know who was sending me orders. We got a lot of our orders, it seemed, straight from MacArthur's Headquarters, not through the Division. As a matter of fact, a lot of our information came from the Japanese, through Japanese working in MacArthur's Headquarters. But we had the artillery together again.

I had two headquarters. My main headquarters was in Nagano and I had a sub-headquarters in Niigata. I always had a good headquarters building and good accommodations. It was really a shame in a way as the GI's would walk over the ceremonial mats in their boots. The building we were in was taken care of by the Japanese and we were comfortable.

When we got the battalions situated in their own towns, we put down perforated landing strips so I could fly around from one battalion to another.

After we were settled, I sent for two Japanese governors. I told them I had served in the Orient when I was here with the Japanese Earthquake Relief Commission. I understood quite well how things were run in the Orient. I understood the significance of "losing face". I would never give any orders to subordinates. I would give orders only to them. Any time I didn't like them, they would be fired and I would get new governors. With that introduction things worked out well.

One of my assignments was to see that all the Japanese arms and all aircraft were destroyed. This was interesting as every airplane, no matter how small, had a bomb on it to dive bomb the landing craft and transports when we were to make our assault landing on the islands. I think we were appalled at the loss of life we would have incurred if we had had to make such a landing. I do not think those who criticize our use of the atomic bomb realize that there was a net saving of lives, both US and Japanese.

Sometime after the first of the year – 1946 – preparations were started for the deactivation of the Division. We had the guns cleaned up and greased. The vehicles and the guns parked in a gun park. The battalions got to the point they didn't have any one to man the guns. The few men left in the batteries were organized into an infantry platoon. Finally that petered out.

I remember the sergeant instructor in the air section came to me to tell me he had been ordered back to the States under the point system. "I'm not going to leave you." He said, "I have to train some replacements and I'm going to stay with you until I have trained them." This went on for a couple of months and he came in again and said "The replacements have all gone home under the point system and I have been ordered to go back to the States but I'm not going to go. I'm going to stay with you until I have trained some more replacements." I said "Sergeant, You're going home. This place is falling apart."

The Division was finally deactivated 31 March 1946 in Japan.

I think it was a terrible mistake to have your command decimated by the point system. What they should have done was to have sent replacement troops for occupation duty, and then returned the Division, as a unit, to the States, have one last parade in San Francisco or some place on the West Coast and then send the men to their homes.

THE SUNSHINE HOURS

In Spite of the frustrations trying to fight a war, we had several interesting experiences and a lot of amusing things happened as we advanced. All of which helped make life tolerable and which Joe suggests we call them our "Sunshine Hours."

I think some people in the Division Artillery Headquarters really enjoyed the war. Two were Jack Kelly and Todd Leavitt. Jack was the Headquarters Medical Officer and Todd was the Dental Officer.

Every time we displaced you'd see their ambulance on the road with a rabbit head sticking out on one side and a goose head sticking out the other side with one of those red down comforters flopping in the air. When we'd get to the forward area where they were going to setup they would throw the people out of a house and start to cook. They just "liberated" enough chickens, rabbits, ducks and geese to eat.

And I suspect they were very adept at "liberating" such essentials as wine and liquor without complete inquiry as to the legitimate owners.

There was, of course, fraternizing between the men and the German girls. After all, there were lots of German girls and most of the German boys had been off at war a long time. I had two men of HQ Battery killed in such an enterprise – they hopped a jeep in the motor park, ran past the guard and into a German mine field – with Disastrous results.

Our Div Arty radios were splendid and needed almost no service so the two repairmen had little to do. Without my knowledge, they "liberated" a German truck. (It was, I think the German version of the 2 ½ ton Chevrolet.) They widened the body on it and built me a motorized

headquarters. They put a bunk in the truck. Under the bunk they built in drawers. On one side, at the foot of the bunk, they had a clothes locker. On the other side they had built a desk. They had the desk wired up so I could just punch a button and talk to all battalions at once. They mounted a tank on the top of the cab to store water. It was really lush – a bunk, drawers underneath the bunk, clothes closet, desk and running water.

I never slept in any of the German houses after they made this because it was so much more comfortable. The Army should have such a vehicle for senior commanders.

After my aide and I crossed the Sieg we went to Neunkirchen. Going up along the river we found a German fishing. I asked him – in German – if there were any German troops around. He wasn't paying any attention to the war and he wasn't interested in anything I had to say to him. He was just fishing. Finally he told me there weren't any Germans around.

A little farther along we came to a railroad overpass where we heard a lot of voices. Niles and I got up on the railroad embankment and looked over. Keep in mind there was just the three of us – my aide, my driver and myself. What we saw was a bunch of women and young boys tearing down a road block. They were just having a great time.

I went up to the group. In the group was a good looking young woman – I guess in her mid-twenties – who seemed to be in charge. I asked her, in German, if there were any German troops around and she replied they all had been captured, including her husband. Then I asked her "What makes you so happy?" "Well," she said, "My husband was home on furlough from the Russian front." It turned out he was due to go back the next day. They were having a big party for him when our troops surrounded and captured the whole bunch. She was happy because they had been captured and he would not have to return to the front. I suspect he was happy to.

These events simply showed how tied the Germans were of the war. They had been fighting about four or five years by now and I think they saw that it was hopeless to expect to win it. At least, being captured by the American's was much better than going back to the Russian front – or being captured by the Russians.

The fighting was about over at Waldsassen and Cheb. All that night we could hear the 16th Armored rumbling through the town. The artillery commander of the Division, Barksdale Hamlett, was an old friend of mine so I went up to Pilsen the next day to see him. The whole 16th Armored Artillery was parked in the city square. Hamlett had his headquarters on the second story with a balcony. He and I were standing on this balcony looking around at all of those guns parked in this great square. Suddenly they started firing. There was a roar of gun fire, the clank of empty shell casing going out on the pavement, the smoke in the air – the damndest business you ever heard, a sniper from one of the building's and they all opened fire.

They might never have fired a shot in anger but this was their battle. What they had done to the buildings around that square was something – Hamlett and I stood out on that balcony and alighted ourselves sick. I guess we were in more danger from that firing than I had ever been in combat. Some of the cannoneers had gotten out their carbines and were shooting all around.

Finally that fire died down a little bit when a civilian came roaring up to Hamlett and said, "Colonel, there is a terrible fight going on down around the water works." "Is it a fight something like this?" and he said "Yes Sir!" "It will be over shortly." Hamlett said. Pretty soon everything quieted down.

Nobody had really fired a shot at them but that was their battle. The war was over.

The moral of the troops in combat is of paramount importance. The unit commanders must continually keep in mind the need to satisfy the creature comforts of his men. Field artillery battalions are organized as separate battalions. That is, they have all the administrative services necessary to support themselves in the field, even though they may be a part of the organic artillery of a larger unit, such as an infantry division.

Our battalion commanders exploited this capability extensively in the interest of their men – PX articles, films, extra rations, wooden floors in their pup-tents when they could not get billets, etc. Sometimes they had to cover up their unit markings to do this but they got it done.

Although it was a great surprise to people like ourselves to fight in Europe where it is the custom in war to throw the people out of their houses and the troops move in, we quickly adapted ourselves to this custom.

I am sure some people think we had a very lush war. We were supposed to have quartermaster battalions that accompanied us where ever we went. You could get a bath whenever you wanted. It got your laundry back promptly. Maybe the people in the rear echelons could, but the people in the front lines had to take care themselves. – Take their baths when and where they could, - wash their own clothes, But I remember one battalion had purchased a washing machine and generator in the States before leaving for Europe to do their own laundry. Others soon "liberated" them.

The Germans had a wonderful little field generator. It had tubing all around it so if it fell out of a truck it just rolled over and didn't hurt anything. The battalions picked up several of them for their own use.

There were two sizes, 220 and 110 volt alternators. In general we had more use for the 220 volt machines since most of the distribution systems in Germany were 220 volts. When we went into a house we simply cut the lines leading into the building and attached the generator. This gave lights to the whole building and we didn't have to put up with the nuisance of our gasoline lanterns. This was particularly convenient for our fire direction centers which frequently had to work during the night. We simply "liberated" light bulbs as they were needed. When we found a 110 volt machine we abandoned our generators just used the German machines. The occupation of Japan had its frustrations but we had several interesting experiences during our stay there which compensated, in part, our frustrations.

I learned there was a group of Nuns in a little village up in the mountains belonging to a teaching order. There were about a dozen or 18 nuns who had had a school in Nagano. They had been interred all during the war. They had suffered from malnutrition, as the Japanese

people had also but they had not been molested, physically or sexually. The Japanese had respected them but they had been shoved around from pillar to post.

I sent Jack Kelly, the Medical Officer, and Leavitt, the Dental Officer, up to bring them out. They brought them down for a physical examination. I called up Glen Clovis Byers – a classmate of mine and Chief of Staff in Tokyo – and asked him to put them in St Luke's Hospital until they could find a Catholic hospital. St Luke's had not been severely bombed and was in operation.

He did that and when the nuns came back to Nagano I had the mayor give them a building where they started their classes again.

Of course, we had plenty of army rations and a lot of Red Cross supplies at my disposal. I asked the personnel of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery if they could go without butter for one day to five to these Nuns. As you know, soldiers are a push over for that kind of thing so we did so.

When I was about to leave Japan, the Mother Superior brought me the most beautiful Kimono I had ever seen. I said, "I can't accept this, it is just too beautiful and valuable." And she said, "I'll tell you how valuable it is. It cost one pound of butter. The butter you gave us." She said, "When I opened the school, one of our students was a girl in the Mitsui Family." (The Mitsui's are an important family in Japan.)

I told this girl I want to give the General a present when he leaves and she brought me this kimono. I asked the girl what she would like in payment for it. She told me "We have not had a bit of butter in our family since before the war. I would like one pound of butter." That's what your kimono cost." In a war everyone suffers.

On another occasion, Niles Chubb told me there were three Japanese gentlemen who wanted to talk with me. They wouldn't talk to anybody but me.

The spokesman, a particularly distinguished looking chap, said "General, we have brought you 50 Japanese swords." I said, "What do you expect me to do with 50 Japanese swords?" He said "Tomorrow you are going to get an order from MacArthur's Headquarters that every Japanese sword in Japan is to be destroyed but the 50 swords we are bringing you are National Treasures. We know if we give them to you, you will give them to the Metropolitan Museum or someplace where they will not be destroyed. It would be a tragedy if these swords are destroyed."

How they knew what orders I was going to get on the following day was never disclosed.

As you know, the Japanese sword is a sacred thing and I told them, "I didn't come to Japan to destroy National Treasures. I am sure that General MacArthur never personally gave any such order for I know him. Here's what I'm going to do. You get me the best sword expert in Japan." They said that would be easy as he's right here in town. "Then I want all swords turned into the police Headquarters where this expert will decide which are the good ones. The good ones will be returned to the families but I will want a receipt for them." (I threw the receipts away afterwards as I knew this would all peter out.) "And the poor ones will be left on a heap. I will

send those down to Tokyo so that any soldier who wants to take home a Japanese sword can do so.”

POSTSCRIPT

Gen Wogan had, indeed, been wounded by a sniper. The shot had gone through his left shoulder, just above the armpit, shattering the nerve center and causing his left arm to atrophy. The bullet had continued to slightly wound a staff officer with him. (Note: This situation at this time was extremely fluid. Though the Germans were retiring on Dusseldorf, The artillery was greatly bothered by snipers – many of them civilians – and by isolated groups of “diehards” who caused us occasional small fire fights.)

One of my aides, Niles Chubb, took a course in law at the University of Texas. He had a job with the law firm in Houston, contracted polio during the epidemic period and died after a long illness.

The other, “Sam” Arnold, had a degree in hotel management from Cornell. He settled on the West Coast and has done very well.

My jeep driver, Brooke, who was captured when we were near Waldsassen, was released at the end of hostilities and was back in the States before the rest of us. He went to work for a contractor but was killed in an accident on a construction job in Korea a few years ago.

Gen Benny Heiser, my Executive, is retired and living in Kentucky. Dr Jack Kelly is still practicing medicine in a hospital on Long Island, New York. Dr Todd Leavitt, the dentist, and Lt Col Ted Sawyer are dead. I have lost track of Maj Taylor, assistant S-3 and many others of Div Arty Headquarters. Col J.W. Redding, CO of the 303d FA Bn is the only battalion commander left. However, contact with many former members of the Division Artillery has been retained through several “alumni” groups that hold periodic reunions.

A few years after the war, I visited the manor house in Siegburg which we had taken under fire to make a river crossing. The doctor and his wife were deceased. The building had been completely repaired and was a home for war orphans.

I also visited the castle in Norf where I had been quartered while we were positioned on the west bank of the Rhine. At that time there was only the caretaker in residence but when I came back the Countess and her daughter had returned. The daughter appeared to be about forty year’s old, unmarried. The war had, I suppose, thinned out the eligible men. One son had lost a foot on the Russian front. For lack of proper medical care the wound had become infected and he had died. Another son survived and was in business in Dusseldorf.

The people of both France and Germany deserve some comment.

In France, I was treated with a rather frigid, distant indifference. I had the feeling that the German invaders were more welcome residents than I. In Germany, I was always treated with the utmost courtesy. They had been at war a long time and it was accepted as part of their economy. When a soldier was due for furlough, he came home, even though his unit was in combat. Otherwise he would lose his furlough. (And have a population decline!)

Since the war I have revisited Germany and Japan several times. I have always been received cordially, never any resentment toward the United States. It could be that our former enemies are now our best friends.

Their troops fought well but I think they had had enough. As we went north on the way to Dusseldorf, I encountered whole companies of prisoners marching to the rear under their own non-coms. They were singing and not at all unhappy. They joked with me in German as though I were one of them.

Twice I was stopped outside of towns by the burgomeister's who assured me their towns were open and would give no resistance to our troops. Generally, the severely wounded and injured troops – amputees, sightless, etc. – had been moved to these towns for treatment and care. Not a very encouraging sight for the general population.

I am sure the German High Command knew they were licked. They knew they could never break through to the channel but if they could give us a smashing blow at the "Bulge," perhaps they could work out a negotiated peace rather than "Unconditional Surrender." And perhaps they had something there. The American people had been assured the War was won. The OCS and the Replacement Depots were folding. A great German victory at this point – who can tell?

Actually many of the Germans told me they were so terrified of the prospect of a Russian occupation that they hoped we- the American's – would be the occupiers.

For a while a "Hate Your Enemy" program was being disseminated to our troops. I cannot speak for the infantry but I am sure there was no "hate your enemy" among the artillery. We are professionals, perhaps not all career professionals, but we were sent to Germany to do a job – to destroy the German armed forces and their military installations. This we did in a very businesslike way without rancor, animosity or malevolence.

The targets of the 97th Div Arty were military, they did not, per se, include the abuse of civilians or the wanton destruction of property. I think most of us realized we were going to have to live with these people and for a while take care of them after the war. (It was rumored that even Gen Patton recommended re-arming the Germans and moving against the Russians.)

Czechoslovakia is a beautiful country much like Connecticut or upstate New York. At the end of the war the people were jubilant at being "liberated". I had difficulty making my way to Pilsen to visit my friend, Gen Hamlett. The men were out in the streets brandishing bottles – the women with baskets of flowers. They were tearing down the German street signs and replacing them with Czech ones, making it a little difficult for a person with old German road and street maps to get around.

Although the combat history of the 97th was short, its military record was inspiring. It is with a very real sense of pride that I had the opportunity to serve as the Commanding General of the 97th Division Artillery.

A Final Note: The work on this essay has been done by Colonel Joseph W Redding. Joe was one of my top men during the War and we have remained fast friends ever since. This work has been a real test of Joe's friendship- it must be about the fourth "Final Draft" I have given him.

Thank you Joe!

13 Oct 1942 -Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

I got my greetings from the President. I was classified 1A and was inducted into the Army on October 13, 1942. My first camp was Ft. Lee, Virginia, for classification. Then I was sent to Camp Edison, New Jersey, for Signal Corps basic training. This camp was on the ocean above Atlantic City. On occasions, we had alerts to evacuate because of German submarines being sighted off the coast. After basic, we were sent to Ft. Monmouth, New Jersey, for specialized training. I attended the Wire Chief School for four months. We were given weekend passes, so I was able to come home quite a few times.

1942 – Nathan Galloway 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Location: 95th Infantry Division training at Camp Swift

A soldier from the Hospital Command – apart from permanent camp – not a member of the 95th Division – took a hospital vehicle into Bastrop – picked up a 8-10 year old girl – raped and killed her – hid her body in bushes in City Park. He was quickly apprehended and brought to trial on post.

Colonel Sam Williams, Commander of 378th Infantry Regiment, 95th Division, was appointed President of General Court Martial. Battalion of Infantry was placed around building where trial was held. Emotions in Bastrop were high. I believe the girl was the daughter of Mayor. After 2nd day of testimony Col. Williams remarked "hang the S.O.B. – dismissed the court. (No television or CNN in those days.) Williams carried the Moniker "Hanging Sam" the rest of his checkered career.

Several weeks later a scaffold was built Camp Ballis (25 miles west of San Antonio). The soldier was hung. I believe he was from Minnesota.

16 Feb 1943 – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

In 1942, after my 19th birthday in July, the Selective Service (or Draft Board) lowered the draft age to 19. At the time, I was working as a typist in the Typing Pool at Lybrand Ross Bros & Montgomery in Philadelphia, along with 6 or 7 other fellows. We were all in the same boat – just waiting for the Draft Notice.

Mine came early in 1943 as I recall – GREETINGS – FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. Initial processing was done at the Armory in Camden. This consisted of a physical exam, a short orientation, and swearing in on February 16. Then, after a 7 day furlough, my orders were to report to Riverside High School on February 23 for transport to Fort Dix for active duty. Mother, dad with Bev drove me to Riverside. I don't remember if any of my cousins were there. Also I don't remember if George came along too. Is he was home at the time, I'm sure he did, but he may have been in seminary in North Jersey. When I boarded the bus for Fort Dix, I entered a new world.

Until then, my world consist pretty much of home, family, school and church. Geographically the extent of my travels had been limited. We had gone as far north as the Delaware Water Gap and Hartford Connecticut in the early 30's. Dad's friend, Joe O'Neal had a cabin he wanted dad to do some work on. We used it as a family vacation. The farthest West was to Carlisle, Pennsylvania in 1936 for Aunt Mildred's and Uncle Howard's wedding. Also in the mid 30's we took a trip as a family vacation to Washington CD and again I went to Washington in 1940 for our senior class trip, the most southern point of my geographical world. TO the east, of course was the shore, usually Seaside Heights – sometimes as a family, but mostly with out cousins – the Bishops family.

23 Feb 1943 – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

After our buses arrived in Fort Dix, we spent the first few days adapting to Army life. We wrapped up all of the civilian clothes to be sent home. For the next three years, the Army would provide for all our needs – in fact we were not to wear civilian clothing – even when we were off base or on leave.

The first major shock of adjustment was in the mess hall, where the typical language was “where's the F---- Butter”, or “send down the G—D--- Bread.” This was from the “new soldiers” who may have been reflecting their own background or more likely their idea of how a ‘tough’ soldier spoke.

As we were growing up, swearing in our house just didn't happen. Occasionally Dad would come out with a “damn” on a special occasion. Mother's most drastic expletive was ‘ding-bust it’. The classic cuss words – SH—or G—D—were not acceptable, and we never heard the “f” word.

At home of course, I had my own room and shared the bathroom with the rest of the family, including Grandma Allen.

At Fort Dix, there were 20 or more men to a floor in the barracks, and we slept on cots – some double decker – lined up so that we slept head to foot – and all shared a common shower room and toilet facilities on each floor.

After a few days of processing, we were issues full uniforms. We stood in formation for the first time, trying to stand at attention – trying to act and look like soldiers. A tough old sergeant stood in front of - and his first words were “You think you're soldiers – you're SHIT” – and thus began our training.

25 Feb 1943 -Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G - Camp Swift, Texas

Division activated at Camp Swift, Texas under Major General Louis A. Craig. 600 Cadre & Officers were mostly from 95th Infantry Division.

1943 – Joseph F Koch 386th Infantry Regiment, Company I

One story recounts a time when the men in S/Sergeant Koch's mess hall complained about having only one slice of bread, so he announced, with a few extra expletives, "You want two slices of bread, you'll get two slices. I'm telling the cooks to cut each slice in half."

25 Feb 1943 -The 97th Infantry Division during World War II - Camp Swift, Texas

The 97th Infantry Division was reactivated on February 25, 1943 at Camp Swift, Texas. The Trident Division's first commander during World War II was Major General Louis A. Craig, brother of former Army Chief of Staff, General Malin Craig. The cadre consisted of over 600 trained officers and enlisted personnel, most of who came from the 95th Infantry Division stationed at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

26 Feb 1943 – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

On February 26 we boarded trains with Pullman cars for Texas. Most troop trains from Fort Dix went through Moorestown to get on to tracks in Philadelphia for points south and west. I remember looking out the window and seeing our house as the train went down Third Street on the way to Texas.

In Texas we went to Camp Swift – a newly built camp near a small town of Bastrop – about 30 miles from Austin. We became the 97th Infantry Division – made up primarily of 19 year olds. The 15,000 man division had 3 infantry regiments – a field artillery battalion, and various service companies – such as quartermaster, communications, medics, engineers, etc.

My assignment was a clerk in G-1 – the personnel section of division Headquarters. Our job was mostly paper work, processing orders, keeping track of personnel – those sick, on leave, AWOL, transferring, new arrivals etc.

We were in Camp Swift for basic training. We were issued steel helmets, rifles and field packs, which we had with us most of the time, although the rifles were shipped separately when we went to a new location.

1943 – Nathan Galloway 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Location: Camp Swift, Texas

Lt. Sam Martin Efforts to qualify Nathan K Hackenbaum on the M-1 Rifle. Martin wanted 100% for his platoon, the second platoon. He made it – I'm afraid some of his methods would not meet the Inspector General.

Forest A Harris, 2nd Cook, was observed exiting a lady's house in Bastrop in the wee hours. Neighbor reported incident to Mayor. Mayor contacted General Craig, but the time it got to me it was pretty hot. Cook Harris probably didn't know this – Citizens of Bastrop were wary of soldiers out after hours. Harris was hurrying back to camp to start breakfast. The matter was dropped; he got his pass privilege back. (Editorial Note: Forest Harris passed away 15 Dec 1946)

Henry Messmacher – cook – could not get along with anyone in the kitchen – constant quibbling. Henry was too skilled to transfer. Mess Sgt Dominic Bednarczyk solved the problem by letting Henry work at night alone. Pastry was Henry's specialty so we all profited by the change.

2nd Lt Donald D Clark, fresh from Officers Candidate's school was in superb physical condition. He took a delight in over exercising the men who were recovering from shots and home sickness. The men came on fast and soon surpassed Lt Clark in fitness. Lt Clark could not keep up and to save face asked for a transfer.

1943 – Gene Gray 386th Infantry Regiment, Company L

One day at Camp Swift Texas, one of the Officers brought a Private into the Mess Hall. He gave Staff Sgt Sturman a direct order; make this man clean the grease trap. The odor in the Trap was horrible, and the man ran outside to vomit. Sturman got him a bucket and a gas mask; he would clean and puke, clean and puke. By the time he finished the job, the bucket was almost full. The Private said I won't foul up, around that 2nd Louie again!

March

Mar 1943 -Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

In March 1943, I was transferred to Camp Crowder, Missouri, in a Signal Battalion. Camp Crowder is or was located in the southwestern part of the state near Neosho. While there I took some tests for the Army Specialized Training Program. Having passed the preliminary tests, the University of Nebraska at Lincoln was the next stop. By the way, the battalion at Camp Crowder was shipped to the China/Burma area. At Lincoln I was classified and sent to the Washington University at St. Louis for the basic engineering course. We had regular college courses plus military and physical training.

Mar 1943 -- 97th Infantry Division infantry regiment was reorganized to include a headquarters, a headquarters company, a service company, an anti-tank company, and three infantry battalions. Each of the three infantry battalions consisted of a headquarters and Headquarters Company, three rifle companies and a heavy weapons company. Within each regiment, the 1st Battalion consisted of Companies A through D, the 2d Battalion consisted of Companies E through H, and the 3d Battalion consisted of Companies I through M (there was no Company J).

1st Battalion consisted of Companies A through D

2d Battalion consisted of Companies E through H

3d Battalion consisted of Companies I through M

Veteran Lingo:

Dog Companies

How Companies
Fox Companies
George Companies
Item Companies
King Companies
Love Companies
Mike Companies
QM - Cargo Jockeys

5 Mar 1943 –H M Stewart 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company G

Location: Camp Swift, Texas –

Dear Mom and Dad,

Didn't have time to write. Just received candy and a letter went to ?? Today. Thank loads, was good. If you ever make brownies, I'd like a barrel of them, Love Junior!!

April

1 Apr 1943 -386th Infantry Regiment, Company M – Morning Reports – Camp Swift, Texas

The following were hospitalized Sheldon Tobolsky

1 Apr 1943 -386th Infantry Regiment, Company M – Morning Reports – Camp Swift, Texas

The following were hospitalized: Wilbur Sparger and Jack (John) Stacy

3 Apr 1943 - –386th Infantry Regiment, Company M – Morning Reports – Camp Swift, Texas

The following were hospitalized: Wesley Patterson

7 Apr 1943 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M – Morning Reports – Camp Swift, Texas

The following were hospitalized: Rowland Bergstrom; Promotion: SGT Frank Horvath redesignated T/4

8 Apr 1943 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M – Morning Reports – Camp Swift, Texas

PVT Cesare Rossetto AWOL to appear in the hands of the Military authorities Ft. Jay N.Y April 2, 1943; the following were hospitalized: PVT Nathan N Hackenbaum. 4 EM attached for ration only

10 Apr 1943 William W. Horne 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M ~ Camp Swift, Texas

Location: Camp Swift, Texas

Dear Dad: It sure was swell to hear from you, that's about the third letter you've written to me. When you're sitting around that office why don't you drop me a line and kind of sling the bull. It seems like everyone else gets more mail than I do so it would help a lot. This paper is crazy but some of the boys bought it in town for me and I had no choice. You talk about it being 35[degrees] there well it's a hell of a lot more than that here. When we come in off the field our fatigues are soaking wet and then this Texas sand gets all over us and in our rifles and heavy weapons. You probably had the same thing last war. Today there was a mess of colonels and a general or two at our Company area inspecting. Some of our non-coms are on guard so twice a lieutenant told me to take a detail in review before the officers. By the way I'm a Pfc. now—got my stripes about the fifth. The first time the officers grilled us on extended order drill, they had to take the boys through some combat formations. The second time we were grilled on articles of war and military courtesy. We flunked the courtesy part but got excellent in the others. I got all of mine right so it won't go against me. We're here to fight not be courteous to a bunch of officers. Did you ever get my suitcase? Have those camera films developed. I'm not sure I want the Air Force; they don't get to fight like the doughboys. There's something about pulling that old rifle down on the target and double timing down the field with every man a fighting unit that I like. We're getting hardened up so the training doesn't bother too much. There's one thing about this outfit, only the strong survive. We had one fellow go nut and during hikes some of the fellows fall out of the column and the sergeants just grab them by the neck and shove them back in place. Half the fight is having good feet and being slim so it doesn't worry me much. About not volunteering for anything, today the Lieutenant asked if anyone had ever had any carpenter work. One dope spouts off and he had to run all the way back to the supply room to get a hammer. After breaking that knife of mine, you'd better make a good one to replace it. Tell Mom that as soon as my clothes get out of the cleaners I'll have some snapshots taken. I believe we're going to be quarantined tomorrow so it may be some time. I've been over to the P.X. draining off the country's surplus beer and feel pretty fine; in fact I've felt pretty fine nearly every night for a week. This Army is more like home every day. Our company and another formed a tug of war team and won the 97 division championship. The officers all the way up to the General were pretty happy about the whole thing. This is a rough going bunch except a few of these dopes that still think they are civilians. They're the ones who go crazy. Sam's always yelling about getting some excitement so I wish he would get his company commander to transfer him down here. He sure wouldn't pull any lazy stuff. That would be pretty nice if Joyce came to stay with you. If she's like she was before she won't stay long but it's worth a try. At least it would leave someone to talk to if I ever get a leave. I better head back to barracks and try to get a little sleep. That bugle

seems to call just as a fellow closes his eyes. I traded my old blouse for a new one but we'll be in suntans in a couple weeks. You'd better write right back. ~ Bill

21 April 1943 – John R "Bussey" Adamson 386th Inf. Reg., Co M transferred to Rangers

Adamson Blown From Foxhole
Article from a New Jersey newspaper.
By Rifle Grenade

To be blown, bodily, out of a fox hole by a German rifle grenade and live to tell about it, was the unique experience of Private First Class John Russell Adamson, better known to his friends as "Bussey," who spent the weekend with his sister and brother-in-law Mr. and Mrs. Phillip Katrosh, of 471 Park Ave.

On Sept. 17, on the drive to Bologna, Adamson and a buddy were occupying a foxhole when a German rifle grenade made a square hit, tossing them both high in the air. With the help of other members of his company, he was taken behind the lines where it was found that he had received wounds in his side and left arm and that both legs had been broken. The flesh of one being badly torn as well.

Due to the skillful surgery and skin grafting operations performed by our capable physicians and the excellent care of our Army nurses, Adamson was able to return to this country three months later. On arrival, he was placed in the Stark General Hospital at Charleston, S.C., later being transferred to the hospital at Fort Dix.

Adamson paid high tribute to the courage and fighting ability of the German soldiers. In Italy, the mountains with their altitude of 2000 to 3000 feet, offered the greatest difficulty to our advance. In answer to questions, he said the Italian people showed much appreciation for their liberation from Nazi rule by many acts of kindness to our boys. They were also of inestimable value in assisting our forces safely through mine fields, which the Germans had planted, to hinder the Allied advance.

This was the second time Adamson was wounded. He was first wounded on July 11, during the battle of Pisa. Adamson entered the Army on April 21, 1943, at Clearfield, Pa., at the age of 19. He received his basic training at Camp Wheeler, Georgia, and was later transferred to Fort Meade, Md., where he served for ten months in the Military Police. In April, 1944, he was sent to Italy as an infantryman of the American Fifth Army. Prior to entering the armed forces, Adamson was employed by the Morrison Machine Company.

As mementos of his service to his country, Adamson has received the Purple Heart, the Oak Leaf Cluster, for his second wound in action, a campaign ribbon bearing two battle stars, the Infantry Combat Badge and the Good Conduct Medal. John is one of four brothers who are presently serving their country as members of its armed forces. The others are:

Corp. Robert L. Adamson, who took part in the Normandy beach-head invasion of France and is now in an artillery division of the American advance guard, which is spearheading the invasion into Germany.

Private First Class George Adamson, who is a machine gunner with an infantry division, which recently entered Luxembourg. George was employed by the Wright Aeronautical Corporation prior to his entry into the armed forces.

Private First Class James Adamson, husband of Octa Lewis Adamson of 471 Park Avenue, who took part in the invasion of Africa and Italy and was a member of the famed United States Rangers during the invasion of Salerno and Anzio. He was taken prisoner by the Germans on Feb. 26, 1944, but later escaped and was returned to this Country. He is now assigned to special duty at the Halloran General Hospital in New York.

May 1943 – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

Our training included marksmanship with the M-1 Rifle, physical training, marches – including 25 mile hikes with a full field pack (which weighed up to 40 pounds) plus the steel helmet and rifle, all kinds of lectures and often field exercises or bivouacs – some involving only day activities, sometimes up to a week in the field.

We would march to a location on the fort, dig foxholes, pitch tents, and conduct war games.

Another regular routine were the inspections – all kinds – some personal, some barracks, some equipment – many in formation – and the results would often determine how you would spend the weekends or the next few evenings.

I remember one experience which stands out. Every Friday we had a formal inspection, where we stood at attention and as the inspecting officer approached, we would bring the rifle to port arms, and open the bolt. At his option, he might decide to inspect the rifle. Ideally when he reached for the rifle, you were to let go, and he would, in effect, catch it in mid-air. If you anticipated his movement the rifle would drop – and there would be serious consequences. If you were slow, he would have the top of the rifle while you still were hanging on, and could be subject to serious injury. So it was sort of an unspoken game to see if you could get the officer to drop the rifle when he went to grab for it.

We had one fellow in our barracks that had one year of ROTC and therefore, had a considerable edge over the rest of us in the ways of the military – and he let everyone know.

12 May 1943 – 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M – Daily Sick Report– Camp Swift, Texas

The following were hospitalized on this date Joseph R Conley, Richard S Lawson, Peter F Foltyn, John J Mattoni, Captain Nathan L Galloway.

(Note: Statement by Richard Lawson – “I was carrying 80 lbs of camera equipment on my back running thru grassland when I tripped and fell and the equipment hit me in the small of my back. This caused serious back pain all the way up to my neck. I spent one week in the hospital when Feathers came in and told me to get better or get discharged. I went back and had light duty for two weeks and then the marching began.”)

Jul 1943 – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

Well into our training a newly commissioned 2nd Lt, just out of OCS was assigned to our company. The ROTC enlisted man and the new 2nd Lt didn't hit it off at all. The Lt almost dropped the rifle when he went to grab it from the ROTC guy. I think he thought we were new recruits, and he would try to show us up with his new found ways for inspection. The Lt found a small bit of dirt on the base plate, and 'gigged' the ROTC guy. He in turn swore that he would get his rifle so clean that there would not be one speck of dust to be called on. He spent hours scrubbing, polishing, and cleaning his rifle. We were all aware of what was going on, and while we were at attention during the next inspection, we kept our eyes and ears open to see what would happen when the Lt approached the ROTC guy.

When the Lt grabbed the rifle, he really gave it the once over, and couldn't find anything. Now on the m-1 rifle there is an elevation adjustment – which is a ratchet arrangement, consisting of 8 slots, or clicks – whereby you can adjust your aim to compensate for elevation. After not being able to find anything to call the ROTC guy on, the Lt raised the elevation adjustment all 8 clicks (something that is most rarely done in an inspection) – and finally found a spot of dirt in the corner of the last cog – and gigged the ROTC guy – and probably caused him to have some restrictions. I don't recall any repercussions from this incident, but I'm sure the Lt felt he had to justify his 'officership'. While we were in Camp Swift we had little opportunity to get off base. A couple of times we went into Bastrop – which wasn't much of a town – and on a couple of weekends- near the end of basic training, we got a chance to go into Austin.

Otherwise, we spent our off duty time on base – sometimes going to the PX – and getting a half pint of ice cream and eating the whole thing – or going to the base movies. Occasionally they would have a live show. We spent a lot of time in the barracks, writing letters, reading, talking – or studying materials, etc.

1943 – This is a popular souvineer from the Camp Swift Days



10 Aug 1943 – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

Near the end of our basic training, we had to run the obstacle course – part of which was crawling under barbed wire while they fired live machine gun rounds overhead.

Again near the end of our basic training, we would have dress parades. This was a very impressive sight. We would line up by regiment – all 15,000 in the division, and the adjutant would conduct the preliminaries. Then the order would come down “Pass in Review”. The band would start off the parade, and then each battalion would swing into place and march pass the reviewing stand. When it was done right, it is a very thrilling sight.

Presumably after 13 weeks of basic training, we could call ourselves soldiers – ready to take on the next phase of our training.

On August 10, I got leave after basic training. I got the train in Austin. The train was so crowded I had to sit on my suitcase in the aisle for 20 hours – all the way to St. Louis. I was able to get a seat on the train to Philadelphia, where mother and dad met me at North Philadelphia Station to take me home.

August 29, 1943 - Between Nov. 1942 and Aug. 1945, Stanley W Safford wrote around 180 letters to his mother. These were found neatly preserved in the order they were received, in his old bedroom at his parents'. They were wrapped with a green ribbon. Stanley was one of the first Army medics. He spent 19 months at Fort Sam Houston, TX training other medics. His group was attached to the Ninth Army in the summer of 1944. His letters give a front row seat to a medic's life during WWII.

<http://stanleysaffordwwiileters.blogspot.com/search/label/97th%20Division>

Cpl Stanley W Safford

5th Auxiliary Surgical Group

Dodd Field

Ft Sam Houston

Texas

August 29, 1943

My dear Mother:

Here is going to be another one of my Sunday letters but this one will not be as long as some. Since I have found out of my being able to come home I have been all excited and nervous forgetting all the things that I should remember for good letter writing. But I guess you know how that is.

Fort Sam is really alive this week and as they have not only been welcoming the President General of Brazil with a Battalion or two of the 97th Division also the band. But once again we are going to have a Division living here and that is also morning in this week-end, I can hear and see the long convoy going by on the highway outside now it has been going by far about 20 minutes already and is really loaded. This is the 88th which is one of the new Triangular Divisions which is really supposed to be something.

I received Muriel's letter yesterday and I liked the picture. Altho they are nice I did not like the one of her sitting on a stool. The others are very good of her although.

I am planning on going up to the Post Chapel this afternoon and hear a soloist with the accompaniment of an organ which should be very good also I have never been in the main chapel so I should like it very much. I am going with the clerk in the headquarters office.

I finally finished reading "The Sun is My Undoing" and am very glad, but it will be some time before I start another book since it takes so much time. I will send home all the Reader's Digests that I have finished and after you have finished them you may keep them for me as more or less a library for me.

Back again I am from town and the finish of it was that after we were practically all through with the shopping of shall I say afternoon we went in for a malted milk and when we went in it it was bright and clear outside but when we came out we were quite surprised to find that it was pouring down a very wet rain and people were running for cover everywhere, but even tho it was raining it was still sultry and sticky and the windows of the bus could not be closed or we would have suffocated.

Quite a place here we have!

Well, anyway, we managed to get home here before the rain reached here and got everything all wet. But anyway, the air is clear and fresh again after so long a time of it being so dry. We were out the other day for a hike and the trees and shrubbery were all covered with dust.

Well the evening is growing on into night and I shall have to begin thinking of going to bed and get a good night's sleep as I can well use it since tomorrow is Monday and the beginning of a new week in which I must get a lot done or I shall be way behind upon my return here for I doubt if the clerk will be able to grasp the job too well as he is rather rattle brained at times and I really don't blame him any for there is really nothing here for him in the way of rating of any kind. Well, anyway I am not going to worry myself any about it while I am away.

I will keep you posted from day to day as to my readiness of starting and also of my leaving date. You go ahead and make any plans that you have thought of making for yourself and keep them. Well, good night for now and I will write more later.

Lots of love, from your son

Stanley

Sep 1943 – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

In September when we were out on bivouac another fellow and I dug a nice foxhole, but the dirt around the top was too obvious, so we had to get some form of camouflage. I found some nice green branches, which obscured the fox hold. I found out later, however that I had used poison oak – when my arms started to swell up to twice their regular size. I ended up in the base hospital for about three weeks – spending most of the days soaking in the bathtub. Eventually the swelling went down and I returned to my unit. (as a side note – that was the only time that I had been admitted to a hospital until 1985 when I had prostate surgery).

24 Sep 1943 – 386th Infantry Regiment – Company M Morning Reports.

Cpl. Edward Verdonck, Pfc Jack Clurry, Pfc George Milliken, and Pvt. Sheldon Tobolsky are transferred out of the 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M to 8th Infantry Div and went directly from Camp Swift, Texas to France. Lt. Order No. 0032. Sheldon Tobolsky is WIA on Approx 13 Aug 1944 France

For more information:

http://www.fatherswar.com/8thinfdiv/WW2/ww2_121stinf/121st_inf_main%20page.html

18 Oct 1943 – 28 Jan 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G - Maneuver Area in Louisiana

Location: Maneuver Area in Louisiana
Louisiana Maneuvers

18 Oct 1943 – 28 Jan 1944 - The 97th Infantry Division during World War II

After completing the basic training at Camp Swift, the Division participated in the Louisiana Maneuvers during the fall and winter of 1943-1944. The grueling training in the bayous, swamplands, and burned-out stump forests of Louisiana increased the stamina of the soldiers and strengthened their military skills. The weather that winter was terrible. The sleet, rain, and snow turned dirt roads into quagmires. The Christmas services under leaden December skies were long remembered by the soldiers of the Division. The Louisiana Maneuver area served as a proving ground. During those four months, the men of the Division learned to sleep on the ground, live in wet clothes, and value comradeship, but above all, they became tough and proficient soldiers.

25 Oct 1943 – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C) Maneuver Area in Louisiana – Shreveport, LA

In October we were scheduled for “d” (or Division) exercises. This would give the commanders a chance to see how effective the basic training had been, and to coordinate training on a divisional basis. They moved us by truck to the middle of Louisiana near Shreveport – and for the next four weeks, we continued training.

Our duties in headquarters were the same, only instead of working from desk, file cabinets and normal office equipment, we operated from tents, on portable tables – everything had to be movable.

Normally after “D” exercises the Division would be returned to a camp for critique, appraisal, evaluations, and retraining where necessary. After four or five week’s assessment, the troops would then be joined by other divisions and units for 2 months or so of Maneuvers.

In our case, however, they decided to go right from the “D” exercises to Maneuvers – all to be conducted in the middle of Louisiana. This meant we spent about 3 months living out of tents – in the field – without benefit of the respite between exercises.

This all happened between October 25, 1943 and January 23, 1944 – which meant we spent much of our time there during the winter months. The weather was miserable much

of our time there during the winter months. The weather was miserable most of the time. On more than one occasion, we would have ice storms, and the rain would freeze on top of our pup tents, and the condensation would drip from the inside. Also we were often camped in pine forests, and we would lie in our tents at night, and hear the branches break off the trees when they became covered with ice – and we hoped that when they fell, they would not hit our tents. As I recall, we had some close calls, but no serious injuries from falling ice-covered limbs.

Very often, also, it was difficult to stay dry – with the constant rain and/or high humidity, limited wardrobes and drying space, it was a real problem keeping warm and dry.

Several of us found on more than one occasion, that ice had formed on our wet socks we were wearing. While it was not as severe as frost-bit, my toes are still sensitive to the cold (luckily here in Arizona that is not a problem)

While most of the time we were camped in the woods (presumable to obscure our positions). There were clearings nearby, which had a lot of dead tree stumps – some large – some small. When we had a chance, we would start one or more of them burning – by getting the sap to burn. This would give off a nice aroma, and usually a dark red glow which might last two or three days. It was also a good way to get a little warmth.

Once during our stay in Louisiana, we got leave to go into Shreveport – the first civilized area we had seen since we left Texas. We found a hotel, and were able to get hot showers – and unbelievable luxury. Then we went to the hotel dining room – I remember I had a plank steak – the first one I had ever seen. There it was – a beautiful steak on a round board, surrounded like a picture frame with mashed potatoes. It was really great – possibly made more so because of the contrast to the way we had been living in the field.

1943 – William C Martin JR 389th FA Bn

Early in 1943 he tried enlisting in the Marines and the Navy, but for both the quotas were full. The army had no quotas and in the late winter of 1943 he was inducted into the U.S. Army at Ft. Benjamin Harrison near Indianapolis. Two weeks later he was sent to Camp Swift near Austin, Texas for basic training. He was assigned to the 389th Field Artillery Battalion in the 97th Infantry Division. After basic training his unit moved on to field maneuvers in "the piney woods and swamps of Louisiana." Shortly thereafter he was transferred to the Army Specialists Training Program for engineering training at Louisiana State University and then to the College of Mines and Metallurgy (now UTEP) in El Paso, Texas. By the summer of 1944 the army decided it wouldn't continue the ASTP program and Bill rejoined his old unit in Ft. Leonard Wood in Missouri. Bill signed up to become a paratrooper, but was picked to go to aerial defense machine gun school in South Carolina. After returning to Missouri the army gave Bill his first taste of teaching. "So the army people assigned me to the instructor's hand to hand combat school...After training, my assignment was to instruct our unit, a class of about 175 — guys all bigger than me — to the finer points of hand to hand combat, including knife fighting. I guess I had learned the techniques sufficiently, because I had to show a lot of big guys that a little fellow like me could defend himself." Anyone who knew Bill would find this unimaginable.

14 Dec 1943 Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Registered December 14, 1943.

23 Jan 1944 Sun - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Brigadier General Milton B. Halsey took over 97th Infantry

23 Jan 1944 Sun -The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

On January 23, 1944, Brigadier General Milton B Halsey assumed command of the 97th Infantry Division. He became the only general to command the Trident Division in combat. After graduating from the United States Military Academy at West Point in April 1917, he served with troops on the Mexican border and saw service overseas during World War I. Some of General Halsey's important prewar assignments included service on the War Department General Staff, Assistant Chief of Staff in charge of Supply and Personnel for the 8th Corps area, and Chief of Staff of the 29th Infantry Division. General Halsey went on to lead the 97th Infantry Division through two phases of training, overseas movement, and two major campaigns in the European Theater of Operations. He was considered congenial but firm, and also dynamic, yet cool and levelheaded under pressure. He placed great emphasis on discipline, training and professionalism. Throughout the Division the "Old Man" became known for his genuine personal interest in the soldiers who wore the Trident patch.

Because of his exceptional military competence and concern for his men. General Halsey was seen by his troops as a leader who could accomplish a mission with minimum bloodshed. Because of his success during the training phases and combat operations in Europe, General Halsey has a unique place in the history of the 97th Infantry Division.

31 Jan 1944 – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

Maneuver Area in Louisiana – Shreveport, LA to Fort Leonard Wood, MO

After we finished the “D” (Divisional) exercises and maneuvers in Louisiana, we were assigned to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

Somewhere along the line I was promoted to Sergeant Technical Third Grade. This is equivalent to what used to be a 3 stripe sergeant – only our rank emblem had a T under the chevrons – indication a technical specialty – mine as a stenographer.

31 Jan 1944 - Mon. – Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Location: Fort Leonardwood, Mark Twain National Forest, Missouri

February

1 Feb 1944 - -The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

In February 1944 the Division was moved to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri for additional training. While at Fort Leonard Wood, the Division was inspected by Under Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson, accompanied by Congressman Dewey M. Short of Missouri. Mr. Patterson and Congressman Short spent the day observing and participating in training and reviewing the 97th Infantry Division at its first formal review on the post.

1944 – Nathan Galloway 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

1944 Ice Storm – Even to this date - the worst ever recorded in Louisiana. I know that the men with only one blanket and canvass leggings suffered.

Picture: Icestorm 1944 (RBergstrom Collection)



16 Feb 1944 - Wed. –386th Infantry Regiment, Company M - Ft Leonard Wood, MO Special Orders

SGT Loy O Collins, 6796328, 386th infantry, enroot to Camp Pickett, VA to report to Co thereon for the purpose of obtaining custody of Private James W Johnson, 38233033 386th Infantry who is AWOL and returning him under guard to this station. SGT Collins will report to Division Provost Marshal prior to departure for instructions. TGT IFG QMC will furnish meals in accordance with AR 30-2215 to Sergeant Collins for the number of meals required to make the journey, including return travel and to prisoner, Private Johnson for return journey. Entire cost of Travel and subs will be charged to prisoner's pay.

21 Feb 1944 Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D Pre-induction Feb. 21, 1944.

March

He entered the US Army Air Corps on May 25, 1943.

Mar 1944 Art Guggemos 386th Infantry Regiment Transferred to ?

Nearing completion of basic training, Art Guggemos was tested and qualified for college academics and was assigned to Kansas State College in Manhattan KS.

“We were all given the rank of “cadet” and were considered officer candidates,” Art said. “The studies were hard, and 10 hours per day, with three additional supervised study hours at night. It was grueling and tedious, but the quarters were good, the food was good, and the alternative was the infantry, so it became tolerable.”

However, the school closed in March 1944, as the US was beginning to realize it needed every able-bodied man in its infantry for D-Day.

Art was transferred to Ft. Leonard Wood, MO and assigned to a rifle company in the 386th Regiment, 97th Division.

“The training was hard,” Art writes. “We were now preparing for battle, as a unit, and we all knew that in the days to come, we would be on our way.”

Art was able to go back home to say goodbye to his family late August 1944. When he returned, he was sent to Fort Dix, NJ where he prepared to cross the Atlantic to the British Isles.

From England he boarded a small troop ship in Southampton and set sail for France.

On October 5, 1944 Art arrived on the French coast.

A landing craft brought them to shore on Omaha Beach almost four months after the D-Day landings.

The first man to jump in the water sank under the weight of his equipment and drowned. Everyone else then threw their equipment in to the water before wading in.

“There was no action there, but I tell you, you sobered up in a hurry,” Art said. “These landing crafts were down in the water where they were shot down, and big criss-crosses of barbed wire. All of the wreckage is pushed to one side so we could get a ship through.”

“We went up this real steep cliff. When we got up to the top there was a cemetery with wooden crosses,” Art said. “Thousands and thousands of crosses. You are on foreign soil for the first time in your life and you are walking into that. It is very scary for a 20-year-old kid.” On October 15, 1944 Art was assigned to the 2nd Infantry Division, 23rd Regiment, Company B and 1st Platoon.

Mar 1944

Pictured: “Coco Cola purchased from the field PX during a non-tactical period. Dick Lawson also advised Left Fred Anderson, right side is Dick Lawson “This was at Ft Leonardwood, MO in March of 1944 during infield training now called maneuvers.”



1 Mar 1944 -386th Infantry Regiment – Company M Morning Reports

Sgt Leo Ostrum to furlough for 11 days. Pfc Norman W Szeluga hospitalized.

2 Mar 1944 -386th Infantry Regiment – Company M Morning Reports

Robert Goldman 2nd Lt attached, unassigned to Company Headquarters

3 Mar 1944 - – President Roosevelt announces that the Italian Fleet will be distributed among the United States, Great Britain, and Soviet Union.

Mar 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

First of 5,000 overseas replacements sent. Men from several ASTP & Ground force Air Corps Units received as replacements.

Mar 1944 - Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

After nine months, the A.S.T.P. was disbanded. This was March 1944, and the feeling was that with the invasion of Europe imminent, the need for replacements would be great. Some of the men were sent back to the units they came from, but most were sent to the 97th Infantry Division at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri. This camp was located near Rolla. At Ft. Wood, I was assigned to an artillery battalion as a technician in the fire control center. A month later I was transferred to a rifle company in the 386th Infantry of the 97th. This was quite a letdown, but my situation was not as bad as some of my fellow soldiers. Some had been Air Corps cadets almost ready for their wings when they were sent to the infantry.

5 Mar 1944 - – Source - Daily Bulletin #131 – 30 Jun 44

Pvt of the 997th Infantry Division at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri wrongfully took an army truck to Waynesville, MO. Pvt went AWOL from 07 Mar – 20 May 1944. Trial held 28 June 1944 and sentenced to Dishonorable Discharge from the service, forfeit all pay and allowances and confined to hard labor for 10 years.

5 Mar 1944 -386th Infantry Regiment – Company M Morning Reports

Sgt Eugene "Pop" Wesley Clark to Furlough for 15 days. Pfc Andrew Andolsek hospitalized.

6 Mar 1944 -386th Infantry Regiment – Company M Morning Reports

Remark of 24 Feb 1944 regarding 2nd Lt Locke amended to read transfer to Fort Benning, GA Officers Motor Course as per Headquarters Company effective 23 Feb 1944

7 Mar 1944 -386th Infantry Regiment – Company M Morning Reports

Eugene Hughes to Transfer to Headquarters Company as a driver. T-5 Norman Hoyle assigned transfer as for memorandum No. 5 Headquarters.

8 Mar 1944 -386th Infantry Regiment – Company M Morning Reports

Robert M Boyer and Eugene Wesley Clark appointed to SSgt as per Headquarters.

10 Mar 1944 – Replacements sent out

Arthur M Marquez 39857001 386th Inf Regt, Co M trns to 350th Infantry Regiment
He earned a Bronze Star Medal. For more information and morning reports click on this link:
<http://www.mtmetas.com/350th-InfantryRegiment/44-historicalnarratives/350th-4405-historicalnarratives-01.html>

Ralph J Grenier 31319397 386th Inf Regt, Co M Trns to Ft George G Meade, MD

Albert J. Stevens 35547767 386th Inf Regt, Co M Trns to 361st Infantry Regiment - KIA

James C JR Dooley 31299149 386th Inf Regt, Co M Trns to Ft George G Meade, MD

Wesley Hester Patterson 34723436 386th Inf Regt, Co M trns to 339th Infantry Regiment

Edward P Callahan 35697393 386th Inf Regt, Co M Trns to Ft George G Meade, MD

Bud C Sexton 35464445 386th Inf Regt, Co M trns to 133rd Infantry Regiment, 34th Infantry Division - KIA

James Edward Reding 34710293 386th Inf Regt, Co M Trns to Ft George G Meade, MD

11 Mar 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

800 of above arrived from ASTP Unit at Brooking, South Dakota

15 Mar 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Forced March in rain, double-time back to post theater for film on personal hygiene.

17 Mar 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Men from George (CO G) released for St. Patricks' dance, leaving rest of Company to clean barracks after two shots & Vaccination.



18 Mar 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Schooling of dismounted soldier

20 Mar 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Hike after breakfast; bayonet drill; extended order

23 Mar 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Cold ground "dry-firing" – Personal records: Fellow soldier born in Finland. He was in the Army when we declared war on Finland so was classified as Alien until taking out citizenship papers to prevent his being court-martialed.

25 Mar 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

After lunch (Saturday) those not on pass ordered out for “Voluntary” sports: “YOU, You, You, play baseball; You, You, You, play volleyball” etc. 2nd LT. Reardon tells us “Men, our regiment now leads in venereal disease.”

27 Mar 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Spent 4 hours learning to become “experts” on hand grenade course. Airmail postage went to 8 cents on the 25th of March 1944.

27 Mar 1944 Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Entered Army March 27, 1944.

28 Mar 1944 - Clifford William Aldrich 386th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Clifford was inducted into the United States Army at Fort Dix NJ on March 28, 1944, and was eventually sent to join 3rd Squad, First Platoon, Company I, 386th Infantry Regiment, 97th Infantry Division at Fort Leonard Wood, MO. Before going overseas Private First Class Aldrich was trained as a rifleman and to use the Browning automatic rifle, or BAR, the light machine gun used by the United States Army during World War II

30 Mar 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G Entered

discontinuance of Class B Allotments effective 31 Mar 1944

April

Apr 1944 – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C) Fort Leonard Wood, MO

In April 1944, I got the most devastating news I had ever received. They had orders to cut Divisional Headquarters staff to replenish the regiments.

My orders were to report to the 1st platoon, “C” Company of the 386th Infantry Regiment. This was a rifle company – the ones that take the brunt of attacks and assaults with the enemy. These units are literally the ‘front lines’. It would have been bad enough, I guess, if I had been assigned to a rifle company when we started basic training at Camp Swift. But being transferred from a clerical job in the relatively ‘prestigious setting’ and safety of Division Headquarters to a front line combat unit was demoralizing.

I wrote to mother and dad and probably reflected some of my feelings. I received a letter from dad – who very seldom wrote – mother was the one who did the correspondence – but I know that dad was aware of things. Dad wrote that I should remember that life is like an ocean – with waves – which have low points, which soon give way to high points, and even though at the moment we seemed to be in a real low point – this would pass and things would soon be looking up – just as the waves crest.

3 Apr 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Spent the day at the firing range

5 Apr 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Fired for record until 6:45 PM Company Artillery: 15 WACS and 15 cases of beer.

6 Apr 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Firing range: highest score ever fired – 206. (But not by me!!)

7 Apr 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Rumor: Division to be sent to California for Amphibious Training.

7 Apr 1944 - 12 Aug 1944 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

17 weeks basic training at Camp Blanding, Fla. from April 7, 1944 to Aug. 12, 1944.

10 Apr 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Infiltration course in huge rainstorm, crawling uphill from knee-high-filled trench, knowing that if mud gets in M1's, we must start the course over.

11 Apr 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Men from 386th leaving for overseas replacements. 20 men from George (CO G) sent to Burma (by 30 Jul 1944, 18 of these were KIA or WIA.)

12 Apr 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Marched 7 Miles to transition firing range and marched 7 miles back to camp in 1 ¼ hours at end of day.

13 Apr 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Marched 6 miles to Nazi Village of Deutschburg. After two hour wait for trucks, marched back to camp.

14 Apr 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Mile march to Anti-Aircraft range. Marched back for chow. Back 12 miles to combat range. After supper marched six miles to "run" Infiltration course for night run, before marching back to camp by 11PM. Improvement in V.D. Rate – 97th Division now has highest VD rate in 2nd Army.

**16 Apr 1944 – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)
Fort Leonard Wood, MO**

We continued our training. While I was still in C Company, we got word that we were to take part in an assault on the hill, while a visiting dignitary – under Secretary of War Patterson – observed.

The plan was for the company to go down a hill, cross a stream, and attack 'the enemy' who was on the hill opposite of us. The field artillery was supposed to lay down a moving

barrage of fire, which would 'move' up the hill 500 to 1000 yards ahead of our movement. We were stretched out in a parallel line – about 5 yards apart – they used to say in training – “Stay 5 yards apart, or a grenade will kill you all”. I heard the fellow on my right let out a yell (his name was Keating).

What happened was that either we advanced too fast, or the artillery barrage moved to slow, and a piece of shrapnel from a shell that landed nearby hit Keating's helmet – it made quite a dent, but other than scaring the SH__ out of him, he was unhurt. Adjustments were made, and we finished the exercises without further incidents. It was the first time (other than the machine guns on the obstacle course) that I had been exposed to live fire.

17 Apr 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Trucked to B.A.R. range. I am called to UPS & jeeped back to process records for additional overseas replacements.

18 Apr 1944 –Tues - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Some of 386th men: Alphonse J. LaBuz, Butcher Sexton, Dominick Million, Hyacinth Doolittle, Jesus Godsey, Alfred B. Nogo, Do Woo, John Googoo, Herman few.

21 Apr 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Processing records of another 150 enlisted men to leave 386th for overseas shipment next Monday.

27 Apr 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Inspection team at Division HQ 3 feet of water in St. Louis depot. ASTP men called in from bivouac to police swollen Mississippi in St. Louis and Oklahoma.

28 Apr, 1944 – Secretary of the Navy Knox dies in Washington, D.C.

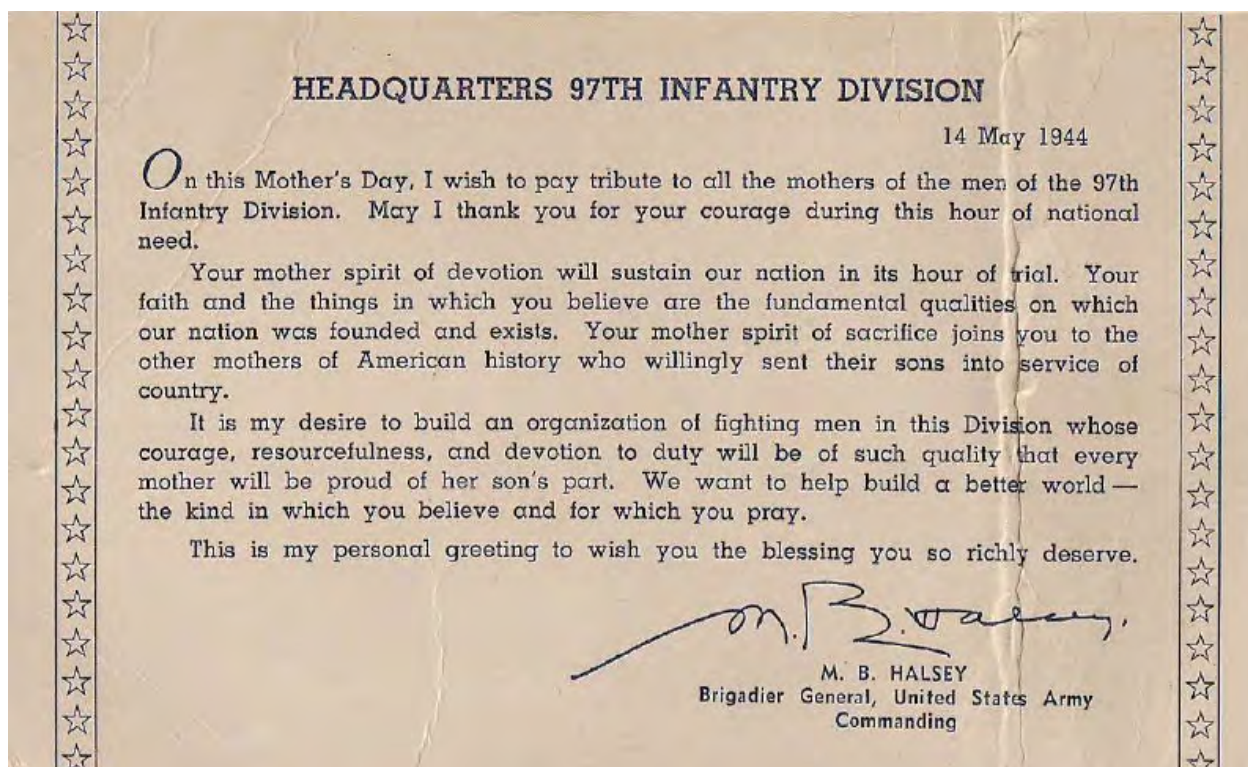
28 Apr 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Mail train derailed. G-1 Classification officer: Captain Ramsay. Shipping list being prepared for 20 May 1944 Shipment.

May

4 May 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

I was on the last train to cross the Mississippi for furlough.



15 May 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Shipping list for 20 May 1944 contains no ASTP Boys

19 May, -- James V. Forrestal of New York, Under Secretary of the Navy since 1940, becomes Secretary of the Navy.

23 May 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Started two week bivouac in foothills of Mark Twain National Forest.

24 May 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Outdoor movie on bivouac

June

3 Jun 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Bivouac ended. Moved UPS to quarters near Co. George (CO G)

8 Jun 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Notified that 97th division will move by troop train before 15 Jul 1944 to new station

9 Jun 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Date of movement of our unit set for 10 Jul 1944

9 Jun 1944 – Albert Miglio, 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

"We had heard that a million men would be killed in the invasion. We were all scared to death. We were lucky we didn't have to go." --

13 Jun 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Notified that we leave for CP San Luis Obispo, California 10 Jul 1944

13 Jun 1944 -The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

War Department officials decided that the 97th would receive amphibious training and then be sent to the Pacific for operations against the Japanese. In July 1944 the Division relocated to Camp San Luis Obispo, California, near Morro Bay and Pismo Beach. Under the supervision of the Navy and Marine Corps, the Division began training for amphibious operations. Realistic amphibious training and exercises took place at Camp Callan, Coronado Strand, San Clemente Island, San Nicolas Island and Camp Pendleton.

16 Jun 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

G.I. Bill of Rights passed by Congress

27 Jun 1944 – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C) Fort Leonard Wood, MO (estimated date)

Part of our training at Fort Leonard Wood was practice marches – some 10 miles – some forced marches – some all day – or 25 miles. On one march, the colonel got lost, and we ended up doing about 32 miles. As the day wore on, the column began to ‘accordion’ when some would slow the pace, and then would try to catch up. Fortunately, some of us were able to stay right in back of the platoon guide or flag carrier, and were able to keep pace. When we finally dragged ourselves back into the barracks, we were told we could have passes to Jefferson City. It was surprising how many of us made a quick recovery got dressed and boarded the bus to Jefferson, City.

27 Jun 1944 – Statement by Richard S Lawson 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M Fort Leonard Wood, MO (estimated date)

“We were marching 25 miles in 8 hours and 15 minutes – or at least that was the target timeframe. We would march for 50 minutes and then rest for 10. If you smoke, that ten minute break was when you would do that. I didn’t smoke. On this particular day we were marching our usual 25 miles. There was a man stationed at the turning point of the road who was supposed to let us know when the troop was to turn but when we arrived he was sleeping. The fact that he could sleep with a whole platoon marching past me is beyond me. We continued to march and went a total of 37 miles before the (Can’t remember the rank he told me of the officer) caught up with us and personally apologized to us. We were all granted a three day leave. Tillie and I went into Saint Louis to a couple of bars and then slept in until 11:30 AM the following morning. We then went and caught a baseball game. We had been up for 40 hours straight.”

1944 – Nathan Galloway 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

The 25 mile night march that became 35 miles when the Column Guide took the wrong fork in the road.

28 Jun 1944 – -Rowland Bergstrom 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M (Also HQTRS)

Dear Folks:

Had a little time to spare when I arrived in St. Louis, so enjoyed an excursion on the boat pictured on this reverse. Will leave in the morning for FT. Leonard Wood, expect to arrive quite early. It has turned awfully warm.

Love, Rowland



July

5 Jul 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Men sent from 386th Regiment this evening. This included last of men who were here when ASTP boys arrived.

**5 Jul 1944 – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)
Fort Leonard Wood, MO**

While still at Fort Leonard Wood, I received word that I was being transferred to Regimental Headquarters as Regimental Stenographer. Much of my duties were the same as I had while at Divisional Headquarters, but on a smaller scale. Also I had to take occasional dictation (my training in shorthand in high school, and at Taylor Business School paid off). I spent the rest of my army career in that assignment.

5 Jul 1944 - The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

Although the 97th was one of the best trained divisions in the Army, it had to deal with the problem of having substantial numbers of its soldiers transferred to other units. For example, in 1944 approximately 5,000 soldiers were "stripped" from the Division while it was undergoing training at Fort Leonard Wood. Some of these men were sent as far away as the China-Burma-India Theater where they were assigned to Merrill's Marauders, an American unit that fought remarkably well against the Japanese in the jungles of Burma. However, most of the soldiers transferred from the Division went to Europe. The "stripping" process had a negative effect on strength levels, morale and military effectiveness.

These problems were overcome to a certain extent by the high quality of many of the replacements and additional training. In 1943 the War Department had tens of thousands of highly intelligent enlisted personnel participating in the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) and aviation cadet training. Soldiers in the ASTP studied engineering, communications, optics, and other subjects at colleges and universities before reporting to their units. Aviation cadets were trained to become fliers or serve in technical and mechanical positions. Because of manpower shortages, the War Department in 1944 dissolved the ASTP and drastically curtailed the aviation cadet training program. Over 73,000 ASTP trainees and 24,000 aviation cadets were assigned to the Army Ground Forces. The 97th Division was fortunate that many of its replacements came from these sources of high-quality personnel.

Pictured: "Moving Out" – Note: Date of this picture is unknown – but looking at the helmets makes me surmise this is the correct date. (RBergstrom Collection)



10 Jul 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Last night at Fort Leonardwood. Basic training completed.

**10 Jul 1944 – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)
Fort Leonard Wood, MO**

Somewhere while traveling through the Midwest, I remember the train stopped for quite a while – probably for refueling, or waiting for another train to use the same tracks.

Anyhow, the Red Cross ladies were there and passed doughnuts to us as we hung out the windows – we weren't allowed to get off the train.

There were a few pre-teenage boys there too. Some of the guys asked if they would run down to the local store and get some candy bars, etc. They were glad to do it, and came back in about 5 minutes. When the others in the train saw this, they also asked the kids to do the same thing – only there was a few more this time. After about an half hour, the train pulled out –with no sign of the kids – or the goodies they were supposed to buy – or the money they had collected from the DI's. If they pulled this on other troop trains that stopped by, they made quite a haul.

Around that time, apparently the military powers looked at the global situation and decided that the manpower needs for the European Theatre were adequate, and decided that the Pacific Theatre needed the services of the 97th Infantry Division. On July 10 – my birthday – they again loaded up the whole division (all 15,000) of us and shipped us to Camp Cooke in San Luis Obispo in California for amphibious training. I remember

passing through Texarkana, at the eastern part of Texas – and 24 hours later we went thru El Paso on the western end of the state.

Jul 1944 – Clifford William Aldrich 386th Infantry Regiment, Company I

In July 1944, the 97th Infantry Division moved to Camp San Luis Obispo, CA for amphibious training, and then on to Camp Cooke, CA in September 1944.

Jul 1944 - Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Shortly, the division was sent to Camp San Luis Obispo, California, for additional training.

11 Jul 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

28-car train moves out of Ft Wood at 1515

13 Jul 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Helped LT. Polich distribute “Goodies” from Company Fund.

Pictured: Ralph E Kane helped Lt. Polich distribute “Goodies” from company fund.
(RBergstrom Collection)



14 Jul 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Commandeered by Lt. Gorney & Major Welsh (Train Commander) to fill out reports on progress of our “MAIN 20618” Train. Have travelled 2,290 miles from FT. Leonard Wood.

NOTE: In July 1944 the division relocated to Camp San Luis Obispo, California. Under the supervision of the Navy and Marine Corps, the division began amphibious training and exercises at Camp Callan, Coronado Strand, San Clemente Island, San Nicolas Island and Camp Pendleton.

15 Jul 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Arrived at camp San Luis Obispo. Pat Purviance has mail call

15 Jul 1944 – -Rowland Bergstrom 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M (Also HQTRS)

SGT Rowland S. Bergstrom

37288271, 386th UPS APO #445, Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif.

Dear Mother and Dad,

Arrived a few hours ago in San Luis Obispo. The trip was very pleasant- a bit warm through the desert though. Our train traveled the southern route thru New Mexico and Arizona. This morning we enjoyed about 200 miles of traveling along the Pacific Ocean.

Will write more later.

Love, Rowland

Pictured: "One of the best examples of modern engineering skill which has speeded travel on the "Trail of the missions" is the Cuesta Grade. From a winding twisting two land road, La Cuesta has been rebuilt into a four lane high-speed highway. Nearby is Camp San Luis Obispo"



20 Jul 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

PFC again after 17 months in the army!

Jul 1944 – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

I believe it was at San Luis Obispo that Danny Kaye put on a show. He had a fast talking routine, which we often saw later on television. When he came on stage, he noticed that a section of the front row was empty. He was told that they were reserved for the General and his staff. Danny Kaye told the guys who were standing along the walls to sit there,

and let the General find his own seats. The General took it OK and stood against the wall for the entire show. Danny Kaye was a hit with the GI's.

Bev and I had been writing back and forth, and, of course, had seen each other on the few times I received leave. I got word that I could have leave in August 1944, so we decided to get married, and thus plans were started for our wedding on August 5.

25 Jul 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G Camp San Luis Obispo, CA

George C.O Captain Geiss ordered me to make up list of all men in George (CO G) who haven't had furlough since 01 Jun 1944.

26 Jul 1944 -Wed. -- President Roosevelt arrives at Pearl Harbor, T.H.; the President will meet with Admiral Nimitz, Admiral Leahy, and General MacArthur to discuss Pacific strategy.

28 Jul 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G Camp San Luis Obispo, CA

Crossed IP for 25-mile night black-out march at 2000. 25 miles in 8 ½ hours

28 Jul 1944 -- President Roosevelt, Admiral Nimitz, Admiral Leahy and General MacArthur meet in Honolulu to discuss Pacific strategy. Ultimately, General MacArthur prevails upon the President and Admiral Nimitz to accord priority to the liberation of the Philippines.

August

Aug 1944 – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

The best travel arrangements I could make, considering accommodations that were available, costs, and timing, were to fly from Los Angeles to Chicago, and then take the train to Philadelphia.

I boarded the train in San Luis Obispo for the trip south to Los Angeles. This would normally have been a pleasant picturesque ride down the coast – in fact, even today they advertise it as a pleasant scenic ride. However, this was wartime, and there were a lot of defense plants up and down the coast. We had to make the trip with the shades drawn. I could peek out once in a while and get a view of the Pacific.

I boarded the plane in Los Angeles for the flight to Chicago. It was a bumpy ride. (This was in 1944 before the age of jets.) The pilot banked the plane over the Grand Canyon so we could get a glimpse of it. I barely saw it, because I was nursing a little brown bag – which I didn't have to use – but almost.

We landed in Chicago, and I got the train to Philadelphia, where mother and dad met me. I arrived in Philadelphia at 4 PM in time for the rehearsal and rehearsal dinner (Wedding

on August 5) which for some reason was held at Ross Cardwell's home. He was my best friend and one of the ushers.

Since we were stationed in San Luis Obispo, we had only winter uniforms – which consisted of long sleeve cotton shirts, wool trousers, and a wool dress jacket. These were the only clothes I had for the wedding. As it turned out, August 5 was the hottest day of the year –and I had to wear wool. The wedding was held in Trinity Episcopal Church in Moorestown, and the reception was held in the Parish Hall. We went to Ocean City, New Jersey for our honeymoon.

After a few days, Bev had to be back in Abington to continue her training. Mother and dad took me to North Philadelphia Station to catch the train to Chicago. Since Bev's Aunt Edna and Aunt Lil hadn't been able to come east to the wedding, we made arrangements for me to meet them at Union Station while I was waiting for my train to Los Angeles. I had met them once before when they had come east a few years before.

I saw these two ladies waiting at the designated spot in Chicago Union Station, but one of them had a leash in her hand, and it was wrapped around her. It looked like she brought a dog with her and it had wrapped itself around her legs. It turned out to be her son Bill, who must have been two or three at the time, and she had him on a leash – probably a good idea with all the people in the station. Anyhow, we had a nice short visit, and I boarded the train to Los Angeles. All my train trips were in coach, and overnight travels meant getting a pillow and trying to get some sleep on the train.

9 Aug 1944 - -- President Roosevelt reembarks in heavy cruiser *Baltimore* (CA-68) and then shifts to destroyer *Cummings* (DD-376) to visit the Puget Sound Navy Yard.

12 Aug 1944 -- President Roosevelt concludes his inspection of naval activities in the Pacific when he departs Puget Sound on this date to return to Washington.

13 Aug 1944 - 25 Aug 1944 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D
Furlough from Aug. 13 to Aug. 25.

21 Aug 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G Camp San Luis Obispo, CA

Leave Akron for return to San Luis Obispo after furlough. One of George's returning sergeants got V.D. from his wife.

25 August, -- U.S. and French troops liberate Paris, France.

25 Aug 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G - Camp San Luis Obispo, CA

General Leer arrived to inspect our outfit. George's Makowski sent to OCS from home furlough. Morgan sent to LA. 47 more men were put on shipping list. Company George's SGT Reidel tried to commit suicide. Captain Geiss applied for paratroopers

and was picked up by MP's in Santa Barbara with a 15-year old girl. We were issued Rubber pants, coats, hats & Barracks bags for amphibious training.

29 Aug 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G - Camp Callan, CA

On move again to CP Callan, near San Diego. 400 men from 386th Regiment to be shipped from our regiment as replacements.



Aug 1944 - Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F - Camp Callan, CA

We went to Camp Callan near San Diego for amphibious training. We stayed there for about three months and were sent to Camp Cooke, California. This camp is now the Vandenberg Air Force Base. The division took desert training there. In late 1944, we were issued summer clothing and equipment and sent to the east coast.

Pictured: Pictured: Camp Callan -



Pictured: Camp Callan - "Most all the Streets look alike as the one pictured here."



Pictured: Camp Callan - "This open air theater is really much prettier than the picture gives credit. The flower bed in the center sparkles with color."



Pictured: Camp Callan – "This building is used for acquainting soldiers with poisonous gases. Those are gas masks you see them wearing."



Pictured: Camp Callan – “This is where soldiers fire weapons for practice, familiarization and record.”



Pictured: Camp Callan – “This is where the soldiers can spend their leisure time, reading and writing. The service club also houses a cafeteria where sandwiches, meals and ice cream are available.”



30 August 1944 – -Rowland Bergstrom 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M (Also HQTRS)

Camp Callan - The Coast Artillery Replacement Training Center is located at Torrey Pines, 14 miles north of the business district of San Diego on U.S. Highway 101. Here the selectees receive their period of training before proceeding to regular posts.



SGT Rowland S. Bergstrom 37288271
 386th Inf Unit Personnel
 APO 445 Camp San Luis, Obispo, Calif.

Dear Mother + Dad,

Just arrived at Callan. The camp is very nice + overlooks the ocean, making it quite cool. Our personnel office is housed in a spacious building giving everyone ample room. We live in barracks again instead of hutments. The camp is located 13 miles north of San Diego + 119 Miles south of Los Angeles.

Love,
 Rowland

1944 – Vern Henderson, 386th Infantry Regiment, Company L & 99th Infantry Division

I first met Zearl Keams at Camp Callan, California in company “L”, 386th Infantry, 97th Infantry Division in late summer or early fall of 1944, I’m not exactly sure which. I had just joined the company that day, having just been transferred from the 113th Special Infantry Regiment, 22nd Corps, at Camp picket, Virginia. The company was standing Retreat formation, and I took exception to remarks made about my ancestry in the presence of the company by the First Sergeant and called him on it. I heard his reply behind me say, “Get him kid, if you don’t, I will.” I look back and saw this tall, skinny, Indian. From that day forward, I was “kid” to the man, and he looked after me during our combat phase as though I was exactly that.

30 Aug 1944 - 12 Aug 1944 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Went to Camp San Louis Obispo, Calif. to Join 97 Inf. Div. Arrived Aug. 30. Stayed there 3 months then went to Camp Callan, Calif. to take amphibious training. Took 10 days cruise off coast of Calif. on the U.S.S. Neville.

September

1 Sep, -- The 97th Infantry Division during World War II --

In September 1944 the 97th was transferred to Camp Cooke, California, situated directly on the Pacific Ocean, about 30 miles north of Santa Barbara. At this location, instructors from the Navy and Marine Corps provided further amphibious training. Units of the Division became skillful in amphibious landings and the establishment of beachheads. By the end of 1944 the Trident Division had been training for a period of almost two years and was in a relatively high state of readiness.

2 Sep 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G Camp Callan, CA

Payday evening. Koth & I went 17 miles into San Diego on pass. Koth and "Fearless" Fossman & I went to PX for a beer. They left & SGT Brown & T/SGT Currier each bought me a beer. After Currier left tap-room, CPL Schorling bought a round. 23 new men arrived for Company George.

Sep 1944 – Murray Garrett 303rd Infantry Regiment

After basic training ended in September, soldiers aged 19 and older were sent directly overseas where most of them became replacements and served in the Battle of the Bulge. Younger soldiers, like Murray, were sent to the 97th Infantry Division at Camp San Louis Obispo for amphibious training. The five-day train ride to California went through Greenville, Atlanta, and Chicago. He still remembers the kindness of the people of North Platte, NE, where the soldiers were fed huge home-cooked meals.

Upon reaching California, Murray was assigned to the 303rd Regiment for training using landing craft. It was a daunting experience for Murray, dressed in full gear while navigating a cargo net to reach the tiny craft bobbing up and down far below.

Even though he used his two weekend passes to visit Los Angeles and Hollywood, Christmas was "...a very lonesome time for an 18-year-old boy to be away from everybody he knew." He learned firsthand how dangerous his training could be. While practicing how to use bangalore torpedos to blow holes in barbed wire defenses, he was struck by a piece of shrapnel. He says the three weeks he spent in the hospital were "...the best I had the whole time that I was in the Army. All the ice cream, milk, and food you could want." However, when he discovered that his unit was being shipped out, he asked to be released from the hospital, for he was certain they would be going to the Pacific. He was wrong.

11 Sep 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G - Camp Callan, CA

Koth, Thoresen, Patterson & I got a pass to Tijuana

12 Sep, -- Romania signs armistice with U.S., Great Britain, and Russia.

12 Sep 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G - Camp Callan, CA
Learned how to climb up & down nets.

13 Sep 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G Camp Callan, CA
OCS Applications from 97th stopped. We are now a combat team and should see no more replacements sent overseas.

1944 – William C Martin JR 389th FA Bn

Bill's unit was ordered to Camp San Luis Obispo, California for amphibious warfare training in preparation for duty in the South Pacific. The men took initial training there and then were sent to other camps in southern California to be trained in the use of landing craft.

20 Sep 1944 – Report of Commander Training Command, Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet, Rear Admiral Ralph O. Davis, U.S.N.

LSM 238, Lt. D. M. McIntosh, reported; assigned to Ship Training Group for training.

LCT(6) 737 departed San Diego for temporary additional duty under Boat Basin Detachment, Landing Craft School at Oceanside.

LCT 395 completed temporary additional duty under Naval Air Center, San Diego.

1944 – Nathan Galloway 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Location: San Clemente & St. Nicholas – I was in command boat with Lt Colonel Richardson – in the excitement in landing he ran down the ramp, tripped on the water and went in submarine style – my thoughts – this is going to be a rough day.

21 Sep 1944 – Report of Commander Training Command, Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet, Rear Admiral Ralph O. Davis, U.S.N.

Conducted shore bombardment exercises on San Clemente Island under Training Operation Order No. 49-44, dated 19 September 1944, for DD 802, GREGORY, Comdr. B. McCandless.

Service ammunition expended:

214 rounds 5" /38 AA Common

5 rounds 5" /38 WP

LSM 26, having completed repairs at San Pedro, returned to San Diego.

LCI(L) training Unit ROOK Conducting amphibious training exercises for the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Battalion Landing Teams of the 386th Regimental Combat Team, 97th Infantry Division, U.S. Army, 21 to 27 September, in the San Diego – San Nicolas Island areas under Ship Training Group Training Operation Order No. 106-44, dated 16 September 1944.

AP 107, WINGED ARROW, departed San Diego for Pearl Harbor.

Pictured: California – Pacific Ocean – Practicing with Amphibious Ducks (RRapesky Collection)



Pictured: Another Duck – (RRapesky Collection)



Pictured: California – Waiting on the Duck (RRapesky Collection)



22 Sep 1944 – Report of Commander Training Command, Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet, Rear Admiral Ralph O. Davis, U.S.N.

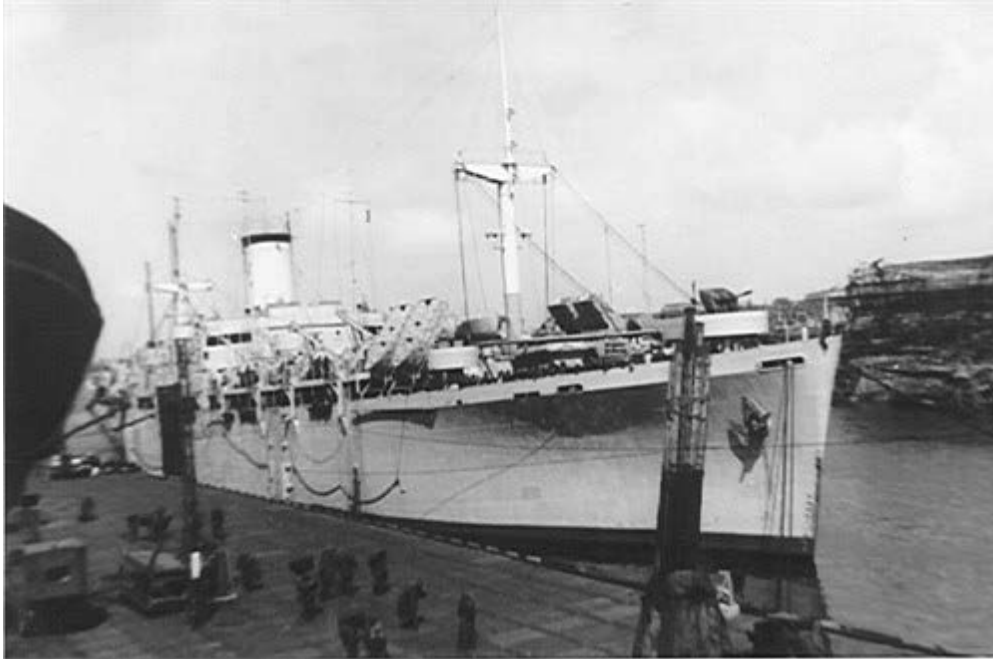
LSM's 201, Lt. G. Buchensky, and 202, Lt. Thurlow; and LCI(L)'s 656, LT. H. C. Hirn, and 1078, Lt. (jg) W. H. Lewis, reported; assigned to Ship Training Group for training.

APA 57, GILLIAM, departed San Diego for availability in San Pedro.

AKA 54, ALGOL, having completed repairs at San Pedro, departed for San Francisco for loading and onward routing.

AKA 6, ALCHIBA, completed repairs at San Francisco and departed for the South Pacific.

Pictured: California – Ship is part of our training exercise (RRapesky Collection)



25 Sep 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G - Camp Callan, CA
 Captured San Nichols Island, after 100 mile ride in LCI

27 Sep 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G - Camp Callan, CA
 Saw Kay Kyser USO show with Phil Harris guesting for Sick Kay

28 Sep 1944 – Thursday - War Diary, U.S.S. Neville

Enroute to San Diego, steering various courses and at various speeds. 0000 speed 12 knots. 0450 Speed 13 knots. 0504 Speed 14 knots. For a few minutes we made 15 knots (985 RPM). At 0632 fetched buoy “1A” and took pilot aboard. At 0800 moored to Navy Pier, San Diego. At 00900 Amphibious boat training groups’ p-20 and p-42, and all attached personnel aboard for training (24 officers and 322 men, debarked for Amphibious Training Base, Coronado, California. At 1635 two army officers and 60 enlisted men from 386h Infantry, USA, constituting ship’s platoon, embarked. At 1745 two more officers and 96 men of same outfit embarked.

Positions:	0800	Navy Pier, San Diego
	1200	Navy Pier, San Diego
	2000	Navy Pier, San Diego

29 Sep 1944 – Friday - War Diary, U.S.S. Neville

At 0800 commenced loading personnel and gear of B.L.T. two, R.C.T. one, of 97th Infantry Division, and attached units, according to T.F.13 operation plan No. 7-44, for the amphibious training of said army division.

Positions:	0800	Navy Pier, San Diego
	1200	Navy Pier, San Diego
	2000	Navy Pier, San Diego

30 Sep 1944 – Saturday - War Diary, U.S.S. Neville

By 1038 we completed loading all troops: 61 officers and 1,208 men. We also embarked nine Naval officers, seven Marine Corps officers, and two Army officers for observation and temporary duty under instruction. At 1424 we got underway for training exercises, as part of T.U.13.9.2. After clearing the harbor, we formed up in said task unit as follows: AMERICAN LEGION (G), HUNTER LIGGETT, NEVILLE, SARASOTA, BELLATRIX. Column formation, distance 600 yards. Speed 9 knots, course 240 Degrees. O.T.C. Captain LUDLOW in AMERICAN LEGION. Screened by T.U.13.9.8.

Pictured: California – Waiting to load for practice landings (RRapesky Collection)



30 Sep 1944 – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

In San Luis Obispo, we climbed down cargo nets into waiting LSTs which were to be our transport to shore. It was quite a knack to climb down the nets, with full field pack, rifle, and steel helmet, and climb into the LST which was riding up and down on the waves. We also had a 10 day “training cruise” on the USS American Legion for more amphibious training.

While we were there, several of us climbed a small mountain on the base. It was a nice Sunday afternoon – and it took us a couple of hours to get to the top. It was a lot of effort, but we had a tremendous view of the countryside.

We also got a pass to Los Angeles, and visited the Stage Door Canteen, and USO, but I don't remember seeing any movie stars. We also got a chance to go to Tijuana, Mexico and saw a bullfight – once is enough.

30 Sep 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G - Camp Callan, CA

All UPS will remain as part of 200 men while rest of regiment goes on 10-day cruise practicing landings on Cal. Coast. Saw Harry James & Orchestra at Pacific Square in San Diego. Kopyto & I visit La Jolla Country Club and its 26 millionaires last day at CP Callan.

Pictured: The Cove – La Jolla, California – Located 4 miles from camp. Note on the back reads “Here is another scene of the beach I visited Sunday.”



Pictured: Note on back reads: "This spot is only 4 miles from camp - spent Sunday afternoons here swimming, and baking in the sun"



Pictured: California Island – Practiced Landings (RRapesky Collection)



October

1 Oct 1944 –War Diary of the Commander, LCI(L) Group Sixty-Three attached to LCI(L) Flotilla, Twenty-One and the Commander, Amphibious Training Command, U.S. Pacific Fleet

Transferred flag to the USS LCI(L) 771. 0800 underway in compliance with U.S. Pacific Fleet, Training Command, Amphibious Forces, Ship Training Group Training Operation Order NO. 114-44, Captain E.C. Rook, USN, officer in Tactical Command, as

Commander, Re-Embarkation Unit Thompson. LCI(L)s 771, 772, 1028, and 1030 of LCI(L) Group Sixty-Three in company. Re-embarked troops of the 386th RCT of the 97th Infantry Division U.S. Army; carried troops to the USS NEVILLE. Moored at 1630 to South Quay Wall, Naval Repair Base, San Diego, California in company with other ships of LCI(L) Flotilla Twenty-One. Transferred flag to the USS LCI(L) 642. Pictured: California – Part of Amphibious Exercise (RRapesky Collection)



Pictured: California – Part of Amphibious Exercise (RRapesky Collection)



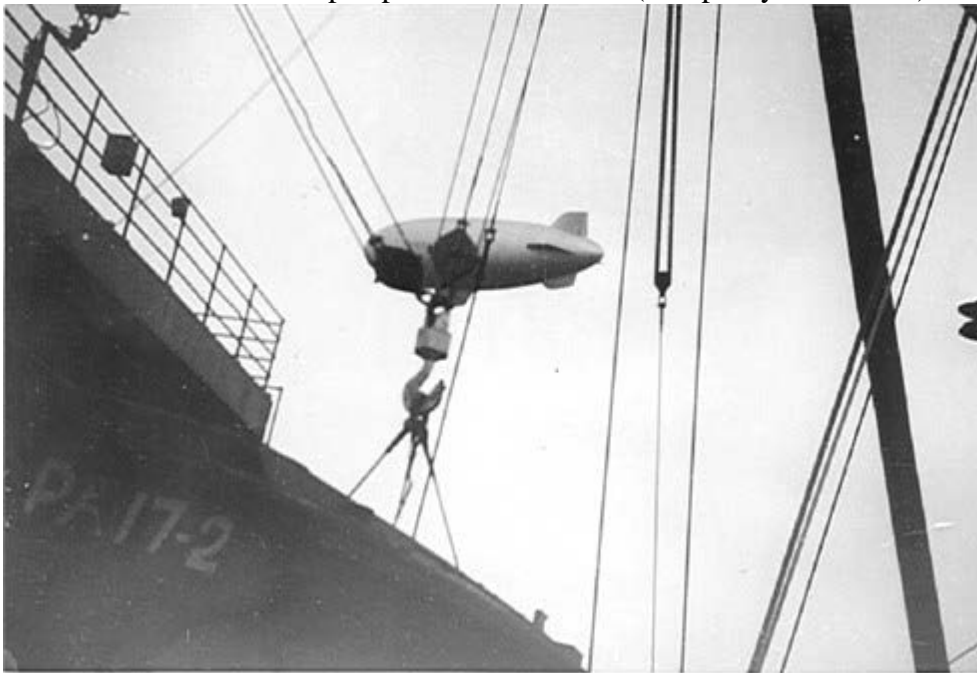
2 Oct 1944 – War Diary of the Commander, LCI(L) Group Sixty-Three attached to LCI(L) Flotilla, Twenty-One and the Commander, Amphibious Training Command, U.S. Pacific Fleet

Underway on 2 October 1944 at 1144 in compliance with U.S. Pacific Fleet, Training Command, Amphibious Forces, Ship Training Group Training Operation Order No. 117-44, Captain E.C. Rook, USN, officer in Tactical Command, as Commander, LCI(L) Training Unit Thompson. USS LCI(L) 1028 in company, operating in San Nicolas Island area; other ships of LCI(L) Group Sixty-Three under miscellaneous orders of the Commander, Amphibious Training Command, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

2 Oct 1944 – Report of Commander Training Command, Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet, Rear Admiral Ralph O. Davis, U.S.N.

LCI (L) Training Unit ROOK conducting amphibious training exercises in the San Diego – San Nicolas Island areas, 2 – 8 October, for Battalion Landing Teams of the 387th Regimental Combat Team, 97th Infantry Division, U.S. Army, under Ship Training Group Training Operation Order NO. 117-44, dates 29 September 1944.

Pictured: California Blimp is part of the exercise (RRapskey Collection)



2 October, Mon. –

3 Oct 1944 – Report of Commander Training Command, Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet, Rear Admiral Ralph O. Davis, U.S.N.

APA 152, LATIMER, reported for amphibious shakedown training; to operate under Ship Training Group Training Operation Order No. 111-44, dated 22 September 1944.

Commander Task Unit 13.9.1 conducted LEX 2, a day regimental rehearsal landing, at Pyramid Cove, San Clemente Island, for the 386h Regimental Combat Team, 97th

Infantry Division, U.S. Army, under Commander Task Group 13.9 Operation Order No. 7-44, Phase I, dated 7 August 1944

The following Ships reported for temporary duty to Commander Task Unit 13.9.1 to supply air support for LEX 2:

CVE 93, MAKIN ISLAND

CVE 95 BISMARK SEA

CVE 94 LUNGA POINT

CVE 96 SALAMAUA

Conducted shore bombardments exercises on San Clemente Island in conjunction with LEX 2 under Commander Task Group 13.9 Operation Plan No. 7-44, dated 7 August 1944, for DD 803, LITTLE, Comdr. M. Hall, JR.

Service ammunition expended: 180 rounds 5" /38 AA common

Close-in Fire Support Unit expended: 480 rounds 4"5 HE BR ROCKETS

Commenced the second Five Day Special Indoctrination Course in amphibious warfare for 12 U.S. Army officers designated by the war department.

Pictured: California – Landing on the beach – LCI (RRapesky Collection)



Pictured: California – Landing ship mechanized LCM (RRapesky Collection)



4 Oct 1944 - Wed - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G - Camp Cooke.
Advance party arrived at Camp Cooke. Our area will be 7 ½ miles from nearest camp gate, 21 miles from there to nearest town of Santa Maria.

Pictured: John Medwid, Bill Stafford, Charles Hofner, Clifford Breckan, Edward Kezkwa, Chester Hafner (DLawson Collection)



5 Oct 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G - Camp Cooke, CA

President Roosevelt addressed the nation on war's progress

8 Oct 1944 –War Diary of the Commander, LCI(L) Group Sixty-Three attached to LCI(L) Flotilla, Twenty-One and the Commander, Amphibious Training Command, U.S. Pacific Fleet

Moored to South Quay Wall, Naval Repair Base, San Diego, California in company with other ships of LCI(L) Flotilla Twenty-One

9 Oct 1944 –War Diary of the Commander, LCI(L) Group Sixty-Three attached to LCI(L) Flotilla, Twenty-One and the Commander, Amphibious Training Command, U.S. Pacific Fleet

Moored to South Quay Wall, Naval Repair Base, San Diego, California in company with other ships of LCI(L) Flotilla Twenty-One

10 Oct 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Rest of troops return from cruise

12 Oct 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

IG is inspecting our records once again. Whole camp has thousands of acres of sand and only 28 trees. A large, flat plain.

19 Oct 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Mailed absentee ballot for November election

23 Oct 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Had pass to Santa Barbara by bus from Lompoc.

31 Oct 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Addressed change of address cards. APO number not known. "Over there" still unknown. Japan or Europe?

31 Oct 1944 – Tues - The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

In the fall of 1944, while undergoing amphibious training in California, the Division was notified that it would be sent to the Far East in December. The men of the 97th began preparations for overseas movement. The War Department later changed the embarkation date to early January 1945. In the middle of December, these plans were abruptly altered. On December 16, 1944 in an attempt to cut the Allied Forces in two, the German Army launched a massive offensive through Belgium's Ardennes Forest. This offensive became known as the Battle of the Bulge because of the large bulge in the front lines. By the middle of January, American units had retaken most of the ground they had lost, but suffered approximately 75,000 casualties. Because of the high number of American casualties during the Battle of the Bulge, several American units earmarked for the Pacific, including the 97th Infantry Division, were ordered to the European Theater of Operations for the final assault on Nazi Germany.

Oct 1944 – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

In the late 1944, the Germans made a major assault on the Eastern Front – which came to be known as the "Battle of the Bulge". This apparently caused the "military powers that be" to reassess their manpower needs so they decided to transfer the 97th Division – who had now been trained for amphibious landings – to the European Theatre.

November

1 Nov 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Japanese started sending 9,000 balloons from their mainland, loaded with bombs expected to create havoc on West Coast. 1,000 reached U.S. coast from Alaska to Mexico, entitling 97th division to American Theatre Ribbons, UNDER FIRE! Little damage was caused by bombs, none of which were reported in news.

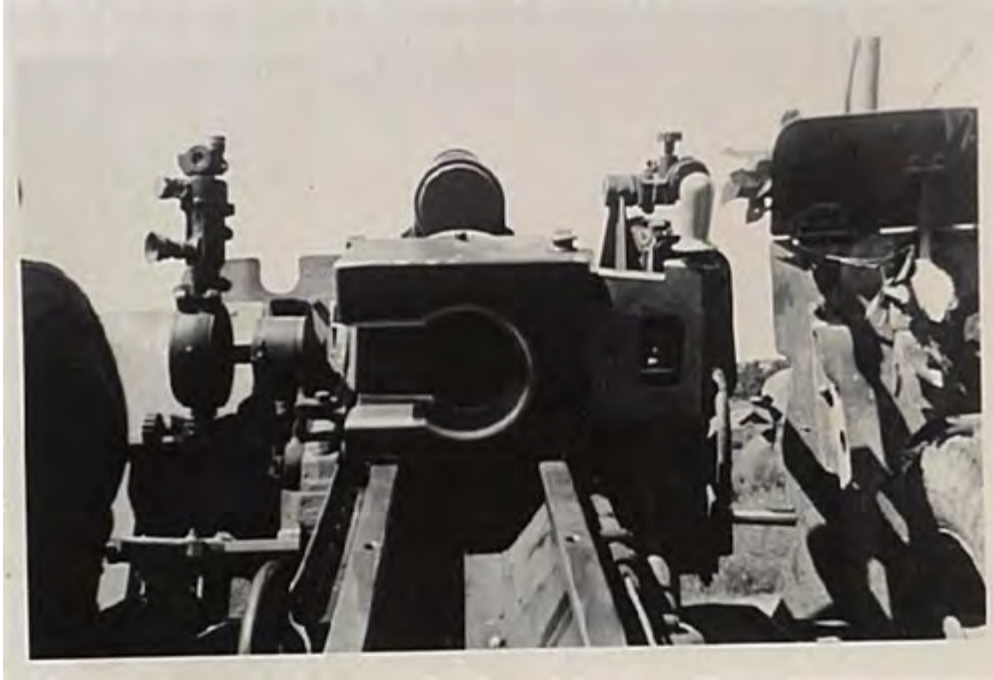
1 Nov 1944 - “Attack on America by Balloon” written by Raymond Schuessler

In a little-known side action of World War II, the Japanese succeeded-although lamely-in attacking the United States mainland. Humiliated by James Doolittle’s bombing of Tokyo in 1942 and unable to retaliate with warplanes, they launched thousands of bomb-laden, paper balloons against the west coast, killing at least six persons. The invasion route was a natural air corridor at 30,000 -35,000 feet where winds roared east at 100 to 200 miles an hour. The Japanese hoped to launch 100 balloons a day, expecting at least 10 percent to reach America and damage cities, burn forest and cause panic. On November 1, 1944, the campaign began. In time, eventually 9,000 balloons would be released from Japan. According to chief of staff of the Western Defense Command, Brigadier General W. H. Wilbur, about 1,000 reached the West Coast from Alaska to Mexico. Ten percent failed to explode; 200 balloons were found in the U.S. and Canada. Remains of 75 more were fished out of coastal waters. Flashes in the sky indicated midair explosion of others. The 32-foot-diameter balloons carried 30 six-pound sandbags which were successively released by a device whenever the balloon dropped below 30,000 feet. Another device let hydrogen escape when the bag rose above 35,000 feet. Each balloon carried an incendiary bomb and two or three 32-pound antipersonnel bombs. They were designed to hit earth after 40 hours when, the Japanese assumed, the balloons would be over the U.S. At a school picnic in Oregon, children found a balloon and, tugging at the strings, exploded the bomb. Five children and a woman were killed. The only way to combat the scourge, it was decided was to keep the Japanese from learning that balloons reached America. The press and radio in Canada and the U.S. were advised to say nothing. But to warn of the danger, news was spread by word of mouth to schools, farmers, hunters, police and fraternal clubs in the West. In April 1945, the balloons stopped coming. General Wilbur visited Japan after the war and found out why. General Sueki Kusaba, in charge of the balloon barrage, had his funds cut (each balloon cost \$800) because no reports of their landings had been reported in the American press. “Your balloons are not reaching America,” the final notice said. “The nosy American press could never keep such a secret.”

1 Nov 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Went through gas chamber, fired a new “secret” weapon.

Pictured: California – The loading end (RRapesky Collection)



4 Nov 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G
CPL Wakefield made SGT

4 Nov 1944 - George P L Rowe from New Jersey and 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M and ? was KIA

9 Nov 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G
IG Inspection team finished today.

11 Nov 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G
Following EM given 48-hour pass to Santa Barbara: CPL Don Beard, SGT Roberts, SGT Brohammer, SGT Wakefield, T/5 Purviance, PVT Shyver & PFC Koehn. Spent most of Saturday getting to Santa Barbara. Had a few beers, lunch & supper free at Elk's Club.

20 Nov 1944 - Joseph Gabica 97th Division and 101st Airborne Division - KIA
Joseph "Joe" Gabica enlisted in the US Army on 25 Feb 1943. He started out in 97th Infantry Division and was to train to become a pilot and deploy to the Pacific. Due to huge casualty numbers in Europe, however, Joe was pulled from the 97th Infantry and put in the 101st Airborne Division as a paratrooper. His test scores were very high and he was a good soldier, so he was recognized by his commanding officers and quickly received a short service commission. He is listed as KIA 20 Nov 1944 in Belgium.

Pictured: Joe Gabica



24 Nov 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Fired rifle again with George, zeroing them in.

1944 – Nathan Galloway 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Location: Camp Cooke, California - Live overhead fire training – heated discussion between 105 Artillery Commander and the 81 MM Mortar Commander – who fired the short one???

25 Nov 1944 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Went to Camp Cook Nov. 25.

December

4 Dec 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Drew entrenching shovels. First SGT Bailey took over from First SGT Fread. Captain Geiss officially made me Company Clerk.

10 Dec 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Captain Geiss transferred to another company & Captain C. J. Cannella was made our new C.O – transferred from C.O of Service Company.

27 Dec 1944 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

I learned that our Erel S. Pederson once worked for my Fiancé's father was traveling harvester from Texas to Dakotas.

Dec 1944 - 9th Armored Infantry Battalion - 6th Armored Division (No Longer with Company M) -Written by William W. Horne

It was in the last half of December, 1944, and General George Patton, commander of the Third United States Army, had apparently told a meeting of generals that he could smash a major German offensive, historically referred to as the Battle of the Bulge, and was

prepared to do so within 48 hours. All of this I learned well after the fact. At the time Patton's offer was accepted it resulted in my being suddenly swept across northern France as a small cog in the rapid redeployment of the 4th and the 6th armored divisions. The objective was Bastogne, where the 101st Airborne and sundry armored elements had created an immense deterrent to German success by occupying that crucial road junction. The gallant action of the defenders of Bastogne would be for naught unless relief was immediate. I was a twenty year old Sergeant in the 9th Armored Infantry of the 6th Armored Division.

We had a half-track full of gasoline, ammunition, rations and an extremely! Large and cantankerous goose. The latter to be our Christmas dinner if circumstances permitted. The "track" held one squad of infantry, and the crated goose, with head and neck extended, which required a large free area because of the nature of its very long neck, extremely sharp beak and burning desire to do damage to its captors. All of this made the trip seemingly endless--cold steel bottom, freezing steel sides and top open to the wintry skies. Thus, there was ample cold and little offsetting heat. It is true; however, that a modicum of exercise and warmth was generated through the constant need to dodge that beak of the main course of our much- anticipated Christmas dinner.

Two armored divisions roaring down the narrow French roads, tracks clanking, engines howling, and eventually, gunfire crashing, were awesome in their aura of power. I could only think that woe-betide the Germans that had to stand up to the invincibility of those flaming monsters. Of course the Germans probably entertained similar thoughts about their own armor. The steep rise of the heavily wooded mountains, and snow-blocked roads made life unbearably difficult, but finally the 4th Division smashed into the German lines. They were completely unexpected, and burst through the defenses and into Bastogne. The 6th followed the tracks of the 4th through the gap in the enemy lines, and fanned out on the far side of town. And that is the locale of this small personal story. The half-tracks with our blankets, overcoats, and most of the food, aboard, dumped us off and headed back to town. Goodbye goose.

The infantry did what infantry has done since the time of Caesar, and probably before. We sent out scouts, and laid out a defensive perimeter. As we scurried to find suitable German holes in which to hide, a string of mortar rounds fell into our position. I was second from the bottom as five men sought the protection of one foxhole. It is amazing how small you can become when need be. I can attest, though, that the weight of the three above became almost unbearable before they could be induced to seek other quarters. Now we had great confidence in General Patton, who had a tendency to be right, but somewhere down the long chain of command someone had failed to realize that maps were required in order to give the troops on the ground at least a faint idea of the lay of the land. We had none. I asked the Lieutenant, who spoke to the Captain, who appealed to the Major. No maps.

Still assuming we knew where the Germans were, we strengthened our perimeter, dug in our machine guns facing northwest and settled down for a freezing night. There was really no need to be concerned about locating the enemy--they found us. With dawn came first a rousing burst of mortar rounds followed by the rapid chatter of machine guns. Thus clearly informed as to which direction to go, we formed up an attack straight to the rear of our dug in positions. Maps can be very helpful, but I suppose a feel for hill and dale is still a soldier's best friend. This was a country of low, forest-covered mountains, with 8 to

15 inches of snow to slog around in. The Germans were well dug in, and as we pushed them back they had every hill and draw carefully taped for fire control. After several days of constant firefights we were severely mauled. My squad was down to two, and the other fellow was limping badly (He was subsequently went to the rear with prisoners.)

Picture of William (Bill) Horne



2 Jan 1945 - Vice Admiral Sir Bertram H. Ramsay, RN, Allied Commander in Chief, Expeditionary Force, is killed in airplane accident near Paris, France.

3 Jan 1945 - 9th Armored Infantry Battalion - 6th Armored Division (No Longer with Company M) – Written by William W. Horne

By January 3, 1945, the battalion was strung out along a tree line, down from which stretched a snowfield into the bottom that in summer undoubtedly contained a small creek (this was the platoon action area). On the far side of the creek bottom, open snow covered slopes led up to our objective, another tree line that was in the hands of the Germans. Scouts had identified the enemy as an SS Panzer unit, the scourge of the German military, and noted for taking no prisoners. The Captain sought artillery and tank support, but none was available. Just before noon one squad jumped off, only to be pinned down with severe losses along the creek bottom. Then there was a short period of dead silence, followed by the crack of a single shot from our position. The word came down the line that our company clerk had shot himself--why? Clerks don't accompany rifle companies in frontal assaults, so he would not have been called upon to leave that marvelously deep German foxhole. Who knows?

Shortly after noon, two more squads made it into the creek bottom, but were again pinned down by withering small arm, machine gun and 88mm-artillery fire. About 2:00 p.m., two light tanks came up on our right, and the remainder of the platoon, including the rifle squad I had fallen in with, left the cover of the tree line, and joined the tanks in a frontal assault on the hill. In order to keep your undivided attention while spinning the remainder of this personal story, I will let you know now that this assault, along with those

conducted by the other platoons of the Battalion, resulted in a virtual annihilation of the opposing panzer unit. (General Patton, in his postwar book, said that this was the only action of significance on January 3, 1945. It's nice to be mentioned, even obliquely, in history.)

It was a cloudy day, in fact sufficiently overcast that there would be no air support, but ground visibility was excellent for the distance between the warring factions, and I even felt a bit exhilarated (along with a heavy dose of terror) as we fixed bayonets and jumped off. The going was slow but most of us made it into the creek bottom. As we started up the far side, one of our light tanks moved slowly along the German line, out at a distance of approximately 200 yards. It was foolhardy for the tanker to expose his light side-armor in this manner, but I took advantage of it by remaining in the cover provided by the tank as I ran up the hill. We gradually converged on the German line, then the tanker must have realized his vulnerability, spun on one track, and faced the oncoming fire with his frontal armor. Problem was, I was left standing in front of the Germans, at about 100 yards; a sitting duck. Almost immediately, a tremendous blow struck me on ! the left arm, spinning me around and down on the snowfield. By that time the Germans were giving it their all, in an attempt to stop the advance. GIs were falling everywhere, some killed, many wounded, and probably not a few using good judgment in getting down out of the rifle and machine gun fire. Hugging the ground didn't offer any protection, though, from the searching rounds of mortars and artillery, which for the remainder of the afternoon continued to pound the hillside.

I was hit; the worst fear of all infantrymen. And because our unit situation remained extremely precarious there was little chance that any help would be along for some time. It was also becoming progressively colder as dusk came on. I had managed to get my chemical-warfare plastic-cover out of its pack, unfolded, and spread on the snow under me. Although a combat medic had stopped and hastily slapped a bandage on my wound, his efforts hadn't done the job, and there seemed to be an almost unrestricted flow of blood. It pooled under me and chilled as the temperature dropped. I tried to tie a tourniquet above the wound, with no success. A dozen of us, dead or wounded, were lying in fairly close proximity, probably the area where the Germans obtained their first line of direct fire as we came up the hill. As the afternoon waned, I began to feel woozy. Small arms fire from above couldn't reach us, but even the slightest movement drew immediate sniper fire,¹ and from time to time artillery rounds swept the hillside. By about 4 o'clock the fight had moved on up the slope and into the woods. I watched a wounded lieutenant get slowly to his feet and lurch down the hill. A crack of the snipers rifle, and he was dead. Others tried to crawl away, but were either wounded or killed by the sniper, who obviously had an excellent field of fire.

As dusk came on, the cold became more and more intense. There was a marked decrease in the moans of the wounded, and it was amply obvious that I had to find a way out, and soon. About this time, two medics, wild with fear (for good reason), scrambled down the hill, headed for the rear. As they came sloshing through the snow I yelled that I needed assistance. They stopped and said that they were on the way out. I mustered my strongest arguments, insisting that they take me with them, pointing out that they could be shot for cowardice for running from the field of battle, but also pointing out that none of this would happen if they were helping a wounded soldier. They finally agreed to take me, if I wouldn't be too much of an impediment. I assured them that I was capable of walking

with only a little assistance, struggled to my feet, and, with a medic on each side, slipped and slid toward the creek bottom, angling off towards where we thought there might be a road and transport. It was dark by this time, so we didn't fear sniper fire, but artillery rounds continued to explode all around us. After one such barrage, during which I felt a ripping through my clothes, I found that my jackets and shirts were in shreds. Fortunately none of us received a scratch. For two miles or so those medics dragged me along, dropping to the ground when shells exploded nearby, but immediately hauling me back to my feet and on down the mountain.

Jubilant, we finally stumbled onto a road. The medics flagged down a medical jeep, where they hoisted me up on a stretcher for a wild ride to battalion aid. There, chaos prevailed--wounded; dying and dead GIs were all over the place. The battalion surgeon and the medics were doing their best to apply sufficient patches to enable the ambulance crews to load up and head back behind the lines. My combat jacket and shirts were cut off and everyone had a macabre laugh at the shell damage. A medic went through my pockets and handed me a small pocket Bible and a notebook, both of which had jagged tears from shell fragments. I was hastily bandaged and propelled into another ambulance. Off we went--cold, dark, crowded--down a slippery mountain road and eventually onto blacktop. By this time I was leaking blood again and feeling groggier and groggier. Finally I got the soldier near the cab to scream at the driver that we needed to stop soon. The driver cut off on another road, and swept into a field hospital. I was dragged out of the ambulance, the doors closed, and my buddies went on to God knows where. I recall entering a large brightly lit room, falling, and sometime later awakening on a table, as doctors and nurses were stabbing away at my left arm and replacing lost blood. Uppermost in my mind was food. After a number of strongly stated requests, a nurse managed to scare up a scrambled egg sandwich, which I could only stare at. Within hours I left the field hospital, very groggy from whatever painkillers were dispensed, and in due course landed in large hospital on a hill in Paris. From thence onto an English hospital train, a cross-Channel boat, an English-hospital train again and finally to an American hospital on the Welsh border. Housed in steel Quonset huts, surrounded by lovely English and Welsh girls and snow, it all seemed like an unscheduled trip to heaven. In fact it was. ~ William W. Horne, Sgt.

Picture of William (Bill) Horne



9 Jan 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

All upcoming furloughs cancelled

9 Jan 1945 – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

On January 9, 1945, I was called into my Company Commander's office and told that I was to be part of a secret advance party of five officers and four other enlisted men to go to Europe to make preliminary preparations for the later arrival for the entire regiment. In early January the advanced party boarded trains for Fort Hamilton, New York on our way to Europe.

10 Jan 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Received two more shots at dispensary

16 Jan 1945 – Brent J Morrison 2nd LT. 386th Assistant Adjutant – Regimental History

Advance detail left Camp Cooke, California, 16 January 1945, and landed in Le Harve, France, 8 February 1945

18 Jan 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Examining regiment once again

20 January, - -- Hungary surrenders to the allies.

22 Jan 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Company picture & Platoon pictures taken for records. Dental checkups for all men.

23 January, – President Roosevelt embarks in heavy cruiser *Quincy* (CA-71) at Newport News, Virginia, on the beginning of the trip that will include his participation in **ARGONAUT Conferences** at Malta and Yalta.

24 Jan 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

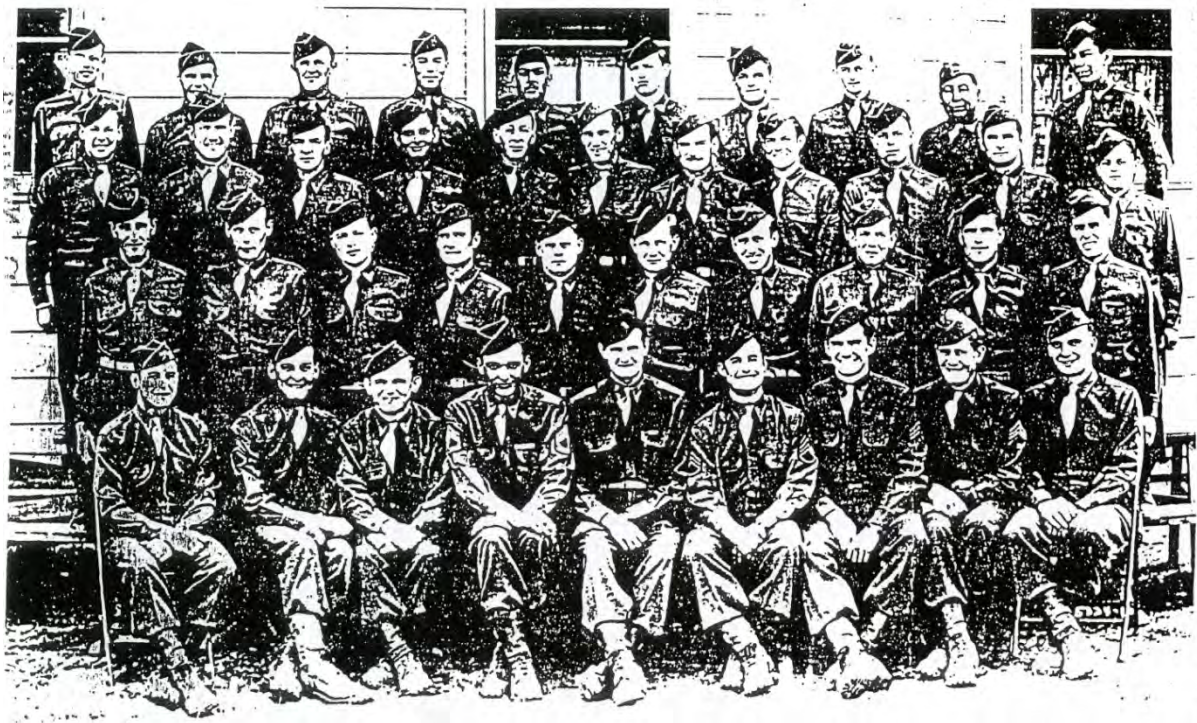
1st Platoon, CO. "G" 386th Inf 24 Jan 1945

Top Row: Harry Snyder, Thomas Morrison, Mitchell, Rudolph Navarro, Juan Ramirez, Stanley Johnson, Alton Herman, George Kurta, Octavius Suina, Tod Sanchem

Third Row: Richard Durig, Gilbert Morris, Robert Kimmey, Thomas Reali, Sylvester Kaplan, William Quinton, Vincent Burns, Loyi Girod, Clinton Telle, Clarence Poirier, Charles Kelvington (Flame-Thrower!)

Second Row: Avon Nichols, Donald Huckle, Clyde Clay, Glenn Howard, John Treager, Weldon Pitcher, Thomas Harper, John Cunningham, George Riehl, Emil Lampman

Front Row: SGT Walter Womer, S/SGT Walter Salamon, SGT Thomas Mulligan, T/SGT Victor Golhardt, 1st LT/George Polich, S/SGT David McKendree, SGT Clyde Wakefield, SGT Carl Brohammer, CPL Roland Swanson



1ST PLATOON, CO. "G", 386TH INF., 24 JAN 45

25 Jan 1945 – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

On January 25, 1945 the advance contingent boarded a troop transport docked off Fort Hamilton in New York Harbor and headed across the North Atlantic. The ship was a former banana boat built in 1900 (registered in Panama) – the USS CRISTOBEL

27 Jan 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Went to Santa Maria for a couple of hours to get away from it all. Met Kopyto, Koth, Pottinger, McCutchen, Mayfield, Sisler, Meyer, Faust, Boyer, Thomas, Morrison, McDonald, all in Santa Maria to have a beer by themselves and to get away from it all!

Pictured: Packing up and moving out (RRapesky Collection)



Jan 1945 - James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

After returning to Camp Cook in January, 1945, the Division was placed on standby alert. Private Fribley from Kansas brought a 37mm dud into the barracks as a souvenir and dropped by my bunk. It exploded and fragments tore my boot and smashed the blood vessels on top of foot. I was rushed to the hospital but no bones were broken. The platoon was restricted and I was given light duty on crutches. They held a court martial and Fribley received 30 days in the brig.

The only other New Mexico kid in the company was Bill Goodwin from Gallup. When money started disappearing from our foot lockers, a search was conducted and money order receipts were found in Goodwin's clothes. When confronted with the evidence. He bolted and ran. The guys chased him for three blocks and brought him back to the barracks, very bruised and bloody. He received six months in the stockade and a dishonorable discharge.

Late one afternoon in January, orders were received to pack all our personal items to mail home, all army issue items in duffle bag, and board trains by midnight. The train traveled east to destination unknown, but we knew we were going to Europe. We were granted one last week end pass, so most of us went to New York City. Gabe and I took the subway to his folks and we stayed with them. We dated some Waves that were going to school in a converted hotel and we all went to the Palladium and danced to the Benny Goodman Band, Tommy Dorsey, Glen Miller , Harry James, and Guy Lombardo on a rotating stage. I got to see the Stage Door Canteen, the Picadilly Bar where the Three Suns were playing, and the top of the Empire State. With two hours' notice, we boarded ships at the embarkation docks in New Jersey. It didn't matter that I was still limping from the dud explosion.

The ships were small Merchant Marine ships that held about 300 to 500 men and guarded by Cruisers and Destroyers. The convoy left the New York harbor and was in the North Atlantic by daybreak. We slept in hammocks and my company was in the lower deck bow.

About the second or third day, one of those famous North Atlantic storms hit and lasted a week. The ship would roll from side to side and bounce up and down with the bow hitting the waves like thunder. I was on KP duty in the galley when utensils and food started flying. I saw a garbage can sliding down the aisle toward me, so I straddled it and rode it to the bulkhead, splattering garbage over everything.

We were issued seasick pills, but it didn't work for most of the fellows. We had to strap ourselves to the hammock to sleep and the floors and stairways got slick and smelly. Food was difficult to handle and eat. We were not allowed to be on deck very much so at the end of three weeks, we were ready to leave that ship.

1945 Abraham Nadler 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company G

During the passage to Europe, my father recalled hearing a torpedo narrowly missing the troop ship as it passed by the hull that contained his bunk. Arriving in France in March 1945, the unit entered Germany through Belgium. From there on, fierce resistance was encountered. The Battle of the Ruhr Pocket, as described by the U.S. Army, became my father's brief battleground.

30 JAN 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Left Camp Cooke by troop train for somewhere on the East Coast; went through Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Penna., Maryland, Washington, D. C, and New Jersey, arriving at Camp Kilmer, N. J.

30 Jan 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Left Cook Jan. 30, 1945.

Jan 1945 – Earl L Fort 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I 3rd Bn

"We arrived in Lucky Strike early in January 1945. Mud, cold chow, and misery were the menu. One Sunday afternoon, soon after getting there, I was cutting something with my knife (a hunting knife I had purchased Stateside). It slipped and I cut my left thumb joint. It was bleeding, so I ran over to the medical tent they'd set up. A second lieutenant was on duty and he put two clamps on my cut. He began to sweat, so I asked him 'what's your problem?' 'You're my first patient,' he replied. I told him 'You'd better get used to it.'



We stayed at Lucky Strike for three or four days, then we marched out. On the way to the front we saw our first casualties. On April 15, 1945, we went crossed into Cologne, Germany in trucks, and then right outside of the city we got out. We marched for a while and put up for the night. The next morning we set out again and had not gone far when we saw a sign pointing back to Cologne (in German). It said "14 km." Right then we got pinned down by machine gun fire. I was shot right through the nose when I lifted my head to see where the gun was. (It was in the tower of a courthouse.) I jumped up to run to get to a house to take cover, but the gunner got me again. Through my right calf this time. So there was no more of that!

February

1 Feb 1945 – Brent J Morrison 2nd LT. 386th Assistant Adjutant – Regimental History

The Regiment left Camp Cooke, California, from 1 February 1945 to 3 February 1945 and closed at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, 8 February 1945.

1 Feb 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Censorship begins. Left CP Cooke. Troop train arrived Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, 08 Feb 1945

1 Feb 1945 – Transmitted herewith Regimental history of the 386th Infantry Regiment for the year 1945

Advance detail left Camp Cooke, California, 16 January 1945 and landed in Le Harve, France 8 February 1945.

4 February, –Yalta (ARGONAUT) Conference attended by President Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Churchill, and Russian Premier Stalin, begins. Matters discussed include the timing of the Russian entry into the war against Japan, and three postwar issues: the division of Germany, the extent of the Soviet sphere of influence in Europe, and the status of Poland.

6 Feb 1945 –HQ at Camp Cooke, California Daily Bulletin #31

All persons having financial claims against former Pfc. Odies Harrington 14039680, HQ CO 97th Infantry Division and those person indebted to the aforesaid deceased will present statements or payments on such indebtness immediately to 1st Lt Ralph L. Gossier, Headquarters. – by command of Brig Gen Halsey – written by Edward O. Wolf (DNB – Died, Non Battle)

Information: LOST – One (1) pistol, Cal .45 1911, automatic #436348, Lost in the vicinity of BLDG 4006, finder contact 303d FA BN

6 Feb 1945 -Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

Aboard the ship (USS CRISTOBEL) we spent some of the time in routine tasks, sometime in training, and some time just to ourselves. Our garters were 3 bunks stacked along the walls (bulkheads) and this was our space. Periodically during the day we were scheduled top side for fresh air and exposure to the elements – which did a lot to avoid sea-sicknesses. We were part of a large convoy – maybe twenty or thirty troop ships, freighters, etc., surrounded by destroyers and other war ships which we could see on the out perimeter – it was quite a sight.

Almost daily we had lifeboat drills in case we were torpedo. We didn't always know if it was a drill, or the real thing, but once or twice we heard explosions in the distance – presumable depth charges or gunfire but it had no direct effect on us. They did tell us, in preparation for the trip, that if we ended up in the water, our life expectancy would be 3 to 5 minutes in the cold North Atlantic.

On February 6 about 12 days after we left New York – we arrived in Southampton Harbor off the chalk cliffs of southern England. We took harbor between the Isle of Wright and the English coast. There was a popular song at the time “there'll be bluebirds over, the White Cliffs of Dover, someday, just wait and see’ – and we harbored near those white cliffs.

6 Feb 1945 -Malcom H. Bruner 922 FA Battalion, Battery B

The 97th Division left Camp Cook, California on February 6, 1945 for Camp Kilmer, New Jersey and arrived at the New Jersey Camp six days later, after having made the trip through the central part of the United States. The trip was made in troop sleepers. During stops, we were often required to take Calisthenics’.

From the warm sunshine of California, we found the snow and cold of New Jersey uncomfortable. Many of the men were able to spend a few evenings at home while at Kilmer and most everyone had an opportunity to visit New York City. New York is the home of B.T.O. Michael Zerkel.

We left Camp Kilmer for our debarkation port of Staten Island, New York and ferried by the Statue of the Liberty Enroute.

7 Feb 1945 – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

The next day, in daylight we crossed the English Channel and landed at Le Havre. This was a major debarkation port, and was busy with all kinds of ships unloading supplies to support the troops that were attacking inland.

When we unloaded, I got a seat in the back of one of the jeeps, as part of the convoy to our tent camp named CAMP LUCKY STRIKE about 40 miles from Le Havre and 10 miles from Dieppe.

We found out later that the drivers were from the RED BALL EXPRESS. This was a company of black soldiers, who were drivers. They got quite a reputation for getting the supplies through, in spite of any obstacles, against all kinds of odds – poor roads, enemy fire, rain, mud etc. They received special honors after the war for their performance.

I have never in all my life had a ride like that. The roads or by-ways in northern France at that time were, at best, dirt, with some of the better roads being two lanes, and they wound around towns, pastures, fences, trees – there was no such thing as a straight-away.

Anyways, it seems that during the 25 miles ride, I doubt if we had all four wheels on the ground more than half the time, and probably would have more than doubled the speed limit – if there had been any, most of the time. After “white knuckling” it for a while, I just decided to hang on and relax as best I could. We finally arrived safely and started to set up a temporary office camp site.

One night we got a pass to Caen on the coast, and had a chance to see the locals and sampled cognac. They were glad to see us.

7 Feb 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Arrived at Camp Kilmer, N.J. Feb. 7.

1945 – Murray Garrett 303rd Infantry Regiment

Murray's eight-day train ride east was so bumpy he was certain a wheel on his car had to have a flat spot. Now at Camp Kilmer, NJ, he was positive his next trip would take him to France and Germany. During his 10-day stay in Camp Kilmer, he used his pass to see New York City and visit Times Square. As expected, he was soon on a twelve-day cruise across the Atlantic as part of a troop ship convoy. Now Murray realized it was fortunate he had not been able to follow his brothers into the Navy, for he was prone to sea sickness. Due to the serious crowding on the ship, when he wasn't sick, Murray spent most of his time standing in line, waiting to eat. Docking in Le Havre, France, he was assigned to Camp Lucky Strike. The other two camps were Camel and Chesterfield. His tent's dirt floor and canvas cots offered little warmth. Chilled to the bone, Murray used everything he could for covers to no avail; he still woke up freezing.

After a week, they prepared to depart from Lucky Strike. That was when he learned that British and American forces had captured the Remagen bridge and had advanced enough to create the Ruhr Pocket. Murray's unit passed through the low country, ending up in a little town near the Rhine where, for the first time, artillery flashes and explosions were

visible. Reports of looting Russian troops who had been released from POW camps began circulating, putting everyone on edge.

1945 - James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

The ships docked at Cherbourg, France, and we loaded trucks to Camp Lucky Strike. Cherbourg and Le Harve, France, were completely demolished by the invasion.

Camp Lucky Strike was a tent city, and with snow on the ground and the cold winds made it miserable. We wore our heavy wool overcoats all day and slept in our clothes in the sleeping bag with the overcoat on top. A GI can of hot coffee was going all the time.

We didn't have much time to see France, but I remember the little French villages, such as St. Lo and St. Valerie, and loaves of long bread and a bottle of wine.

8 Feb 1945 – Transmitted herewith Regimental history of the 386th Infantry Regiment for the year 1945

The Regiment left Camp Cooke, California from 1 February 1945 to 3 February 1945 and closed at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, 8 February 1945...

11 February 1945, – Yalta (ARGONAUT) Conference attended by President Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Churchill, and Russian Premier Stalin ends.

13 February 1945, -The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

The Division traveled to the east coast by train, arriving on February 13, 1945 at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. On February 19 about 14,000 men of the 97th Infantry Division departed from New York in a large convoy of ships. German submarines were still operating in the Atlantic Ocean. On several occasions during the voyage, destroyers had to drop depth charges in order to prevent enemy submarines from attacking the convoy. On March 1 the Division arrived at La Havre, France and proceeded to a nearby staging area called Camp Lucky Strike.

13 Feb 1945 - Clifford Aldrich 386th Infantry Regiment, Company I

In February 1945, the 97th Infantry Division left for the East Coast to embark for Europe. On February 13, 1945, the unit arrived at Camp Kilmer, NJ, and on February 19, 1945 the 97th departed from New York for Europe, arriving on March 1, 1945 at Le Havre, France, proceeding to Camp Lucky Strike, on their way to the front.

Feb 1945 - Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

After a week of staging at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, we shipped out of Hoboken. Eight days and one submarine attack later, we arrived in La Havre, France. While on the ship in the harbor, the city and port came under a German V2 rocket attack, but nothing important was hit.

18 Feb 1945 – SSgt Archie C JR Robbins 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M & ?
Killed in action in Germany.

18 Feb 1945 – Brent J Morrison 2nd LT. 386th Assistant Adjutant – Regimental History
The Regiment left Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, 18 February 1945, detraining at Elizabeth, New Jersey, and boarded transport same day.

18 FEB 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A
Left Camp Kilmer in a troop train to Jersey City, N. J. Crossed the Hudson River and New York Harbor to Staten Island on ferry. 97th Division Band played as we loaded on to the USS Monticello, former Italian Luxury Liner, Conte Grande; received hot coffee and doughnuts from Red Cross. Morale was very low.

18 Feb 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D
Left States Feb. 18, 1945 on the USS Monticello

18 Feb 1945 -Malcom H. Bruner 922 FA Battalion, Battery B
On Sunday Night, February 18, 1945, we left the States on the merchant marine ship “Marine Wolf”. During our trip to France, many became sea sick, P.X. rations were hard to get, the food was terrible, and the ship was overcrowded. We landed in Le Havre, France on March 3, 1945. From here we were transported by truck to Camp Lucky Strike which is located about twenty miles from Fecamp, France and three miles from St. Savian.

At Camp Lucky Strike we were processed for combat. We attended classes on German uniforms, arms, booby traps, and how to behave when captured. We were allowed pass privileges to the surrounding towns, and even though not allowed, we did buy or trade for French bread. The liquor was very poor. Brooklyn was declared on of our allies.

A forced motor march from Camp Lucky Strike to Ralshoven, Germany took us through DIEPPE, France as well as many cities and towns of Belgium and Hollannd. We passed through AACHEN, Germany at night a few hours before reaching RALSHOVEN.

Feb 1945 – William C Martin JR 389th FA Bn
After training had been completed, the army decided the unit was needed in the European theater. In February 1945 they reached the east coast and two days later left on the 12 day Liberty Ship journey to Europe, arriving at Le Havre, France

19 Feb 1945 – Brent J Morrison 2nd LT. 386th Assistant Adjutant – Regimental History
Morning of the 19 February 1945, the Regiment sailed form New York for Le Harve, France, arriving 2 March 1945.

19 FEB 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A
Sailed from harbor while we slept. Company A quartered on F Deck, the bottom deck. Two meals a day, served at 6 A.M. and 4 P.M. Food was awful and sea generally calm throughout the trip. About 40 ships in convoy, largely transports, protected by destroyers and sub chasers, about 15 in all.

19 Feb 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

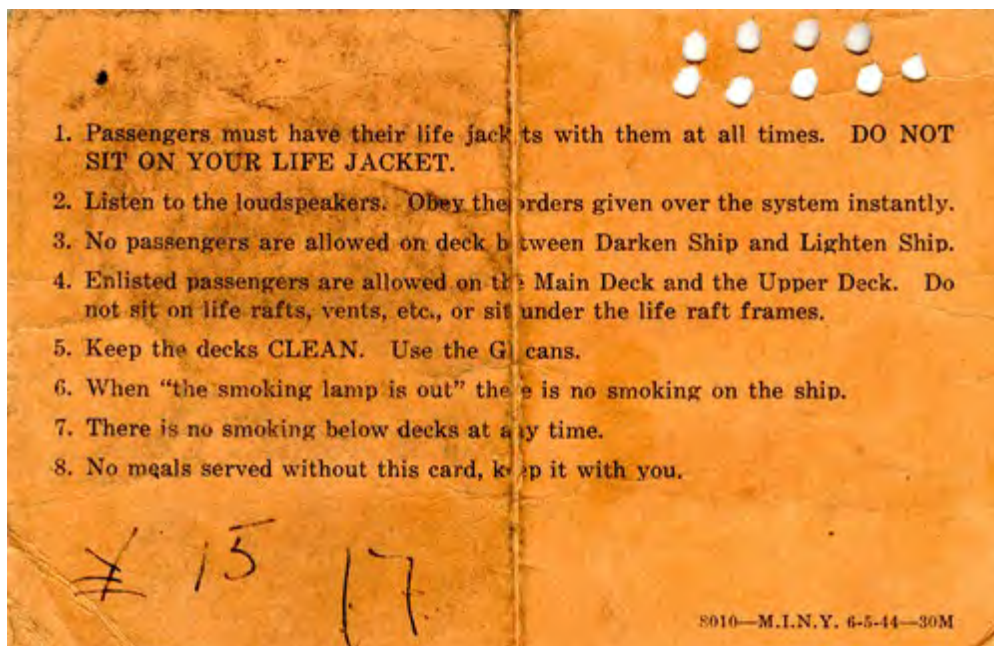
Departed Nypoe on Ship 35520-G in convoy of Liberty Ships destroyers and tankers

19 Feb 1945 - William Meisekothen 386th Infantry Regiment, Company C

In—well, really it was strictly field training and I—the division was pretty much filled about when I came in; I came in as a replacement or just added to make it fill. And we went from Fort Leonard Wood. Then we—I think our next stop was San Luis Obispo, California, and there we were trained for, basically, amphibious training for the invasion of Japan, obviously, we felt it was, and I was in the infantry there. I was a radio man and worked as a scout most of the time in the training. They had a volunteer program to go down to Camp Pendleton and train for scouting, more or less because you had to be a rather accomplished swimmer, which I was. I qualified for the program, went down there for a month in training, and we really trained in rubber boats, five- or seven-man rubber boats, for invasion of places, and then I went back to the same outfit I was with at San Luis Obispo. And I think from there we were, while the war was going on, we were gettin' ready to head to the Far East. And I think this is about the time—I'm a little hazy, but I don't know if it was just before the Bulge or right around in there. And really they were, we were packing up equipment to head to the far Pacific. We get on the train, no one said anything. Instead the train goes down to Florida; I ended up at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, and I went with a group of—my company went on a Liberty Boat to France.

19 Feb 1945 – Transmitted herewith Regimental history of the 386th Infantry Regiment for the year 1945

The Regiment left Camp Kilmer, New Jersey 18 February 1945, detraining at Elizabeth, New Jersey and boarded transport same day. Morning of 19 February 1945, the regiment sailed from New York for Le Harve, France arriving 2 March 1945.



B				B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	

Your compartment is No. _____

Your mess times are _____ and _____

Use **STARBOARD** entrance aft.

Name Sgt. Bergstrom 291

Unit No. _____

16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D
B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B

March

1 Mar 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Location: LeHavre, France

Landed Le Havre, France. Trucked to Camp Lucky Strike. Received mail upon arrival!

2 Mar 1945 - James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

The 97th Infantry Division landed at Le Havre, France, 2 March 1945, and moved to Camp Lucky Strike.

Mar 1945 - Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

On the way by truck to Campy Luck Strike (all camps in this area had cigarette names), our convoy was strafed by fighter planes. This camp was a tent camp on an old German airfield near Fecamp, France.

2 Mar 1945 - 386th Infantry Regiment, Company L

Stationed at Fecamp (vic., Camp Lucky Strike) in the region of Seine-Inferieure, France

2 Mar 1945 – 97th infantry Division Command Posts –

Town: Fecamp (vic, Camp Lucky Strike)

Region: Seine-Inferieure

Country: France

2 Mar 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Disembarked at Le Havre, France; loaded on trucks and went to Camp Lucky Strike, France, near Vittefleury, Cany Barville, and Fecamp. Lived in tents; very little activity.

2 Mar 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Arrived at Le Harve, France March 2, 1945. Went to Camp Lucky Strike, France.

2 Mar 1945-, GEORGE R. CAPPELLA Pfc, 387th Infantry Regiment, Company M

387th Infantry, New Haven:" In the countries of Europe nothing is worth as much as a cake of soap. In Germany and France we could trade a cake of soap for two good loaves of bread any time. We did a lot of swapping. A can of ' C Ration is good for a dozen eggs anywhere. One thing got me was that lots of Germans had on G. I. (U. S. Army Issue) clothing and many of them had American cigarettes."

2 Mar 1945 –Clyde Edward Braden 97th Acorn Division – KIA near Trier, Germany – in Germany

Braden, Clyde E. (37656928) was born on 22 September 1922 at Elliott, Iowa and entered service on 26 January 1943 at Hastings, Nebraska. He Arrived in England in October 1944 as a member of the 97th Acorn Division and was assigned to Patton's 3rd Army and saw action in France, Belgium, and Germany. Clyde was killed in action on 2 March 1945 in the Middle Rhine Valley near Trier, Germany at age 22. He was Private First Class at the time of his death. He was posthumously awarded the Silver Star and the Purple Heart. The Silver Star was presented to Clyde's parents at the direction of President Harry Truman through the Commanding General of the Seventh Service Command at Omaha, Nebraska. The citation for the award reads: "For gallantry in action against an armed enemy of the United States near Germany on 2 March 1945. PFC Braden, assigned as a truck driver, left his vehicle under guard and voluntarily organized a carrying party to take vitally needed ammunition and food to the front lines. Disregarding the danger involved, PFC Braden let the detail under enemy observation and fire was fatally injured by shell fragments during the third trip. His initiative and outstanding courage were an inspiration to our troops and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service." The first interment for Clyde was in Plot H, Row 6, Grave 144 at the U. S. Military Cemetery in Foy, Belgium. His body was returned aboard the U.S. Transport Haiti Victory. Final burial services with full military honors were held at Perryman Chapel at Red Oak, Iowa on 13 April 1949. Interment was at the Evergreen Cemetery in Red Oak. Clyde's brother, William C. Braden, was also killed in action and a double memorial service was held at the First Christian Church in Red Oak for both of them on 25 March 1945.

Pictured: Clyde Braden



2 Mar 1945 the 97th Reconnaissance Troop landed at Le Havre, France, 2 March 1945 as part of the 97th Infantry Division.

3 Mar 1945 – Brent J Morrison 2nd LT. 386th Assistant Adjutant – Regimental History

On 3 March 1945, the Regiment moved by motor to Camp Lucky Strike, France, arriving 4 March 1945.

3 Mar 1945 – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

The rest of the troop arrived. We were housed in large tents – twenty or thirty guys to a tent. Once someone found a source for real cheap gin – the only thing to mix it with was lemonade from our K Rations. Between the cheap gin and the powered lemonade, I've never liked gin after that.

3 Mar 1945 – Transmitted herewith Regimental history of the 386th Infantry Regiment for the year 1945

On 3 March 1945 the Regiment moved by motor to Camp Lucky Strike, France arriving 4 March 1945.

6 Mar 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

George (CO G) permitted to shower.

8 Mar, Thu. – Inter-American Conference, in session at Mexico City since 21 February 1945, ends.

10 Mar 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Used hollocrafter purchased from Company George's (CO G) funds to pick up Dinah Shore singing "I Dream of You" from America.

20 Mar 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Got another communal Shower

22 Mar 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Camp Lucky Strike

1005 S: G-1 reports

1732 message from division to pickup truck ¼ ton at ORD. shop office.
1945 alerted by phone for 15 ¼ ton drivers and 2 OFF's.
2050 2 OFF's and 15 EM left troop area on driving mission to Cherbourg, France.

23 Mar 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G
97th received EAME SV Ribbon

23 Mar 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL
Location: Camp Lucky Strike
0600 6 EM left for Le Havre, France on mission to drive 2 ½ ton trucks and 1 M-20 back to Lucky Strike
1600 6 EM returned from Le Havre mission completed.

24 Mar 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL
Troop 15 EM and 2 OFF return from Cherbourg, France driving mission

25 Mar 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL
Location: Camp Lucky Strike
Troop issue ETO ribbons. 1 OFF and 1 EM alerted to move to front.
2245 1 OFF and 1 EM left troop area in troop 1/3 ton for front.
2400 41 EM left troop area for CPX (radio operators and M9 drivers) 412 M-8's

26 Mar 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL
Men returned from CPX

27 Mar 1945 – Brent J Morrison 2nd LT. 386th Assistant Adjutant – Regimental History
The 386th Infantry moved as part of the 97th Infantry Division by motor and rail from Camp Lucky Strike, France, vicinity of Neuss, Germany, during the period 27 March 1945 to 30 March 1945.

27 Mar 1945 - Clifford William Aldrich 386th Infantry Regiment, Company I
The 97th Infantry Division left Camp Lucky Strike on the 27th of March, crossing the German border the next day, passing through Aachen.

27 Mar 1945 - Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)
On March 25 they loaded the Division onto "40 and 8" railroad cars, actually French box cars – (For 40 homes and 8 chateaux) these were left over from WWI – and got their name because they would hold 8 cows or 40 men.
We stopped in Belgium on Easter Sunday.



27 Mar 1945 - The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

The 97th left Camp Lucky Strike on March 27. On the following day the Division crossed the German border a few miles west of Aachen. A short time later it passed through the streets of that battered city.

The 97th Reconnaissance Troop crossed the German border west of Aachen and took up a defensive position along the west bank of the Rhine River opposite Düsseldorf, engaging in patrolling.

Pictured: Thermen, Bad Aachen (RBergstrom Collection)



27 Mar 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G
Entrained via Jeumont, Abbeville, Arras, Lovenich

27 Mar 1945 – Tues – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL
2015 troop left motor pool to move forward
Cross I.P. for trip to Germany

27 Mar 1945 – Transmitted herewith Regimental history of the 386th Infantry Regiment for the year 1945

The 386th Infantry moved as part of the 97th Infantry division by motor and rail from Camp Lucky Strike, France, and vicinity of Neuss, Germany during the period 27 March 1945 to 30 March 1945.

Mar 1945 – Nathan Galloway 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Location: Europe – The motor march – blackout from la Havre through Belgium and Aachen to Neuss. Squad leaders in jeeps – balance of unit 2-3 day journey in French Rail Road cattle cars. The superb spirit of Squad Leaders in preparing sleeping space for each member of his squad. Mess Sgt Dominic Bednarczyk labored tirelessly to prepare a broth –stew that could be eaten from canteen sup. Balance of troops arrive at night – walk 2-3 miles in rain – from a crowded cattle car- three day rations – “dog biscuits.” The squad leaders and the Mess Sgt forgot their rank and worked tirelessly to make the men comfortable, I shall always be proud of their spirit.

Mar 1945 – William C Martin JR 389th FA Bn

In early March., the 97th moved north through Belgium and entered Germany near Aachen. They tasted their first action on the west bank of the Rhine River. "It was there, after the German shells began dropping in, I became one of the fastest foxhole diggers anyone has ever seen." Bill's duty initially was as a .50 caliber machine gunner and an anti-tank gunner. Later he was assigned to the laying and repairing of battlefield phone lines. "That meant that we might have to crawl along in mud or snow toward an observation post, in pitch darkness, with a telephone line in one hand and a rifle in the other, all the time looking for a break in the line. Often German and American machine gun fire and mortar bursts were too close for comfort." Bill also helped to detect and clear land mines. The 97th had become part of Patton's 3rd Army and took part in the Battle for the Ruhr Pocket which resulted in the surrender of thousands of German soldiers. "During that action, we fired night and day, three howitzer rounds per minute." As spring advanced, the army swiftly moved across Germany and into Czechoslovakia. By mid-May the shooting was over in Europe.

Mar 1945 - Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

We boarded 40 by 8s (rail cars from World War I, 40 men or 8 horses) and went to Belgium. After a truck trip, we disembarked and marched to positions south of the Rhine River.

1945 – Vern Henderson, 386th Infantry Regiment, Company L

I can vividly recall that during our first attack as a unit, being ahead of Keams in the line of our attack through a cemetery. Our squad leader, Joe Morales, had crossed this cross street, crouched down by a tombstone, and was bringing the rest of the squad over by hand signals as we hunkered down by the wall of what must have been the side of a large tomb. The cross street was swept by sporadic machine gun and small arms fire, and Joe would bring us across during lulls in the fire. As my turn is coming up, I'm worried about moving fast enough, as I'm loaded down with a carbine and ammunition, a bazooka and bag of three rockets. Keams asked me if I'm scared, and when I assured him I was, he told me to let him go first, do as he did, and I'd be fine. His turn came, he jumped off, and met an enemy soldier head on. The enemy fired and missed, Keams fired and didn't, and we all made it. I could have never been able to unsling my carbine in time to do that. In my book, he saved my life.

After VE day, I was transferred to the 99th Infantry Division for occupational duty in Germany, and lost track of my old comrades in the 97th Division. I found them in 1985, and my wife and I attended their reunion in Kansas City. On our way home from there we stopped in Arizona and I found a way to write to Keams. Sometime later, I got a well-written letter from him and we corresponded for about two years. As he lived on the Navajo reservation about 7 ½ miles from a phone at the nearest trading post, I sent him our phone number and asked him to call us collect when he wished to, which he did several times.

In the summer of 1987, we planned a trip east, so I asked him to meet us at a trailer camp in Winslow. He did, we took him and his grandson to dinner, and as they had hitched a ride to town, we took them back to the reservation, learning a lot about his life there. With our younger daughter, we visited him the following year, and I did so a couple of other times. We met some of his family and friends and were..... (The rest of the letter is missing)

27 Mar 1945 – HQTRS RECORDS – AFTER ACTION REPORTS - DATED 22 May 1945

The 386th Infantry moved as part of the 97th Division (Thermite) by motor convoy and train from CAMP LUCKY STRIKE, France to Neuss, Germany, during the period 27 March 1945 to 2 April 1945.

28 Mar 1945 – 97th infantry Division Command Posts –

Town: Lovenich
Region: Rhineland
Country: Germany

Mar 28, 1945: The 97th Infantry Division crosses into Germany for the first time near the border city of Aachen, Germany

28 Mar 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop arrived and setup CP in Germany

28 Mar 1945 - James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

On 28 March, the division crossed the German border west of Aachen and took up a defensive position along the west bank of the Rhine River opposite Düsseldorf, engaging in patrolling.

28 Mar 1945 - Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

We then made our way to the Rhine River opposite Düsseldorf, Germany. All we did there was some patrolling before we were put on trucks to cross the Rhine at Remagen.

28 Mar 1945 - Clifford Aldrich 386th Infantry Regiment, Company I

On March 28, 1945 the 97th Infantry Division crossed the German border west of Aachen and took up a defensive position along the west bank of the Rhine River opposite Düsseldorf, engaging in patrolling.

28 Mar 1945 - 386th Infantry Regiment, Company L

Stationed at Lovenich, in the Region of Rhineland, Germany

28 Mar 1945 – History Background – AGAINST THE FATHERLAND

At 1725, March 28, 1945, division headquarters rolled across the German border a few miles west of Aachen. A short time later, it passed through the streets of the battered city, which Hitler once said never, would be taken by the Allies.

The division's first assignment was taking up defensive. Positions along the western bank of the Rhine River opposite Düsseldorf. Here, 97th dough's captured their first prisoners, killed their first Nazi soldiers.

The 389th FA Bn. commanded by Lt.' Col. Lawrence G. Kiely, Billings, Mont., fired the first round against the enemy, A 155mm howitzer shell demolished an installation in the suburbs of Düsseldorf.

The 303rd, a light artillery battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Joseph W. Redding, Jeannette, Pa., fired on an enemy gun emplacement across the Rhine in Div Arty's first combat mission. One less German gun emplacement was the result of that round. Members of the gun crew were S/Sgt. Sherman Girdler, Somerset, Ky.; Cpl. James K. Allen, Chicago; Pfc Michael L. Nocera, Exeter, Pa.; Pfc Alfred C. Barnow, Boston; Pfc Jack R. Clarke, Independence, Kan. Pfc Marion D. Myler, Ironton, Ohio; Pfc Remundo Garcia, Phoenix, Ariz.; Pfc Chester S. Pomeraiiz, Bronx, N. Y.; Pvt. Roy R. Ulness, Strum, WIS.

The 922nd FA Bn. under the command of Lt. Col. William V. Fenton, Lakeland, Fla., and the 365th FA Bn., under Lt. Col. Alfred E. Graham, Oklahoma City, OK, fired numerous missions across the Rhine, destroying road junctions and blasting enemy gun emplacements.

28 Mar 1945 - KAHRMANN, ARTHUR R., Pfc, Battery A, 303rd Field Artillery, New Britain:

"Germany is one big mess of rubble. Aachen is really flattened and Julich is even worse. We talked to a lot of the liberated Russians. Some of them had been slaves for five years. The Russians are good people. They are a lot like Americans."

28 Mar 1945 - SKOLNICK, GEORGE, Pfc, Company M, 387th Infantry, New Haven:

"We saw and talked to hundreds of liberated Russians. They were very friendly and very appreciative."

28 Mar 1945 - CUMMINGS, WILLIAM T. Cpl., Battery C, 303rd Field Artillery, New Haven:

"What got me was the way the German people, nearly every one of them, claimed they weren't Nazis. The Germans we saw were all healthy and well fed, as compared with the French who had nothing left after the occupation." Cummings was disgusted with the way the Germans starved and beat the slave laborers and prisoners of war.

28 Mar 1945 -Malcom H. Bruner 922 FA Battalion, Battery B

We entered the small town on the night of March 28, 1945 and slept in houses. Recent classes pertaining to booby traps made us very cautious. This was our first position for looting, we moved to NIEVENHEIM on the 31st of March and the first howitzer section of Battery "B" fired the first round against the Germans for the 922nd Field Artillery. Walt Calvert blushing pulled the lanyard. At Nievenheim we suffered our first casualty. We witnessed some poorly placed harassing fire from German 88 guns, suffered our first infiltrating patrol scare, and acquired more loot, which was to be discarded later for something better. Viette and Wibel managed to get a German Motorcycle in running order. We relieved the 95th Division.

From Nievenheim we moved to Viede by way of COLOGNE and BONN, crossing the Rhine on pontoon bridges at BONN. Viede is only a short distance from BONN, and the barrage balloons which helped protect the bridge from enemy aircraft were visible from our position. Our nights at our gun position were made easier because of the artificial moonlight provided by huge searchlights. We relieved the 78th Division, and from their cooks, we learned how a line outfit supplemented its meager food rations. At Viede, we fired over 3000 rounds in support of the 387th Infantry's crossing of the Sieg River, and in the shelling of SIEGBERG as part of Corps Artillery. A German "chow line" received enough rounds one evening to discourage what was left of those trying to get some food from returning. We learned how to fire from a muddy position, and how to sleep in a house shaking from the blasts of our howitzers. It was here to, that Cpl Lukash first discovered that it was necessary to light a flash light at night to see the time on a radium dialed watch.

1945 - James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

We started moving up to the front and saw the old Maginot Line of WW I, the tank barriers and trenches. We went thru the cities of Metz. Rheims, Aachen and Liege, Belguim. We relieved combat troops in Belgium that had fought the Battle of the Bulge and moved on into Dusseldorff, Germany, along the Rhine River without much fighting. It was bitter cold with snow on the

ground and we spent many nights in foxholes. It was difficult to keep dry socks and trench foot would happen real fast.

29 Mar 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Co. HQ., first and third platoons, machine gunners boarded train in St. Valerz, Normandy, and left. Second Platoon and motormen (with the 386th Infantry) boarded train but departure was delayed.

29 Mar 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Baal, Heinsberg, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany

C.O. and 3 Officers left CP for front lines. Changed password and received telephone call from G-2 w mission to take 1 ¼ ton and 1- M8 and patrol ?? S. from Baal to Horrenzig, draw fire of sniper reported operating in area.

30 Mar 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Left in 40&B's after a full day's delay (rear element). Traveled thru France into Belgium (advance element.)

30 Mar 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0410 Moved out on mission with 1 1/4 ton truck and 1 LAC (?) M-8

0115 mission completed – NOG. Report

1015 C.O. & 3 Off return from front lines.

1730 platoon leaders and 1st SGT of 2nd platoon moved to the front

2300 S: G-2 intelligence summary – S: G-3 operation overlay #1

30 MAR 1945. William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Train trip on 40 and 8 cars (40 men and 8 horses). Straw used as bedding. Went through the following places in France: St. Valery, Dieppe, Abbeville, Amiens, Mamn, Nestle, St. Quentin, Bohain, Le Ceateau. In Belgium: Charleroi, Namur, Liege. In Holland: Maastricht. We finally ended up in the town of Bellinghoven, Germany.

30 Mar 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Left France March 30.

30 Mar 1945 – MUSKATELLO, MICHAEL E., T/ 4, Service Company, 303rd Infantry, Portland:

"Holland and the Dutch were not so good. As far as I could see about one- half of them that I met were for the Germans."

31 Mar 1945, – Brent J Morrison 2nd LT. 386th Assistant Adjutant – Regimental History

Campaign:

Name: Central Europe

Duration: 31 March 1945 to 8 May 1945

Purpose:

In Ruhr: Encirclement of German Army, Group "B", in Ruhr area, and destruction of enemy strength and equipment in areas.

In Czechoslovakia Border: Protect left flank of THIRD ARMY within assigned sector.

31 Mar 1945 – 97th Infantry Division Command Posts –

Town: Glehn

Region: Rhineland

Country: Germany

31 Mar 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Traveled thru northern France into Belgium (rear element) crossed Belgium into Germany, to Bolsar, then to Nievenheim (advanced element).

31 Mar 1945 - 386th Infantry Regiment, Company L

Stationed at Glehn in the Region of Rhineland, Germany

31 Mar 1945 - ESPOSITIO, CARLO, Pfc, Battery C, 389th Field Artillery, New Haven:

"I'll take Belgium; the people are nice and handed out coffee and sandwiches as we went along."

31 Mar 1945 – Sat – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Division Signal Officer requested?? Vehicles for tactical radio work.

0300 Radio net was setup and functioning.

2000 2nd platoon with reinforcement from the 1st platoon moved into positions on the front against the enemy (along the Rhine) O.P.'s were put into operation under the command of Lt. Jennings and S/Sgt Furnas.

April

Note: The 97th Reconnaissance Troop then entered the battle of the Ruhr pocket, crossing the Rhine near Bonn and taking up a position on the southern bank of the Siegen River

1 Apr 1945 Peter Schrijvers - The Margraten Boys: How a European Village Kept America's Liberators Alive

Under the cover of darkness on Easter Sunday 1945 the 387th Infantry Regiment, Company G sent a patrol across the Rhine in three boat teams. The men were to probe enemy positions opposite their sector and they soon discovered that the German strength should not be underestimated. They sustained heavy machine-gun fire and many were shot as they took off their equipment and tried to wade and swim to a reef in the river. Leonard Rozwalka was not the only American who failed to return that night. According to the patrol's after-action report, the body of an engineer floated by "with a hole from ear to ear." Pfc Shiff "was hit in the jaw by a bullet." Private Gonzalez came to the

rescure of Pfc Vombey only to find that “he had been shot all along his side and through the right side of his head.”

1 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Traveling from Camp Lucky Strike north of France the Battalion arrived by train at Baal, Germany at 1830. The Battalion detrained and proceeded by foot to Immerath, Germany where we remained for the night awaiting arrival of the motors.

1 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Location; Baal, Heinsberg, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany

Detained at Baal, GY. Marched to Holzweiler, Immelrath, (5 KM from Neuss). Berms mined, not yet cleared.

1 Apr 1945 - Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

We stopped in Belgium on Easter Sunday and had Easter services with the local inhabitants – it was quite a moving service – under those circumstances with the Belgium’s singing the Easter hymns along with us.

After we left France, we travelled through Belgium, Holland, Luxumburg, and into Germany. In 24 hours, we had been in 5 countries. I couldn’t help but recall that it took us 24 hours to cross Texas from Texarkana to El Paso. It was a good geography lesson.

1 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

From Liege, Belgium, rear element went thru Maastricht, Netherlands, then into Germany. Debarked from the train, boarded trucks, de- trucked in Nievenheim, joined the rest of the company. Billeted.

1 Apr 1945 - William W. Grier 386th Infantry Regiment, HQTRS Company

Major William W. Grier, was in military operations against an armed enemy of the United States during the period of 1 April 1945 to 9 May 1945, in Germany and Czechoslovakia.

1 Apr 1945 John Leo PALKA 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

First Lieutenant John L. Palka, Company “M”, 386th Infantry Regiment for meritorious achievement in military operations against an armed enemy of the United States during the period of 1 April 1945 to 3 May 1945, in Germany and Czechoslovakia. Entered military service from Illinois.

1 Apr 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

(first part is unreadable) changed password. 2130 1st patrol crossed Rhine against the enemy led by 2nd Lt Walther and consisted of 9 men and 1 officer. Sgt M.C. Sheehan received a scalp wound inflicted by incoming MG (was first casualty of troop)

1 Apr 1945 - The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

In early April the Trident Division became involved in a major offensive operation in the Rhur area.

Although the industrial importance of the Rhur had been greatly diminished by heavy bombing raids in early 1945, Army Group B, consisting of about 350,000 German soldiers, still defended the region as the American forces approached. The Battle of the Rhur Pocket was one of the last major battles of World War II. Over 825,000 American and German soldiers fought in the Rhur.

1 Apr 1945 – HQTRS RECORDS – AFTER ACTION REPORTS - DATED 22 May 1945

Forward CP opened at Neuss, at 1600, 1 April 1945, with the main body of the Regiment closing at 2135, 2 April 1945. Regiment was ordered to relieve the 387th Infantry west of the Rhine River, to be effected the night of 1 April 1945.

Due to the fact that the main body of the 386th Infantry had not as yet closed in, the 322nd Combat Engineer Battalion of the 97th Division was attached to the 386th infantry, and this unit completed the relief required by higher headquarters prior to midnight, 1 April 1945. The foot troops of the Regiment arrived on the 2nd of April, the 1st and 2nd Battalions occupied the line relieving the 322nd Engineers, while the 3rd Battalion, 386th Infantry went into reserve. The width of the Regiment front indicated this disposition.

Patrolling the lines was ordered and reconnaissance missions were given patrols from the Battalions and to the Regiment I & R Platoon. These Reconnaissance patrols had great difficulty in accomplishing the job because of the swiftness of the river, the high seawalls that lined the 90% of the east bank at Dusseldorf, and the fact that it was the patrols first mission against the enemy. However, most of the patrols were successful and brought back valuable information with regard to enemy installations.

One patrol, led by the I & R Platoon leader, was to cross the river on the wrecked bridge at night to find out what opposition might be encountered on the hostile bank of the river. This patrol was led to the middle of the bridge before it was discovered that night crossing was impossible due to the condition of the bridge at that point. Machine guns opened up on the bridge and the patrol withdrew without losses.

Orders were received from Thermite to send Combat patrols across on the night of 4 April 1945, but these orders were rescinded when it was noted that there was not sufficient time for Reconnaissance patrols to get information as the enemy strength and disposition prior to the time set for the combat patrols to move out on the assigned mission.

During the period of 1 April to 4 April 1945, enemy activity consisted of harassing fire and light artillery, machine guns, flak guns, with some sniping. The enemy had good observation of the west bank and was able to cover river roads by fire when our vehicles or personnel appeared.

Relieving units should not occupy the same buildings or areas used by the relieved units as CP's, as these installations had been located and reported by enemy agents still in the vicinity. Due to the accuracy of enemy artillery fire in the Regiment CP area, it is believed that there was a forward observer located close at hand – possibly using the spire of a nearby church for signals and as a reference point. There was little hostile action during daylight hours.

The 365 FA (Teaser), as direct support artillery, was prepared to fire pre-plotted mission on the call of our battalions. Several of these missions were executed satisfactorily, particularly in effecting the withdrawal of the I & R patrol on the night of 4 April 1945 when it was trapped on the bridge to DUSSELDORF. It was reported by civilian informers that the heavy artillery firing into NEUSS was located out of range of the 105s of Teaser. This information was verified and relayed to Division Artillery.

1 Apr 1945, – Brent J Morrison 2nd LT. 386th Assistant Adjutant – Regimental History

Authority: Supreme Commander, SHAEF, and Commanding General of the 12th Army Group.

Battles: Two

Name: Ruhr Pocket

Place: Right zone, 97th Infantry Division Sector from Sieg River running generally north and northwest to Sector east of Dusseldorf.

Date: 1 April 1945 to 18 April 1945 inclusive

Campaign of which battle was a part: Central Europe

Forces engaged: Elements of the 3rd Paratroop Division, 9th Panzer Division, 7th Flak Division, 12th and 363rd V.G.E.

Results: Objective taken successfully. Regiment consolidated and plans were prepared for military occupation for prisoners captured see par 2 below. (25 April 1945)

1 Apr 1945 – Sun – History Background – The Battle of “THE RUHR POCKET”

During the first week of April, the 97th entered its second phase of the war--the Battle of the Ruhr Pocket. The division moved south, crossing the Rhine. Near Bonn to establish positions along the southern bank of the Sieg River which runs at right angles to the Rhine. The division front extended eastward from the Rhine approximately 30 miles.

On the north bank of the Sieg and facing the 97th was the German 3rd Paratroop Div., which later proved to be one of the toughest and most fanatical units in the entire Ruhr Pocket. In addition, German forces opposite the 97th sector consisted of the 353rd Inf. Div., 59 Inf. Div. and 7th Flak DIV.

A brisk exchange of mortar fire began as soon as the 97th went into the line along the riverfront. Initiative and skill favored the Trident. Capt. Glenn B. Peterson, Alta, Ia. And 2nd Lt. Jack M. Silverman, Bayonne, N. J., 303rd, located an enemy mortar by determining the trajectory of a dud. The two officers rushed to a nearby house when an enemy shell pierced the roof and an exterior wall before burying itself in the floor without exploding. By placing a long stick in the floor and pointing it along the line formed by the holes in the wall and roof, - they ascertained the azimuth and elevation of the shell.' A series of division 81s whammed back along the same route taken by the dud. The enemy mortar failed to return the fire.

The incident typified the initiative of 97th officers and men as they held positions along the Sieg. Then came the order from XVIII Airborne Corps, First Army. It meant one thing-attack!

The 97th was poised for its first major action. What dough's lacked in experience they made up in courage and determination. A typical infant man's attitude was that of Pvt. Remsen Hunnewell, New York City, 303rd, who said prior to the jump-off I'm raring to go. I don't think any of us are nervous. We're just tired of waiting.

1 Apr 1945 – Lt Sheldon's 387th Infantry Regiment, Company G, 1st Platoon

Lt. Sheldon's Patrol! Three boat teams cross the Rhine River at night

Recall – North Carolina Military Historical Society.

This is a copy of a World War II Infantry patrol report made by Lt Donald A. Sheldon, Co G, 187th Infantry, 97th Infantry Division. The patrol crossed the Rhine River during the night of Easter Sunday, 1 April 1945. The report is dated 3 April 1945.

Patrol was composed of three boat teams. Boat No 1, commanded by Lt. Donald A. Sheldon. Boat No 2, commanded by Tec Sgt Kenneth McCann. Boat No 3, commanded by S/Sgt George Mulvey. Three boats left our side of the Rhine at approximately 2200 hours, 1st April 1945. Boat team No 1 was 15 to 20 yards left of boat team No 3. Boat team No 2 was to the right of boat team No 3. Boat team No 2 became stuck on a reef about half way over and fell 200 yards behind the other boats. Boat team No 1 moved directly across and landed directly in front of Panel 718. Boat team No 2 landed to the left between boat team No 1 and wooden pier. Boat team No 3 landed between pier and Red Cross barge farthest to the left. The trip across took approximately eight to ten minutes. Boat team No 1 was about 15 yards off shore in hip deep water when the enemy opened up probably with machine pistols and the fire missed the occupants of the boat. No one was injured. Boat team No 1 hit the shore and fired at the flashes as they moved up off the beach. Lt. Sheldon with Sgt. Mize, Pvt Gonzales, PFC Bouton and PFC Vombey moved into the underbrush to the right of the patrol. The rest of the men were scattered in front or to left of the panel. Sgt. Sakass stayed on the beach rounding up the men to forward them to Lt. Sheldon. LeBlanc, Rentfrow and Cory were dug-in in the sand. Lt. Sheldon sent Vombey back to Burgasser and three remaining members to bring them up, but he couldn't find any of them. PFC Rentfrow, radio operator for boat team No 1, sent a message as soon as the enemy fired on the boat, then went ashore to the right of panel and sent another message "Receiving heavy, enemy resistance."

LeBlanc was right in back of Rentfrow and pointed out a machine gunner emplacement as enemy opened fire. Both men then started to dig in. Additional enemy riflemen (?) caused them to withdraw towards beach where joined by PFC Cory. They took up a position in a shell crater half filled with water — water damaged radio set so sending was impossible and only weak reception. Neither LeBlanc or Cory had weapons.

Lt. Sheldon: "The reason I didn't turn back was that the enemy covered the boat position with machine pistol and machine gun fire at intervals." The fire was grazing the ground to the rear of the men. No tracers or flares were used the entire time by the enemy. Another thing: the weapons being wet almost without exception failed to give satisfactory performance (ammunition was wet also). In my reconnaissance I found that the enemy has trenches and individual emplacements running across the crest of a small rise to the rear and right of the panel. These trenches may have spread to both flanks but this was

not discernible.” Sgt Mize and PFC Bouton both advanced and threw grenades at the automatic weapons in the trenches which caused them to stop firing for some time. Throughout the entire patrol, it was noticed that a thrown hand grenade usually silenced any automatic weapon nearby. Up to this time — midnight — there were no casualties in boat team No 1. No 3 boat team was farthest to the left, and there was no contact with it, nor with boat team 2. Lt Sheldon: “We were lying in our positions and formed the opinion that Tec Sgt McCann and S/Sgt Mulvey and their squads were probably proceeding with mission. We were pinned down by enemy fire so decided to wait and hold the position for the return of these men.”

Between 2400 and 0100 Lt Sheldon and PFC Bouton headed for designated assembly area to see if Tec Sgt McCann had returned or the other boat team. Lt. Sheldon making for the crest of the rise to the rear of the panel was halted by enemy rifleman whom he shot in the face. At the time two more riflemen fired at him from a trench 25 feet away. Both missed. Lt Sheldon dove behind log barrier closely followed by percussion grenades which shook but did not injure him. Both he and Bouton lay close to the ground for some time. It was now approximately 0200. Lt Sheldon: “The Germans which subsequent observation disclosed seemed to number about one platoon in this area. They seemed to be well equipped with automatic weapons. My conclusion is that the Germans in this area remained well inside their emplacements until after midnight when several small groups seemed to start roaming around. Their habit was to remain in their position and at varied intervals spray the area in front of them with low grazing fire.” Lt Sheldon and PFC Bouton withdrew from their position about 0215. There still were no casualties in boat No 1 at this time. S/Sgt Mize who had remained behind close to the beach tried to round up some of the men preparatory to returning across the Rhine. He could only find PFC Bouton who had come back to the beach in advance of Lt. Sheldon. They decided to swim for it. They started crawling diagonally toward reef extending into the water when machine pistol on right flank opened up and in the opinion of S/Sgt Mize who inspected PFC Bouton wounded him in the back. Mize also crawled past an unidentified body in an American helmet with an M-1 rifle. Body had a hole from ear to ear and he surmises that he was one of the engineers attached to the patrol. S/Sgt Mize made it to the water, took off clothes and equipment, and jumped into the water and started wading toward a steel rowboat farther down the beach. He was halted after a few moments of wading by PFC Rentfrow who was lying dug-in on the beach. He waded ashore and together with Rentfrow went to join Gonzales, Sherman (Engineer) and Lt. Sheldon. PFC Rentfrow’s story is that he, Cory and LeBlanc moved from the shell hole to the right and to the rear. He was the only one with a weapon so they all stuck together. They decided to swim back in spite of the fact that Rentfrow couldn’t swim without help from the others. Rentfrow gave his carbine to Cory and all three waded to the end of reef extending into river. Upon reaching end of reef with water up to their necks, they stopped while LeBlanc went ahead to explore for water shallow enough to wade through. LeBlanc slipped off the end of the reef into deep water and PFC Cory jumped in to help him. They both went down and PFC Rentfrow, left standing on the end of the reef, did not see either come up again. At the same time an automatic weapon started firing in his general direction so he crawled back to the shore

and without weapon lay hidden in the rocks at the shore line where he noticed S/Sgt Mize as mentioned above.

Gonzalez was stationed by a big tree with his BAR with PFC Vombey to his right flank. It was about 0200 when suddenly over the crest of the rise about 30 or 40 feet away a group of Germans advanced firing automatic weapons. Gonzalez fired half a magazine when his weapon jammed. He inserted a new magazine, fired a few rounds, and the weapon stopped firing altogether. At this time Vombey rolled over to Gonzalez and said he was wounded all over.

Gonzalez saw that he had been shot all along his right side and through the right side of his head. Then Vombey rolled over and Gonzalez believed him dead. Gonzalez left his BAR and started crawling toward the water, made it, and took off his outer garments and waded and swam to reef in the river. He saw a person on the other side of the reef (probably another engineer).

Believing him to be a German, he waded back to shore where he met with Rentfrow and the others.

Sgt Sakacs's story: Together with Burgesser they were pinned down by enemy fire and lay in one position in a small shack until they saw Lt Sheldon with a boat. While crawling back toward Lt Sheldon they were fired upon by several standing at the edge of the woods. They were not in a position to return fire.

They joined Lt Sheldon and the rest of the group who at this time were at the edge of the reef that extended into the river: Lt Sheldon, S/Sgt Mize, Sgt Sakacs, Engineer Sherman, PFC Burgesser, PFC Rentfrow, and PFC Gonzalez. They all dug in, surrounded their positions with rocks as much as possible, and remained there on the reef throughout the next day. At dawn they saw the Germans coming out of their emplacements. Some 15 of these Germans were engaged in digging of some kind. S/Sgt Mulvey's boat landed to right of boat No 2 and was fired on as it reached shore — but all got ashore safely. Tec Sgt McCann's boat came in immediately afterwards and was caught in a cross fire as it landed. Tec Sgt McCann and S/Sgt Weiher were the only ones to reach shore. However, PFC Fatzinger and PFC Bledsoe (unwounded) stayed in the boat and returned across the river with the body of PFC Venezia and with PFC Weiss and PFC Ochlschlaeger who were wounded. (Note is made here that PFC Bell, wounded in action in this patrol, is not mentioned by any of the present survivors.)

S/Sgt Miller was wounded while going ashore and remained on the beach by the boat. Tec Sgt McCann advanced and joined up with S/Sgt Mulvey's group. Tec Sgt McCann was under the impression that he was the only survivor in his boat. S/Sgt Mulvey's group with McCann headed toward the general assembly area when they were caught by automatic weapons fire. At this point they either lost or became separated from five men in the group including the medic. They did not see these five at any time thereafter. The remains of S/Sgt Mulvey's group went through to and behind objective of mission. Their observations are that all Germans and weapons were concentrated along the river front as

they met with no opposition or challenges after they got 1000 yards inland. They crossed over a large road, made a circle and headed back to the assembly point. They waited there for some time without any news of the other members of the patrol.

Then they headed for their boat, but in the darkness missed it by quite a ways. As they headed back up the beach towards the correct position of their boat, they saw it being rowed to the other side by three engineers. This was at approximately 0315. They picked up S/Sgt Miller, who was lying along by the boat badly wounded in arm and legs. The group now consisted of S/Sgt Mulvey, Tec Sgt McCann, PFC Schiff, PFC Head, PFC Schmidt.

The five men who were lost from the original group were S/Sgt Weiher, PFC Saladin, PFC Rozwalka, PFC Adair, and Medic PFC Parker. S/Sgt Mulvey's group was again caught in automatic weapons' fire and deployed into holes on the beach near barge in the river. S/Sgt Miller was carried with them.

About 1100 they discovered an old wooden boat attached to the barge. Tec Sgt McCann advised returning immediately depending for successful daylight crossing of the river on supporting fire from our side (which was not forthcoming). They started back in the wooden boat when the boat filled with water and the enemy opened fire from the far left flank. S/Sgt Mulvey was hit in the back of the neck, S/Sgt Miller was lying over the gunwale of the boat helpless. McCann, Beard, Schiff and Schmidt jumped into the water. They started swimming and Schiff was hit in the jaw by a bullet. Schmidt returned to the side of the boat, took off his shoes and all outer clothes and started to swim. Schiff returned to hang on to the side of the boat; McCann and Beard were last seen swimming in the water amid enemy rifle fire. In Schmidt's opinion, the three men in the boat were not mortally wounded.

Schmidt swam and was carried by the current three miles downstream, where he was finally picked up on our side. Lt Sheldon's party returned via dug up by PFC Gonzalez who took the boat from under machine gun fire. Thus ends Sheldon's after action report of 1st Platoon, "G" Company, 387th Infantry Regiment, 97th Infantry Division pertaining to patrol across the Rhine on Easter Sunday, 1st April 1945 — Zone Germany. Mission completed 3rd April 1945.

2 Apr 1945 - Thomas F. Collingwood 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A

Near Oberkassel, Germany on the night of 2 April 1945, Lieutenant Collingwood fearlessly led a reconnaissance patrol across the Rhine River, in Germany, in the face of heavily defended enemy positions. With his progress being constantly harassed by enemy flares and searchlights, Lieutenant Collingwood landed on the enemy shore and obtained valuable information as to the enemy dispositions. Returning to his unit, the patrol was brought under heavy enemy fire. Lieutenant Collingwood, demonstrating courage and leadership brought his men back without casualties.

2 Apr 1945 - Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

Patton and his Third Army had crossed the Rhine and were well into Germany. In the process they had encircled the Ruhr Valley – a major industrial area – so that it was literally an island along the Rhine completely encircled by Allied Forces.

Our Division task was to start at the northern end of the valley and proceed south to clean out the area of resistance.

2 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

The Battalion received orders to move to Neuss, Germany. We occupied a defensive position west of the Rhine, opposite Dusseldorf, Germany, E and F Companies on line, G Company in reserve, and H Company in general support. We relieved elements of the 95th Infantry Division. Later on in the evening we were ordered to send a patrol across the Rhine due to extensive enemy activity on east bank. Battalion came under its first artillery fire.

2 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Location: Neuss, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany
386th at Neuss – Enemy front line east bank Rhine River. Spasmodic artillery falling on regiment area approx. 35 large caliber shells fell. Sniper activity reported near canal. En civilian captured crossing bridge. Civilians observed were not walking down streets in customary manner during PM but going door to door as if they sensed some activity to commence. 0730 2nd Bn. Assigned south flank of 386th regiment. 1030 White CP at Neuss. Relieved elements of 95th Division.
1200 George (CO G) met with White. Planned recon patrol.
1400 George (CO G) in reserve.
1545 George (CO G) patrol leader, Patrol & Engineers met with White.
1600 Patrol Recon of River crossing (Rhine). (Dillon's squad – third platoon, George (CO G) swam Rhine; pulled Fishman out)
1930 Hourly reports from George (CO G).
2230 George closed in.

2 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Third BN. Relieved the First on the front west of the Rhine, Item CO., in reserve, moving into Norf.

2 Apr 1945 –Rupert L Davis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company I

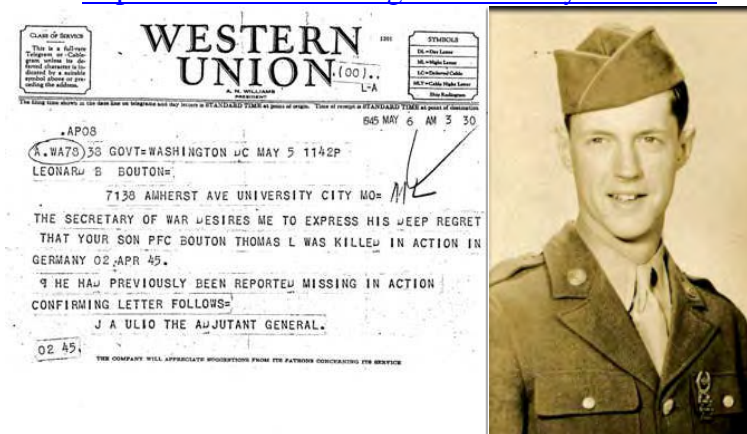
The 3d Battalion, 386th Infantry Regiment moved onto the front line near Dusseldorf, Germany on 2 April 1945. Over the next few days, the regiment conducted patrols and reconnaissance while encountering harassing fire from the Germans.

2 Apr 1945 Thomas Leonard Bouton 387th Infantry Regiment, Company G - KIA

Thomas Leonard "Tom" Bouton was born on March 2, 1926 in St. Louis, Missouri. He was the only child of Leonard B. and Paula (Jaenicke) Bouton, and the grandson of Paul Albert Jaenicke, who immigrated to America from Berlin, Germany in the 1880's. Tom had two cousins to whom he was very close. Their names are Paul and Donald Jaenicke.

Tom served as Student Body President of Hanley Junior High School in University City, Missouri. He graduated from University City High School in 1943. His main hobby was playing drums in the school band. He was also known for his baseball ability as a southpaw pitcher during his high school and brief college careers. While attending University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas, Tom enlisted in the United States Army in March, 1944 at the age of 18. He was sent to Camp Cooke, California for training. His baseball throwing skill came in handy during army training for grenade throwing. While at Camp Cooke he received a marksmanship medal. From Camp Cooke he was sent to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. He departed New York City by troop ship "Monticello" on February 18, 1945, and arrived LeHarve, France on March 2, 1945 (his 19th birthday). Tom served with the 97th Infantry Division, 387th Infantry, and Company G. He entered Germany on March 27, 1945. His unit entered combat on March 29, 1945. In the night of the first to the second of April Tom was a member of a night-raiding patrol sent out on a special mission into enemy-held territory in Western Germany nearby Düsseldorf. He was fired upon several times and escaped injury. He was attempting to return to his own unit when he was killed in action by a German sniper while crossing the Rhine River in the early morning of April 2nd, 1945. He was age 19 years and one month.

Link: <http://www.fallennotforgotten.nl/Story00022.htm>



2 Apr 1945 Arthur D JR Thomas 387th Infantry Regiment

While serving in the Rhineland campaign, he was one of only seven survivors of a group of 48 Infantryman that crossed the Rhine River on a mission.

2 Apr 1945 Raymond C Beard 387th Infantry Regiment - KIA

2 Apr 1945 Oliver J Parker 387th Infantry Regiment, Medical Detachment - KIA

Oliver J Parker, Pfc, US Army. Home address: Vinita, Craig County. Mrs Juanita D Parker, Wife, 216 North Smith, Vinita. Born October 10, 1917. Enlisted December 21, 1939. Decoration: Order of the Purple Heart. Served in Medical Detachment, 97th Division. Awarded the Good Conduct Medal. Died April 2, 1945, in action in Dusseldorf, Germany

2 Apr 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Germany – changed password. 1830 T/5 Frantz accidentally shot by weapon being discharged.

2300 Lt Rock & 9 AM made patrol across Rhine, encounter small arm fire. No casualties.

3 Apr 1945 - The 97th entered the battle of the Ruhr pocket, crossing the Rhine near Bonn, 3 April, and taking up a position on the southern bank of the Sieg River.

3 Apr 1945 - James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

The 97th entered the battle of the Ruhr pocket, crossing the Rhine near Bonn, 3 April, and taking up a position on the southern bank of the Sieg River.

3 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

The Battalion remained in its defensive position. Later on in the day we received orders to send another patrol across the Rhine. The patrol was formed under the command of Lt. Byeligh (Byelich). Patrol did not get across the Rhine due to extensive enemy activity on east bank. Battalion received orders to be relieved by the 101st Airborne Infantry.

Note: XXI Corps Commander, General Brown, visited the Battalion.

3 Apr 1945 - Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

We then took up positions along the Sieg River. For the next three weeks we were in the Battle of the Ruhr Pocket.

3 Apr 1945 – Tues - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

386th at Neuss – Two patrols sent out during the night. Our Mission to reconnoiter east bank of river to Railroad Bridge, discover automatic weapons. No casualties sustained. Unusual number of civilians was moving west from river during PM. Enemy pillbox 400 yards from head of Railroad Bridge on east side was knocked out.

0115 Patrol moved out at 0115.

0615 Patrol reported back at 0615. 1005 written report from George (CO G).

1035 Request report from LT. Rohr (George)

1130 Corp Commander may visit 2nd Bn area.

1135 George Co to send another patrol. 1140 George Co. Reported.

1830 White CP moved forward to Grafrath.

3 Apr 1945 - Frank T Holmes 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Private First Class Frank T. Holmes, was in a fierce battle on 3 April 1945, in Germany. Private First Class Frank T. Holmes, Company “G”, 386th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 3 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Massachusetts.

3 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Prepared for night raid to cross the Rhine and neutralize enemy forces in Himmegeist. Raid canceled.

3 Apr 1945 - Clifford William Aldrich 386th Infantry Regiment, Company I

The 97th entered the battle of the Ruhr pocket, crossing the Rhine near Bonn on April 3, and taking up a position on the southern bank of the Sieg River.

3 Apr 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Germany – Changed password. Troop train moved to Anstel, Germany. 1730 troop trained closed at Anstel, Germany

3 APR 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

We crossed the Rhine River at 3 P. M. in trucks over a pontoon bridge at Bonn, a few miles north of the Remagen Bridge. There were 25 barrage balloons and plenty of AA batteries around. Billeted in Bueul.

4 Apr 1945 – 97th infantry Division Command Posts –

Town: Oberpleis
Region: Rhineland
Country: Germany

1945 – Nathan Galloway 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Crossing the Sieg – I was delegated to take all Battalion Transportation across the river and rejoin the troops. The engineer's to have the crossing ready by 8 PM. General Patridge was at the crossing site – I was about 500 yards back with about 40 vehicles lined up. The general kept in touch with me – we were to cross first as we had the longest distance to go to where the men crossed. 8 o'clock became 9 – 9 became 10, 10 became 11, 11 became 12 – some time after 12 the general gave the word to start. As it was so late and we were going into one of those Black Forests, the general told me to go in far enough to clear the column and wait till the crack of dawn to proceed – I had already made that decision but it was comforting to have him confirm it. At dawn I went forward until I located a space adequate for a turn around. I didn't want to get ambushed. Upon returning to signal the vehicles forward I remember observing Pfc Danek, as tall stole young man who never exhibited much enthusiasm for the military – he was squatting, carbine loaded and pointed – his head turning like an owl – observing all directions. As a Commander it gives one a warm feeling that perhaps some were listening to those dry lectures.

4 Apr 1945 – History Background - ELIMINATION OF THE RUHR POCKET - Interview with: Capt Milton Ponitz, Asst S-3, 387th Inf , and 97th Inf Div. 1st Lt, Robert McCaffrey, Ln 01 387th Inf , 97th Div. Place: Opladen, Germany.

On 4 Apr 45 the 387th Inf as a component of the 97th Inf Div was holding a defensive position on the West bank of the Rhine from DORMAGEN North to NEUSS . On this day the Division received orders from the VII, Corps, First U. S. Army, to move to the East side of the Rhine River in the vicinity of SIEGBURG, Germany to take up a position on the left flank of the First U. S. Army breakout from the REMAGEN bridgehead. The Regiment moved at 040600 Apr 45 by truck and closed at ROTT, Germany at 1730 on

the 4th, this was a rear assembly area, and the battalions then crossed into the terrain just north of ROTT.

The Regiment was given the mission of relieving the 309th Infantry of the 78th Division on the South bank of the SIEG River. The area to be taken over by the 387th Infantry extended from the left flank on the Reichautobahn (FRANKFURT - COLOGNE) Highway East along the southern bank of the SIEG River to the right flank at (773409), a frontage of 9000 meters, including HENNEF. The Regiment completed relief of the 309th Infantry at 050545B Apr 45. The Regimental Commander placed two battalions on line, the 3d Battalion on the left and the 1st Battalion on the right. The 2d Battalion was given the mission of taking up breakthrough positions to the rear of the 3d Battalion, on the high ground commanding the plain SE of SIEGBURG.

The SIEG River flows EW into the RHINE River, just above BONN, Germany, and it was on the south bank facing north that the Regiment went into position. From HENNEF to the East, the South bank of the river is a shallow open plain, three to four hundred yards wide, cut by an EW road.. However, near the right boundary, in the vicinity of BLANKENBURG the high ground approaches the river closely from the South To the W of HENNEF the South bank of the river is a flat, open plain, about 2000 meters in depth, which rises to the high ground to the SW of HENNEF. The flat ground on the South bank of the river, the valleys approaching this ground from the S, and the N side of the high ground overlooking the river from the south were commanded by high ground on the N bank of the river from HOLBERG W to SELIGENTHAL, all of -which was in German possession. Movement on the flat open ground by day was necessarily limited to infiltration., except in the larger towns where cover and concealment were available. HENNEF, in the center, served as a strong anchor for our line. The 1st Battalion on the right in general extended from HENNEF along a road about 300 yards S of the river, to BLANKENBERG, exclusive. The 3d Battalion, which included the main W portions of HENNEF, extended from the N Portions of HENNEF through WEINGARTSGASSE - ZISSE'NDORF - STOSSDORF to the AUTOBAHN.

The wide flat plain between the Autobahn and HENNEF was suitable for use by German Armor, and was one of the most vulnerable locations on the Corps front. This plain was commanded by the high ground lying between HENNEF and the highway and the S of the plain. For this reason the 2d Battalion in Regimental reserve dug in on this high ground at location (650405 to 660405)Ref. Map, Companies E and G were charged with the defense of these positions. Company F was further held in reserve at SOVEN . To further strengthen the regimental reserve position, Company I, the reserve of the of the 3rd Battalion, dug in on the high ground South of HENNEF.(683405) The 1st Battalion's left flank was at(685417) with right flank at (733409). The 3d Battalion's left was just east of the Autobahn Highway at (650430) extending right (E) to tie in with the 1st Battalion's left flank at (685417).

Both the 1st and 3d Battalions had their CP's in HENNEF, the 3d Battalion CP being in the West End at (695417). The Regimental CP was at ROTT. Cannon Company occupied positions at DOMBROICH ((650390). TD and AT guns were included in each Battalion's fire plan.

The Regimental CO, Col William D. Long, immediately sent night patrols to feel out the N bank of the river, which was enemy held territory. Intense lateral patrolling along the riverbank was also maintained at night. Reconnaissance groups were sent at night along the river to find points for possible crossings; the mission including investigation of the formability of the banks on both sides for easy approaches, consistencies of the river bed and current and the routes of penetration away from the river to the North.

4 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

386th at Obereip, Rhein-Sieg-Kreis, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany – Units in contact, 78 Infantry Division. Information from 78 Infantry division indicates EN maintains approx. 50 men per 1,000 yards, plus manages mortars. EN is said to be largely civilians with a few days training. SS TRS are scattered through the area.
0130 Recon Patrol departed on mission.
0345 Recon Patrol returned – mission unsuccessful.
1300 George Co started move to new area by foot
1530 George Co closed in billets.

4 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Plans for relief at Neuss were completed. Forward echelon moved to Grafrath, Germany at 1230. The Battalion closed into Grafrath at 2400, awaiting further orders. The Battalion Commander received orders to move Battalion to Oberpleis, east of the Rhine. Plans were arranged to move the Battalion the following morning.

4 Apr 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Germany – 0900 Troop crossed I.P. on move to Bellinghausen, Germany.
1400 troop closed at Bellinghausen to setup up guard. Changed password.
1830 troop received the pay for men.

4 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Replaced Bn the 101 Airborne Div. Left early with full field packs on 10-mile hike, boarded trucks near Gohr, traveled thru Bruhl, Bornheim, the outskirts of Cologne, thru Bonn, crossed the Rhine slightly south of Bonn. Saw the devastation wrought by heavy bombing attacks on Cologne's metropolitan area. Halted in Honnef on the Rhine south of Bonn, which was the wrong stopping place. After two hours boarded trucks again and moved thru Oberpleis to Hennef area. Waded three miles in mud to a factory where Russian "displaced persons" had labored.

4 Apr 1945 - 386th Infantry Regiment, Company L

Stationed at Oberpleis are the Region of Rhineland, Germany

4 Apr 1945 - MONIZ, JOHN A., Pvt., Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 303rd Infantry,

Naugatuck: "There were six of us moving up in a truck through East Cologne, when we were fired at from a building, and the truck started to burn. The 'whistling Betties'

(German 88s) were dropping all around. We pulled out our driver who was wounded, just before the truck exploded. Then we strung out in a line of skirmishers, surrounding the house. I fired two rounds from my bazooka and 36 Germans came out with their hands up."

4 APR 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Moved to Hanniglar to act as a reserve battalion.

4 Apr 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Arrived in Germany April 4, 1945. Was in the Battle of the Ruhr Pocket and the battle crossing the Czech border.

4 Apr 1945 - JOHN F. PATRICK LT. Col 820TH TANK DESTROYER Bn

Battalion C.P. vic Euskirchen, Germany (F334274). Reconnaissance Company at Stotzheim (F346262). "A" Company at Cuchenheim (F358283). "B" Company at (F361252) and "C" Company at (F335225). Headquarters Company and rear echelon at Kreuzweingarten.

Battalion C.P. Group moved to Oberpleis, Germany (F676346) closing at 1700 hours. Battalion was attached to 97th Infantry Division which was relieving the 78th Infantry Division. The battalion relieved the 893rd Tank Destroyer Battalion.

Reconnaissance Company moved to Ittenbach, Germany (F665308) closing at 1700 hours with First and Third platoons. Second platoon was attached to Company "C" at about 1600 hours and reported to Commanding Officer, Company "C" at Putzchen, Germany. At 1930, Third platoon was attached to "A" Company and reported to Commanding Officer, Company "A", at Boserath, Germany at 2015.

"A" Company moved from Cuchenheim, Germany (F358283) to Boserath, Germany closing at 1700. Company was attached to CT 387 of 97th Infantry Division to relieve Company "A" of 893rd Tank Destroyer Battalion. 3rd platoon reconnoitered area of 3rd platoon of Company "A" 893rd Tank Destroyer Battalion.

"B" Company moved from Heistebacherrott, Germany (F645332).

"C" Company moved to Putzchen, Germany (F5838) and was attached to CT 303 of 97th Infantry Division.

The rear echelon moved to Nieder Dollendorf, Germany.

4 Apr 1945 – HQTRS RECORDS – AFTER ACTION REPORTS - DATED 22 May 1945

On 4 April 1945, the CP (CT) moved from its position opposite DUSSELDORF, being relieved by elements of the 101st Airborne Division.

The CP (CT) went into temporary assembly area SE of NEUSS.

5 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

386th at Obereip, Rhein-Sieg-Kreis, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany – 97th Division rear at Glehn from 31 Mar – 4 Apr 1945. At 1415 15 men were discovered in a camouflaged POS and were fired on by our Artillery. Enemy Artillery was heard falling to west of our area but none reported by Bn.'s. Mortar round fell in 2nd Bn area without effect. 19 PW's captured.

0600 White left for new CP at Oberpleis (Lbereiper). 2400 George completed relief of positions of 78th division along Sieg River.

5 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Battalion Commander, Company Commanders, and S-3 left for destination at 0630. Upon arrival at Oberpleis the Battalion Commander and party were directed to report to Oberroth, Germany to the 311th Infantry, 75th Division C.P. to receive relief plan. The Battalion moved into position that night and completed relief at 2400, with the exception of F Company who completed their relief at 0930 on 6 April 1945. We occupied a general line, facing north in vicinity of Huckenbrol, Forst, Sitterzenbach about 2000 yards south of Sieg River. We also occupied positions north of Sieg in vicinity of Stromberg.

Note: We traveled approximately 90 miles to get to our destination, crossed Rhine River and then found out we were to participate in the Battle of the Ruhr Pocket.

C.P.'s: E Company Eitorf; F Company Rodder; G Company Sitterzenbach; (?) Company vicinity of Sitterzenbach.

5 Apr 1945 - Ted Maillet 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G - KIA

Serving with the 386th Infantry Regiment of the 97th "Trident" Infantry Division, Ted Maillet arrived in France in March 1945. On March 28, the division moved into Germany and crossed the Rhine River on April 5. Two days later the 386th Infantry Regiment crossed the Sieg River and faced counterattacks by German forces. Private First Class Maillet was killed that day. He is buried at the Ardennes American Cemetery in Neupre, Belgium.

5 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Relieved the 78 Division in the Hennef area. Billeted.

5 Apr 1945 –Rupert L Davis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company I

The regiment moved to positions south of the Sieg River near Oberpleis on 5 April and prepared to take part in the Ruhr Pocket Operation as part of the First Army.

5 Apr 1945 - Eugene Corbitt 386th Infantry Regiment, Company K

Staff Sergeant Eugene Corbitt, Company "K", 386th Infantry Regiment, on 5 April 1945. Entered military service from Texas.

5 Apr 1945 - William E. Shafer 386th Infantry Regiment, Medical Detachment

Private First Class William E. Shafer, Medical Detachment, 386th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 5 April 1945, in Czechoslovakia. Entered military service from Ohio.

5 Apr 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Germany – Troop crossed I.P. on move.

1600 troop closed Pleisersohn, Germany changed password.

Apr 5, 1945: Jack Ater (view from airplane) writes to his parents that he has been up along the Rhine River in Germany, as part of the 97th Infantry Division, 387th Infantry Regiment, and things are going well, but he has seen some action in the process.

5 Apr 1945 – Thur– JOHN F. PATRICK LT. Col 820TH TANK DESTROYER Bn

Battalion C.P. and rear echelon no change

Reconnaissance Company Pioneer platoon made a reconnaissance of road net and bridges in 97th Infantry Division sector. The Company C.P. and Pioneer platoon moved to Oberpleis, Germany (F678343) at 1530.

1st platoon was attached to Company “B” and reported to Commanding Officer, Company “B”, at 0800. Made route reconnaissance to vicinity of Oberscheid (F772331) and Griesenbach (F788336).

2nd platoon made route reconnaissance in regimental area and checked for gun positions and O.P.’s.

3rd platoon moved to vic Hennef (F6741) with 3rd platoon of “A” Company.

“A” Company.

1st and 2nd platoons went into indirect fire positions vic Urthweiler (P6637). Fired 67 rounds unobserved indirect fire.

3rd platoon went into direct fire positions vic Gruelsiefen at 0400 relieving 3rd platoon, Company “A”, 893rd Tank Destroyer Battalion, placing one section in direct firing positions and one section with one reconnaissance section in mobile reserve, vic Hennef, Germany.

“B” Company.

Attached to 386th Infantry. Company enroute to Mendt, Germany (F767343).

“C” Company.

Reconnoitered area for routes and firing positions, both direct and indirect.

5 Apr 1945 – HQTRS RECORDS – AFTER ACTION REPORTS - DATED 22 May 1945

The main body of the 386th CP (CT) moved by truck at 0600, 5 April 1945 from NEUSS to positions SOUTH OF the SIEG RIVER near OBERPLEIS via the pontoon bridge across the RHINE at BAD GODESBERG. The CP was opened at OBERPLEIS at 0600 7 APRIL 1945, and relief of the 311th Infantry started at once with forward positions being occupied under cover of darkness.

The Regiment thus came under the control of the XVIII Corps of the First Army, and prepared for the operations in the RUHR Pocket.

The Regiment was originally disposed with two Battalions on the line, 2nd on the right, 3rd on the left. 1st Battalion was in reserve. One Company 820 TDs attached.

6 Apr 1945 – History Background - ELIMINATION OF THE RUHR POCKET - Interview with: Capt Milton Ponitz, Asst S-3, 387th Inf , and 97th Inf Div. 1st Lt, Robert McCaffrey, Ln 01 387th Inf , 97th Div. Place: Opladen, Germany.

On 6 April 45 the Regiment received an order from Division to force a crossing of the SIEG River on The 8th of April. Orders included the further mission of continuing the attack to the NW after crossings was secured. ,at this time the whole Corps mission was to attack to the N to crush the Ruhr Pocket formed by the link-up of the Ninth U. S. army and the First U.S. Army at PATTERBORN, Germany, further to the East. The overall Corps plan was to use the left flank of the Corps anchored on the Rhine as a pivot and to swing the right and center of the Corps to the N:W., slamming the door on the pocket formed between the RUHR River, which flows EW into the Rhine far to the N, and NS course of the RHINE itself.

On April 6 at 5:00a.m., the Corps launched its attack across the Sieg River. The 97th Infantry Division on the left and the 86th on the right maintained their defensive positions as the veteran 8th and 78th divisions crossed the river in assault boats and established positions on the northern bank. The next day all four Divisions were on the move.

6 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

386th at Obereip, Rhein-Sieg-Kreis, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany – 0500 launched attack across Sieg River,. 1015 Maps to George by runner. 1345 George to call in reports every hour on ½ hour.

1445 George observed activity in Alzenbach toward R.R. Track patrol to RR track and observe activity.

1730 George left RD co sector across, along recess slope bank to overpass. Entered Alzenbach this side of town, a Kalt woman said that Nazis had left. Interpreter and five men patrol town thoroughly. On way back same route, every side of 44 tracks. Front of chapel on other side of RR track, tank tracks relatively fresh.

2400 George patrol departed.

6 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

F Company, and 1st section of 1st HMG platoon of H Company attached, ordered to jump off at 1830 and clean out draw on their right flank. Accomplished mission, suffered light casualties. Patrols from Companies E and G were sent down to Sieg to reconnoiter for possible river crossings. F Company captured first P.W.

1945 - DEMARTINO, LEWIS P., Cpl., Battery A, 303rd Field Artillery, Bridgeport:

"Working conditions in those European countries are certainly different from ours, especially for women. Over there, the women do all the heavy work even the plowing in the fields."

6 Apr 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Germany – Troop assigned G-5 mission in division rear area for purpose of clearing civilians.

1400 platoons in position to perform above mission

1500 troop reassembled at Pleisersohn pending new due mission.

6 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Withdrew to a point 600 yards from the billet area and dug positions in anticipation of possible counter-attack. Returned.

6 APR 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Moved to the outskirts of Neider Pleiss on the Sieg River to take up a defensive position. 97th Division relieved the 78th Division.

6 Apr 1945 – Fri– JOHN F. PATRICK LT. Col 820TH TANK DESTROYER Bn

Battalion and rear echelon no change.

Reconnaissance Company.

C.P. no change.

Pioneer platoon continued reconnaissance for road block sites and tank approaches, particularly in "A" Company sector.

1st platoon moved to vic Mendt, Germany (F767343) with "B" Company and made reconnaissance of routes, checking on friendly troop locations and gun positions in areas bounded by F7634, F8534, F8534, F8540, and F7640.

2nd platoon reconnoitered routes and for gun positions and O.P.'s in CT 303 sector.

3rd platoon remained with 3rd platoon, "A" Company, and performed local reconnaissance. At 1600 hours second section moved to western edge of Hennef and occupied O.P. to observe for 2nd platoon, "A" Company.

"A" Company.

C.P. moved to Dambroich, Germany (F6538) at 1415.

1st platoon no change.

2nd platoon at 0400 moved to direct fire positions in vic Hennef and at 2300 pulled back to direct fire positions vic Geistigen (F6741).

3rd platoon joined 1st platoon in indirect fire positions vic Urthweiler.

"B" Company.

C.P. moved to Mendt, Germany (F7636). Gun platoons occupied indirect fire positions in 386th Infantry sector.

C” Company.

C.P. no change.

Two platoons occupied indirect fire positions at night and withdrew to vic of C.P. prior to dawn. The other platoon remained in vic of C.P.

6 Apr 1945 – Thomas Anschütz Colonel M.D. German Air Force -Much Germany

To whom it may concern: Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command and Mucher Citizens inaugurated an American Memorial in Much Germany on August 2008 for the American Soldiers killed in action liberating the community Much from tyranny in World War II on 11 th April 1945. We believe that soldiers from the 97th Infantry Division were KIA liberating our town Much and would like to know their names to honor these fallen American Soldiers. Can you help me in this respect?

Sincerely Thomas Anschütz Colonel M.D. German Air Force Reserve
Birkenweg 6 53804 Much Germany

How Much was taken in April 1945

This Report was written on the 28th of October 2008 by Ralf Anton Schäfer, a German historian, who had written 4 Books and other reports with military history. The following narrative is based on the After Action Reports of the 97th US Infantry Division and there 386th Infantry Regiment, personnel collected information's and contains also memoirs from Mucher citizens, which were provided by Thomas Anschütz.

The so called Trident Division – the 97th Infantry Division – reached the Sieg River with last elements on the Morning of the 6th of April and started immediately with extensive patrolling in the area north of the Sieg River. There revealed information: the enemy opposite was mainly from the 3. Fallschirm Jäger Division, from who also was received the most and fanatically resistance in the divisions sector. After the 78th Infantry Division had crossed the Sieg River line on 6th April 1945 in there advance zone to clear out the Ruhr pocket, the 97th Infantry Division received there orders to attack across the River with target of Düsseldorf.

The Attack started with first elements of the 386th Infantry Regiment on the 7th of April at 12.00 AM. After the Divisions artillery opened with a fire barrage of 30 minutes on the German frontline to prepare for the assault boats of the 322nd Engineers, the infantry boarded the boats in small units and was shipped across the river, the initial assault was a full success, losses were only light and contact to the right neighbor, the 78th Inf. Div. was made. A bridgehead had been established.

Now it was the time to bring the other elements in the line: the 1st Battalion of the 387th attacked at 14.00 on the 8th April as planned. Meanwhile the 322nd Engineers had build behind the assault sector of the 386th a footbridge, two support rafts and a tread way bridge, to enabling heavy troop reinforcements to cross rapidly and bolster the attack.

The Bridgehead was growing larger from minute to minute and on the 8th and 9th of April Ruppichterth and Felderhof were reached, here were enemy strong points heavily defended in the sector of the 1st and 3rd Battalion. Enemy tanks were reported at Heide, a small village in the zone of operations. An airstrike was requested in order to remove this thread to the advancing troops. The danger was removed by several P47s in spite of some opposition from flak guns.

The enemy seemed to defend in small groups at key terrain features and in Towns, where the howitzers of the 365th Field artillery did an excellent job. Road blocks of all features were encountered; felled trees, log barricades of uniform construction, road craters, blown bridges, etc. Some of these road blocks were mined and protected by sniper fire. The first Objective – the Brölbach – was reached at approximately 14.00 and at 14.40 the Combat teams were ordered to cease their advance, consolidate their positions and clear out the rear area from overrun German positions.

On 8.00 in the Morning of the 10th of April the division ordered to restart the attack. Also the division gave order to change movement of the advance into the north western direction. So the regimental commander ordered his three battalions from right to left starting at 8.00 for the 1st Bn., 10.00 for the 2nd Bn. and 12.00 for the 3rd Bn. After a firefight at Felderhof and Schönenberg, the advance moved from 12.15 rapidly until units of the 386th Regt. reached the line of Bröleck – Marienfeld, where enemy troops were again encountered.¹

From Marienfeld the GIs spread out to take the villages from left to the right Werch – Nieder- and Oberdreisbach and Oberbohnrauth; owned by elements of the German 353. Volksgrenadier Division. Werch was defended by a fanatic Nazi, who lived then in Much. This Nazi had forced a handful of youngest boys at age of around 16 Years, to defend the village. Armed with handguns and only in civilian clothes, they went into position, when the American infantry closed in on Werch, the German group opened fire and one GI was shot into his stomach and was severely wounded. This was the fact, why the American company commander would order artillery and an airstrike on Much, but concerning this, read later more.

In Oberdreisbach a German sniper opened meanwhile fire from a Henhouse and killed 2 American soldiers who were advancing from the south; the sniper was killed in action when the Americans reached Oberdreisbach approximately 2 hours later. After the resistance in the before named villages was broken by mortar fire the Americans had to fight its way through the hilly Forest with the height 325, called the “Hammers Knüppel”, to secure Berghausen, Niederwahn and Altenhof. In the Forest, where the Germans were entrenched and received support of artillery and mortars, a heavy firefight occurred and 6 or 7 American soldiers died in the battle, which last until the next day. Others were wounded. This strongpoint had to be taken in assault after German soldiers were killed.

Meanwhile it has become late and the Americans didn't count with so hard resistance in the area around the Town Much and the appearance of civilian boys under weapons, lead

by a fanatic Nazi. So they ordered the 365th artillery battalion for a fire support mission on the German strongpoint in the Forrest and on the Town Much.

But just before the fire barrage did start on the Town, three Germans, a catholic priest together with the sacristan of the St. Martinus church and one Mucher citizen, came to negotiate with the American company commander in Werch. Armed with only a white Flag they walked from Much to Werch where the Front stood over the night, and stated that there was no one German soldier left in the Town and that the Town itself could be taken without any firefight and difficulty. They learned that the artillery was right in position and would start immediately with a heavy fire barrage on the Town. Also a staff of P47s should be ordered to strafe the Town by Bombs.

The company commander ordered his artillery not to shot on the Town and called the planed airstrike back to ground. Thanks to this company commander the citizens of Much must be very thankfully to the Americans that they did not destroyed the town with artillery or by an airstrike. On the next Morning Much fells to American hand, although there occurred a few fire fights in the city, as well last resistance in the forest must beaten down while advancing onwards. Further there was a flak-unit consisting of a few 20mm, 37mm and one 8,8cm Gun in the northwestern area of Much, whose resistance had to be cleared before the GI's could move on toward there Objectives.

Also from further interesting are the following facts: in the Area of Much there was in the early spring a launching pad based for V2 from the flak regiment 155. To secure the rocket based bombs, there were many flak-units all over the area in the Ruhr. In April 1945 many of the flak-units remained in the Ruhr pocket and fought against the ground based infantry in direct support of the German Wehrmacht.

1 After Action Reports of the 97th Infantry Division and the 386th Infantry Regiment.

7 Apr 1945 - The 97th and taking up a position on the southern bank of the Sieg River. It crossed that river, 7 April 1945.

The 97th entered the battle of the Ruhr pocket, crossing the Rhine near Bonn, 3 April and taking up a position on the southern bank of the Sieg River. It crossed that river, 7 April, with the troops suffering 80% casualties in wounded and dead. There was a building marked by a red cross which the 97th assumed was a hospital and therefore, did not attack it. In fact, it was a factory that made German 88's. The Germans had tunnels dug there and after the troops got up on land, past the river, the Germans came up behind them. They then shot at the Americans from both directions. It fought a street-to-street engagement in Siegburg on the 10th.



Link: <http://ww2gravestone.com/general/craig-louis-aleck>

7 Apr 1945 - James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

The 97th crossed that river, 7 April, with the troops suffering 80% casualties in wounded and dead. There was a building marked by a red cross which the 97th assumed was a hospital and therefore, did not attack it. In fact, it was a factory that made German 88's.

7 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Battalion Commander and S-3 reported to Regimental C.P. to receive attack order for river crossing operation. Battalion jumped off at 1000; E Company, plus section of HMG of H Company attached, on the left; F Company, plus two bazooka teams from 1st Battalion and two light machine guns from Hq. Company attached, on the right; G Company, plus A/T platoon, in general support. First elements of Battalion crossed Sieg at 1230. Battalion completely across river at 1500. Companies moved forward rapidly. First two towns captured by Battalion were Alzenbach, south of Sieg River, and Halft, north of Sieg. Battalion C.P. established at Alzebach and then moved to Borensheid. High ground was secured for the night around Borensheid.

Note: Received artillery, 88-mm, SA and AW fire throughout operation. Captured approximately 280 P.W.'s. Mission for the day accomplished. Battalion captured approximately 16 towns.

C.P.'s: E Company Luckerath; F Company Nider Rifferath; G Company and H Company Borensheid.

7 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

386th at Obereip, Rhein-Sieg-Kreis, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany – Enemy resistance has been very light during day and has not utilized Artillery to large degree. One direct Artillery hit occurred at Co. "G" CP at approx. 1330. Among prisoners captured was one identified as member of 840 Engineers. Weapons in vicinity of Eitorf.
0203 Easy contacted George.
0540 Easy contacted George.

0605 George reported casualties: KIA- Theodore C. Maillet, Earl L. Wolf SR, Anthony S Hunko, all by shrapnel at Alzenbach. WIA- Verner W. Thoresen (EVAC), Sidney Scheck (EVAC – died), Albert Ghirardelli – WOA (EVAC) all by shrapnel at ALG Enbach. Also KIA: 2nd Lt Johnston 3rd Platoon.

0900 George OP enemy at 82.2 – 4L.2

1100 Started shelling enemy.

1200 386th combat team crossed Sieg.

1215 Advance White CP to Bornscheid.

1315 George has security across river and direct Artillery hit Company George, CP Stoltz has bad shrapnel wound, next to Dillon. Flown to England same day.

7 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Mortar section moved up to the front, fired all day on Seld (Sieg?), at 1630 white flags appeared. Elements of King and Item Co's went forward to investigate but troops could not enter the town because of no bridge across the Sieg River. Received order to return to billets.

7 Apr 1945 - Clifford William Aldrich 386th Infantry Regiment, Company I

The 97th Division crossed the Sieg River, April 7 and was in constant action for the next 9 days, culminating with the capture of Dusseldorf on April 16, 1945. PFC Clifford W. Aldrich was killed in action in fighting between the Sieg River and Drabenderhohe on April 10, 1945. He is buried in the Netherlands American Cemetery at Margraten, Netherlands

7 Apr 1945 - Donald C. Roberts 386th Infantry Regiment, Company K

On 7 April 1945, near Hanschied, Germany, while attacking with his platoon, Private Roberts boldly advanced upon an enemy pillbox in the face of heavy automatic weapons fire and, firing his automatic rifle through the embrasure of the pillbox, killed five of the enemy, captured three and reduced the position. His gallantry on this occasion permitted the rapid accomplishment of his platoon's mission.

7 Apr 1945 - Albert V. Henderson 386th Infantry Regiment, Company L

Private First Class Albert V. Henderson, was in a fierce battle in Germany. Private First Class Albert V. Henderson, Company "L", 386th Infantry Regiment, on 7 April 1945. Entered military service from Oregon.

7 Apr 1945 - Arthur A. Bloom 386th Infantry Regiment, Medical Detachment

In a fierce fire fight near Merten, Germany, on 7 April 1945, Technician Fifth Grade Bloom, fearlessly advanced across fifty yards of open terrain in the face of direct machine gun fire which pierced his canteen, pistol belt and field jacket to the side of a man who had fallen from enemy fire. Entered military service from Pennsylvania.

7 Apr 1945 Fred G Bouman 387th Infantry Regiment, Company B

Sergeant Fred G. Bouman, Company "B", 387th Infantry Regiment, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 7 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Ohio.

7 Apr 1945 Abraham Nadler 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company G

There was a telegram informing my grandparents of my father's fate, delivered on April 26, 1945, almost nine years to the day before my birth. The Secretary of War expressed his deep regret that my father was slightly injured, but that mail should continue to be addressed to him as before. My father was a "first scout," an unenviable assignment. When he was training for Pacific island landings, he considered himself to be a "dead man," since he was the first soldier in the amphibious boats when the hatch was lowered, and thus, the most likely to be killed when the Japanese opened fire. When he learned that he would instead be sent to Europe, this was good news — or so he thought.

Upon arriving, he learned that first scouts typically lasted three days before injury or death. After clearing the Glockner Works (Troisdorf Kloeckner-Mannstedt Works) with great loss of life, my father's platoon was ordered to proceed. The first scout and the second scout were ordered to proceed in advance. The second scout, who my father recalled by name, simply refused to go. Sixty years later, my father casually excused his refusal, since he was married and had a family. Someone else was assigned, with whom my father had never trained, and this lack of training led to my father being unaware of the platoon's movement away from his position.

Thus, he found himself alone in a field. He was targeted by a German machine-gun nest and some light vehicle mounted cannon trained on him. According to my father, he dropped to the ground in a fetal position. The machine-gun bullets kicked up dirt all around him. The cannon started firing at him. German "88" artillery shells also were exploding. The next thing he remembered was flying through the air, and then waking up on the ground. A shell had exploded, and the Germans left him for dead.

Somehow my father's unit found him; he could not recall how. My father volunteered, with others, to "take out" the very machine-gun nest that had been firing at him. He successfully did so, although back pain increasingly hampered his ability.

The pain grew intense, and he was sent back to the field hospital. He agreed to take German prisoners back with him. By the time he got to the hospital, he could hardly move because of the increasing pain. He was strapped onto a stretcher and found himself unable to feel his lower extremity.

7 Apr 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Germany – G-3 operation instructions #4, G-3 periodic report #7, G-2 periodic report #6, ? #1 to ADM order #2 – changed password

1830 troop commander and Plat leaders and 1st Sgt left CP and moved to the Sieg River and observed brigadier operation.

2030 troop commander and party returned from observation of Sieg River Bridgehead and reported operations going well and prisoners being moved to rear.

2200 G-2 called with further operation instructions.

7 Apr 1945 - The 97th Infantry Division during World War II

In the assault on the Glockner Works (Troisdorf Kloeckner-Mannstedt Works) at Troisdorf, one platoon was immediately cut off as it entered a building in the factory complex. A firefight developed in which several soldiers of the platoon were killed or wounded. The platoon's position was untenable. For Sergeant Leslie Fishman, the solution to the problem was obvious: the Germans should surrender.

Sergeant Fishman and Second Lieutenant W. Christianson, a company officer who was cut off with the platoon, persuaded Nazi soldiers to lead them to the officer in charge. While admitting that they were hopelessly surrounded, Fishman and Christianson warned the enemy officer that an American battalion would soon be in position to attack the Glockner Works (Troisdorf Kloeckner-Mannstedt Works) and that the wisest course of action would be for the Germans to surrender immediately. Within a short period of time, six German officers and 170 enlisted men were prisoners of Lieutenant Christianson and Sergeant Fishman. The courage, initiative, and determination illustrated by this example were attributes of many of the men in the Division.

7 Apr 1945, 11 00 hours – History Background - THE RUHR POCKET

The relative silence was shattered by booming howitzers and a "cloudburst" of .105 and 155mm shells pouring down on enemy positions across the River from the 386th Regt.'s sector. For 30 minutes all four Divisions of Art' battalions laid down concentrated fire. Then, as suddenly as it started, the preparation stopped.

At exactly 1200, the 386th Combat Team, under the command of Col. Samuel M. Lansing, spurred forward, crossing the Sieg in engineer assault boats. Resistance was light because the enemy's main defenses still reeled from Artillery's punishing blows. Casualties were negligible. Training, coupled with surprise, paid off.

Once on the opposite shore, the 386th CT immediately regrouped and pressed the attack Northward. The first step in the 97th's initial major combat mission was Successful. The right- flank of the division front poked forward. Next day, the 387th Combat Team Commanded by Col. William D. Long' jumped off to cross the Sieg in The central sector of the division's front. The "crossing was affected against light enemy. Resistance. Main support of the 'crossing was furnished by the 922d Light Artillery the unit consolidated and the second 97th spearhead stabbed northward into the Ruhr.

On the left flank, Col. William B. Forse's 303rd Combat Team awaits the command to attack. The order was given to Concentration of fire and, at 1800 hours, 303rd infantrymen struck across the river. The crossing was made against medium resistance but the clearing of Siegburg, directly in the 303rd's route of advance, and the buttoning up of the Glockner Works (Troisdorf Kloeckner-Mannstedt Works) at Troisdorf, near Siegburg resulted in one of the toughest battles of the Ruhr Pocket campaign.

The regiment ripped through 'two-thirds of Siegburg during the first five hours of the

attack. Dough's used grenades, machine guns and small arms fire to stifle the German 3rd Paratroop Div.'s bitter resistance. However, Col. Forse's troops cleared virtually the entire city by nightfall and a CP was established in the southern part of the town.

The attack continued the following morning with rapid progress until the 303rd reached the Glockner Works (Troisdorf Kloeckner-Mannstedt Works), a machine the factory. Co. G was assigned the Mission of cleaning out the factory as the remainder of the division carried the assault into Troisdorf.

One platoon was immediately cut off as it entered the factory buildings. The remainder of the company soon was forced to withdraw to the north side of the area. Battalion headquarters rushed

Additional forces to the rescue when it learned the jobs too much for a rifle company.

Meanwhile, the isolated platoon sustained casualties. Several men were killed or wounded. Heroism was commonplace, Pfc. Clyde T. Crouch, Dunns Stations, Pa Platoon aid was kill While braving enemy fire in an attempt to administer First aid to one of the wounded PFC Donald Rapport Evanston, Ill., was injured by a concussion when he attempted to rescue Crouch.

Under' the leadership of Sgt. Leslie Fishman, Los Angeles, the platoon took up defensive positions in a house inside the factory grounds at twilight. Pfc Maurice Stack, - Doniphan, Mo., applying his knowledge of' first aid, was Instrumental in saving the lives- of three wounded men.

The night was a long nightmare for the platoon. German 88s bombarded the vicinity incessantly. To leave the building meant death or capture. Members of the platoon repulsed repeated Nazi attacks. Sgt. Fishman undertook a desperate gamble next morning. Disregarding enemy fire, he made his way to an underground enemy bunker which offered protection to approximately 70 Germans Second Lt. David W. Christianson, a company officer who was cut off with the platoon, soon joined the sergeant the pair persuaded the Nazis to conduct them to enemy headquarters.

Admitting they were hopelessly surrounded but warning the Germans that more Americans were on' the way, Sgt. Fishman and Lt. Christianson effected the surrender of six officers and 170 men. This action led to the capture of the factory without further 'casualties. Sgt Fishman was awarded the Silver Star for his outstanding leadership. Meanwhile, the remainder of Co. G, reinforced by other elements of the regiment, battled the enemy in the tunnels -and rooms under the factory' building. Under the command of Capt. Thomas W. Mellen, Burlingame, Calif., Co. G turned flame throwers on the Nazis just as the garrison surrendered.

With Siegburg cleared and the Glockner Works (Troisdorf Kloeckner-Mannstedt Works) captured, the company rejoined the 303rd, pressing rapidly forward several miles further north.

The 97th's three spearheads now drove into the heart of the Ruhr according to plan. The pattern formed by the triple-thrust resembled a giant Trident-pointing northwest in the general direction of Dusseldorf. . All four battalions of Div Arty crossed the Sieg. Many enemy guns. And vehicles still smoldered as infantrymen pushed ahead.

Back at the Sieg River the 322nd Engr. Bn., commanded by Lt. Col. Erland A. Tillman, Fort Collins, CO, undertook the tremendous job of building an adequate number of bridges to accommodate the flow of supplies and reinforcements across the river.

During the first five days of the operation, the 322nd, assisted by the 1052d and 1024th Engr. Bns. constructed five tread way bridges, two Infantry support bridges and six infantry support rafts. In addition, two blown bridges were repaired and one railroad bridge was planked. Engineers also were faced with the task of clearing mine fields. At times, they fought as infantrymen to accomplish their mission.

CO. B, commanded by Capt. Edward F. Gerrity, captured the first German general for the division.' A squad under Sgt. Oliver Roach, Kenton, Ohio, was pushing along a road when it fell upon a group of Germans. The Krauts immediately dispersed and opened fire on the engineers. - After a brief skirmish in which one German was killed and another wounded, Maj. Gen. Freiherr von Ulsar-Gleichen, who had served as military commander at Dusseldorf for two and a half years, surrendered with his men.

7 Apr 1945 - The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

In the 97th Infantry Division's sector, bridges across the Sieg River had been destroyed or seriously damaged. Initially, engineer assault boats had to be used by the infantry to cross the river. At 11:00 a.m. on April 7, all four field artillery battalions began a one-hour bombardment of enemy positions on the northern bank. The supporting fire made it possible for units of the 386th Infantry Regiment (Combat Team) to cross the river in assault boats, receiving only small arms fire. Casualties were negligible. The high level of training had paid off. During the next two days, units of the 387th and 303rd Infantry Regiments crossed the Sieg. Most units met only light resistance crossing the river. A few companies received heavy enemy machine guns, mortar, and artillery. Some of the machine gun fire came from a castle on the northern bank. The castle was soon hit by mortar and artillery fire. Enemy fire from several other positions on the high ground on the northern bank continued to hit one of the crossing areas. After a vicious fight, infantry units of the 387th neutralized the enemy positions.

Picture: Not positive this is the exact castle mentioned. (RBergstrom Collection)



This action facilitated the work of the engineers. Lieutenant Colonel Erland A. Tillman, commander of the 322nd Engineer Battalion, was responsible for building an adequate number of bridges to accommodate the flow of supplies and reinforcements across the Sieg River. During the first five days of the operation, the 322nd, assisted by other engineer units, constructed five treadway bridges, two infantry support bridges, and six infantry support rafts. In addition, two seriously damaged bridges were repaired, and a damaged railroad bridge was repaired and planked.

7 Apr 1945 - HQTRS RECORDS – AFTER ACTION REPORTS - DATED 22 May 1945

The Regiment (3rd Battalion) attacked at 1200, 7 April 1945, movement of the 3rd Battalion being controlled by Div 0 until a later time. The scheme Maneuver called for the movement of the 2nd Battalion across the river at two points. Company F being already across the river in position which it assumed from the 311th Infantry, with the 1st Battalion crossing in the rear under the protection of the 2nd Battalion, into the zone of Company F, then as the 2nd Battalion moved forward, covering in the right flank of the 2nd Battalion, and as the zone of advance enlarged, gradually taking positions generally abreast of the 2nd Battalion on its right. At 1543, the 3rd Battalion was ordered to cross the river by Division, moving in its zone to the Regiment and Division objective, displaced three Battalions abreast from left to right – 3rd, 2nd 1st (-). Company A of the 1st Battalion was held in reserve. This disposition was indicated by Division 0, due to the width of the Division front. The Regiment moved generally abreast during the 8th and 9th of April

1945 with the enemy strong points at RUPBICHTEROTH and FELOERHOFT on the right in the zone of the 1st and 2nd Battalion respectively, offering stronger resistance than other positions. The Objective was reached at approximately 1400, and at 1440 the CP (CT) was ordered to cease its advance, consolidate its position and clear out rear areas.

The prisoners taken were miscellaneous Volkstrum troops who fought only as long as they could do so in safety, for when the Nazi SS at their backs withdrew, and the pressure in front became great, they would fire a few more rounds and surrender. This was typical of the enemy on many occasions throughout action.

The enemy seemed to defend in small groups at key terrain features and in towns – where the howitzers of the 365th FA did an excellent job with their HE, WP time fire. Road blocks of all descriptions were encountered, felled trees, log barricade of uniform constructions, road craters, blown bridges, etc. Some of these road blocks were mined and protected by sniper fire, but comparatively few mines were found, while some of these were dummy mines made of cross sections of logs. One ton truck from I company was torn to pieces and three occupants killed and one seriously wounded when the vehicle struck a Teller mine at the EITORF bridge. With regard to the road blocks, it was interesting to note that many were passed by our companies before they could be completed, and in some cases, before they could be assembled – even though the material was ready to be dropped into place. Rapid forward movement, even when the men were practically dead on their feet from weariness and lack of sleep, undoubtedly prevented many casualties.

Enemy tanks were reported at HEIDE, a small village in the zone of operations. An air strike was requested in order to remove this threat to our advancing troops. The danger was removed by several P 49's in spite of some 0 position from flak guns.

7 Apr 1945 – Sat– JOHN F. PATRICK LT. Col 820TH TANK DESTROYER Bn

Batallion C.P. and rear echelon no change.

Reconnaissance Company.

C.P. and Pioneer platoon no change.

1st platoon continued route reconnaissance. At 1200 hours the 1st section was attached to the 3rd platoon. “B” Company moved to Eitorf (F800415), and covered the construction of pontoon bridge across Sieg river. This section moved to Munhteip (F798372). The second section attached to 2nd platoon of “B” Company moved to (F824414) and covered movement of assault boats. At 1800 this section moved to Munteip.

2nd platoon no change.

3rd platoon moved to Dambroich (F6538) and helped to dig in positions for 2nd platoon.

“A” Company no change.

“B” Company.

C.P. no change

Gun platoons fired 479 rounds 76mm HE indirect fire on targets north of Sieg river in 386 Infantry sector. All platoons moved up toward Sieg river at about 2100 hours.

“C” Company.

C.P. no change

1st platoon took up indirect fire positions vic (F590375)

2nd platoon moved to direct fire positions vic Haneglar (F6040).

3rd platoon moved to direct fire positions vic Vilich Muldorf.

8 Apr – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Continued attack at 0800—E Company on left, G Company in center, F Company on right. All units had some weapons attachments. Battalion A/T was in general support of E Company. Units captured towns of Ahe, Schohenberg, Ruppichterth, and several smaller ones. After crossing Waldrop River, Battalion came under artillery—88-mm, 20-mm, and SA and AW fire which was more intense than any we had received to date. We suffered our first large group of casualties. Company E occupying Schohenberg was shelled heavily by 20-mm, 88-mm, and 105-mm artillery. Company G was shelled by 88-mm fire when attacking Ahe. Planning to secure this general line for the night, we were ordered to continue to attack. Units moved out in night attack. An attempt was made to raid E Company’s C.P., but the enemy was held off by six soldiers in the C.P. Company E lost 1st Sgt. Eugene Palenske that night. Battalion C.P. moved to Ahe at 0200 9 April. Communication with companies was lost during this night attack, but all units obtained their initial objective.

8 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

386th at Mittel Ottersback. PW interrogation stated German party moved out this morning and regular Army last night. EN fire consisted mainly of small arms & automatic weapons. Some mortar rounds fell in regiment rear but no Artillery reported. PW’s captured – approximately 200.

1530 New White CP at Ritscherth. George WIA: Wallace V Levstek by Shrapnel (EVAC).

8 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Marched at dusk to night bivouac in reserve.

8 Apr 1945 George J. Streckfuss 386th Infantry Regiment, Company K

Private First Class George J. Streckfuss, Company “K”, 386th Infantry Regiment, on 8 April 1945. Entered military service from Ohio.

8 Apr 1945 - Calvin R. Hines 386th Infantry Regiment, Company K

Private First Class Calvin R. Hines, Company “K”, 386th Infantry Regiment, on 8 April 1945. Entered military service from Arizona.

8 Apr 1945 - Nathan L. Galloway, Jr 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Captain Nathan L. Galloway, Jr., was in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 8 April 1945, in Germany Captain Nathan L. Galloway, Jr., Company “M”, 386th Infantry Regiment for meritorious achievement in a military

operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 8 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Texas.

8 APR 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Shelling of Siegburg from us day and night; no return fire. Famous Hitler Autobahn was our right flank.

8 Apr 1945 Edward J Garzoni of the 387th Infantry Regiment, Company A

Awarded Purple Heart for wounds received as a result of enemy action in Germany on 08 Apr 1945.

8 Apr 1945 Oliver M Smith 387th Infantry Regiment, HQTRS Company

Near Hennef, Germany, on 8 April 1945, Captain Smith volunteered to lead a patrol to lay wire from a forward observation post to a battalion command post over a route known to be under heavy machine gun fire. Captain Smith's advance to the observation post was halted on three occasions by enemy fire falling as close as 25 yards but, on each occasion, he proceeded to the accomplishment of his mission. Arriving at the observation post, Captain Smith fearlessly exposed himself to fire and, with bullets falling and ricocheting all about him established a wire point. Returning over the same route with his position being constantly given to the enemy by the noise of the wire reel, Captain Smith was subjected to heavy enemy machine gun fire over the whole course of one-quarter mile.

8 Apr 1945 Dominic Gallagher 387th Infantry Regiment, HQTRS Company

Technician Fifth Grade Dominic Gallagher, Headquarters Company, 387th Infantry Regiment for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 8 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from California.

8 Apr 1945 Earl R Walter 387th Infantry Regiment, HQTRS Company

Technician Fifth Grade Earl R. Walter, Headquarters Company, 387th Infantry Regiment for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 8 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Pennsylvania.

8 Apr 1945 Carl F Albert 387th Infantry Regiment, HQTRS Company

Private First Class Carl F. Albert, Headquarters Company, 387th Infantry Regiment, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 8 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Ohio.

8 Apr 1945 Earl G Mink 387th Infantry Regiment, HQTRS Company

Private First Class Earl G. Mink, Headquarters Company, 387th Infantry Regiment, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 8 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Tennessee.

8 Apr 1945 Edwin M Tuno 387th Infantry Regiment, HQTRS Company

Private First Class Edwin M. Tuno, Headquarters Company, 387th Infantry Regiment, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 8 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Tennessee.

8 Apr 1945 - The 387th Combat Team, commanded by Col. William D. Long, jumped off to cross the Sieg in the central sector of the division's front. The crossing was effected against light enemy resistance. Main support of the crossing was furnished by the 922nd Light Artillery Bn. The unit consolidated and the second 97th spearhead stabbed northward into the Ruhr. On the left flank, Col. William B. Forse's 303rd Combat Team awaited the command to attack.

8 Apr 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Germany – received G-3 periodic report #8, received G-2 periodic report #7, received call from G-2 alerting the unit to be prepared to move by 1100.

0930 troop liaison arrived from division.

1125 3rd platoon moved across Sieg River on contact mission to contact division on right.

Changed password.

1200 3 messages received from 3rd platoon

2055 Perruccio, Fisher, Noll left CP to report to division G-2 per telephone conversation at 2045

2310 call from G-2 for troop Co and 1 OFF to report to division at once.

2335 troop CO and LT Rock left C.P. to report to G-2

2355 call from troop CO at G-2 to alert 2nd and 1st platoon and COMDG group to move out.

8 Apr 1945 – Sun– JOHN F. PATRICK LT. Col 820TH TANK DESTROYER Bn

Battalion C.P. and rear echelon no change.

Reconnaissance Company.

C.P. and Pioneer platoon no change.

1st platoon crossed Sieg river at 0600 at Eitorf (F800420). The first section moved to Halft (F820415), then to (F805489) as liaison with Company “E”, 386th Infantry. Did route reconnaissance and acted as PW guards. 2nd section moved to Halft (F820415), then to Hoppengartin (F851445), then to Herchen (F843425) as liaison to “B” Company, 386th

Infantry. 2nd section went on patrol to (F851450) but encountered no action, returning at 1200.

2d platoon no change.

3rd platoon no change until 2130 when platoon went to Nieder to act as security for 2nd platoon, “A” Company.

“A” Company.

No change in positions. 1st and 3rd platoons fired 750 rounds indirect fire supporting the crossing of Sieg river by 1st Battalion, 387th Infantry. 2nd platoon fired 71 rounds direct fire on Allner, Germany, neutralizing an enemy howitzer set up in a castle.

“B” Company.

C.P. closed Mendt at 1845 hours and opened Nieder Ottersbach (F822435) at 1945 hours. The three gun platoons crossed the Sieg river at Eitorf (F800415) at approximately 0600 and continued in close support of 386th Infantry firing 40 rounds 76MM APC and 56 rounds HE direct fire. Two PW's were taken.

“C” Company.

No change in position.

1st platoon fired 46 rounds 76MM HE indirect fire.

2nd platoon fired direct fire mission on tower used by enemy as an O.P. and also used as a MG position, knocking it out at a range of 4100 yards.

3rd platoon remained in direct fire position but did no firing.

8 Apr 1945 – History Background - ELIMINATION OF THE RUHR POCKET - Interview with: Capt Milton Ponitz, Asst S-3, 387th Inf , and 97th Inf Div. 1st Lt, Robert McCaffrey, Ln 01 387th Inf , 97th Div. Place: Opladen, Germany.

The 386th Infantry on the right of the 387th Infantry was to cross on the 7th with the 387th Infantry crossing on the 8th. This would necessitate an attack: across the river by the 387th infantry to the North until it caught up with the left flank of the 386th Infantry. Upon contact the 387th Infantry would then have to wheel itself into line facing to the NW and thus take its proper place in the Corps picture.

The plan formulated with this in view as follows; The 1st Battalion was to make a crossing of the SIEG in the vicinity of VIELDE'-RGOVEN (704425) and drive to The NE, take as its initial objective the high ground at ALTEN'BODING (717438) and BODINGEN (725425), (facing N). When this position was consolidated and the pressure taken off the crossing, the 1st Battalion was to continue to the N and E and take the high ground (730440) (737438), (still facing, NW). Then the 1st Battalion was to pivot on its own left flank (730440) and swing its right flank to the N and then to the NW to anchor at (747454), facing NW, and thus becoming an extension of the 386th Infantry's left flank which was already in position at (747454.:).

The 3rd Battalion and the 2nd Battalion's left flank companies were to maintain their defensive positions and guarantee the security of the tank approaches along the autobahn while Company F, which was' Regimental reserve, was to occupy the front line positions of both 1st battalion front line companies in the right flank sector. On Corp's order the 2d Battalion was to cross during the day of 9 April at the same place and anchor it left flank on the SIEG River at (700428) and swing its right flank to the N and NW to (716431). Then the 3d Battalion was to cross and fill-in between the 2d Battalion and the 1st Battalion, with its left flank on the right flank of the 2d Battalion at (716431), and its right flank on the left flank of the 1st Battalion at (730440). Thus all three battalions would be on line facing NW in extension of the 386th Infantry line and the attack could jump off to the NW to the RUHR River. As the 386th infantry drove NNW the sector of the 387th infantry would widen naturally as the 1st Battalion maintained contact with the 386th Infantry.

The 922 FA Battalion was in support of the Regiment and Cannon Co of the Regiment was attached for the initial fire mission to the 922 FA Bn. Company A of the 82OTD BN was attached to the FA BN also for the preliminary artillery fires. The TD's were to move into position for direct fire missions during the actual crossing and attack.

The 3d Battalion's heavy Weapons Company was to support the crossing of the 1st Battalion's by fire from HENNEf on ALLNER and vicinity. H Company was to support

the 1st Battalion crossing from positions in the vicinity of WELDERGOVEN, but was not to cross with the -1st Battalion.

The SIEG River E of HENNEF is about 50 feet wide and varies from four to eight feet deep. The current was very swift from recent rains, and no suitable ford for a crossing in strength could be found. The crossing point selected was at WELDERGOVEN (705424). On the S side this small village is approached over open plains by several roads across bare ground commanded by the high ground held by the GERMANS to the N. On the N bank of the river, across from WELDERGOVEN, lays an open meadow which is bounded by the village of LAUTHAUSEN on the E and which is commanded by a spur, which extends from ALTENBODINGEN nearly to ALLNER. The bridge at ALLNER had been blown as had also the bridge over the tributary of the SIEG some 200 yards to the NE of ALLNER.

In the planning for this operation, it was intended to ferry one company over in assault boats, while another company forded the river. However, nothing approximated an adequate ford could be found, and the plan was altered to include the ferrying of the two Companies over at two different points. Company C, 322 Engr (C) BN, assembled the crossing material in the village of WELDERGOVEN and planned assault boat crossings at (707422) and (703426).

8 Apr 1945 – History Background - ELIMINATION OF THE RUHR POCKET - Interview with: Capt Milton Ponitz, Asst S-3, 387th Inf , and 97th Inf Div. 1st Lt, Robert McCaffrey, Ln 01 387th Inf , 97th Div. Place: Opladen, Germany.

At 081300B April 45 artillery barrage opened which was to last for one hour. The 1st Battalion had pulled out of its defensive positions on The right flanks and now moved behind the mask of the high ground 200 yards S Of the river crossing into an assembly area, (691419). At 1400 the 1st Battalion launched its attack across the river. The troops went over in waves with Company A using the assault boats at (707422) and Company B crossing at 703426) Company C followed, using both crossings. Heavy mortar fire was falling on the crossing area immediately after the initial assault. MG Fire was strafing the crossing area from castle at (696435) near ALLNER where it had a clear field of fire and from a wooded spur at a bend in the river W of the crossing, firing upriver toward the boats. Artillery fire, TD's heavy MG fire, and Mortars were all brought to bear on this castle but although it crumbled, the MG Fire continued. Fire was also coming from the high ground N of the river at (700430). The assault units crossed the meadows at a run and in two hours had gained the high ground at (717438). This gave the Regiment a mask just N of The River, which permitted them to put in a pontoon ferry for vehicles. Two wire Jeeps, the first across the river on the pontoon ferry, hit mines on the road at (705427) The pontoon ferry was placed in operation on the river at (703424) by 1625 the 1st Battalion had consolidated its position and reorganized on the high Ground. At 1750 Companies A and B launched their coordinated attack to reach The 2d-phase line of which was the high ground at (773440) By-2130 the 1st Battalion had successfully cleared its objective and had reached a final phase line At (74745) and gained contact with elements of the 386th Infantry on their right Flank. The communications were a terrific problem. Because the radio did not work and the wire jeeps had been damaged when they crossed the river. Regiment was not fully informed of the situation of the 1st

Battalion until the next morning.

On the night of 8 - 9-Apr 45) Co C, 322 Engr (C) Bn, put in a footbridge just E of the pontoon ferry at WELDERGOVEN (703424). At 090555B Apr 45 the 2d Battalion moved down from its position on the high Ground in the left sector of the Regimental area and crossed the footbridge. It encountered little difficulty and anchored its left flank on the SIEG River at (700426). Artillery and SA fire harassed but did not stop the river crossing. Company G led out and anchored their left flank on the river. E and F Companies followed and went into position in extension of G Company with, E on the right. F Company's right flank was at (716431). At 090600B Apr 45 the 3d Battalion crossed without incident other than harassing artillery fire, and took Up a position in the center of the regimental line with its left flank contacting the 2d Battalion's flank at (716431) and its right flank in contact with the 1st Battalion's flank at (730440). The three Battalions were now on line, 2, 3, and 1 from left to right facing NW.

The battalions pushed to the NW as soon as the 3d Battalion was in position with the mission of clearing the high ground to the N W overlooking the river. The 2d Battalion hit very stiff resistance at the ALLNER Castle (696426) and on the ridge in the loop of the river at (695430). Anti-tank Company and the TD's blasted the castle from the S bank of the SIEG River and G Company was able to clear it out. The hill beyond the castle was very steep and heavily wooded and gave the 2d Battalion the toughest fight of the entire Regiment during the campaign. All three Companies of the Battalion were engaged in the step by -step drive up the steep hillside to clear the top of the cliff. Until this high ground could be side to cleared, a tread way bridge for the 13th Armored Division tanks which were to follow the regiment could not be built at ALLNER because the only suitable site for such a bridge was commanded by this high ground.

Orders 'were received from 'Division to expedite the Attack. To the high ground N of SIEGBURG. The situation at this time was roughly as follows: The 1st Battalion was making good progress and keeping abreast of the left flank of the 386th Infantry on the right. Company F had become heavily involved with opposition along the SIEG River in the ALLNER - SELIGENTHAL area. Company H, in covering the crossing of other troops over the river, had been delayed and had not caught up with the remainder of the battalion. In the 3d Battalion, Company L had been required to remain in place to cover the open plain SE of SIEGBURG until our advance had moved further W along the N bank of the SIEG.

At this time the Regimental Commander took personal charge of the situation, moving to HOPPERSCHOSS, where he made contact with the 3d Battalion (Company L), following which contact was also made with the 2d Battalion (Companies F and H). From this point the attack was by the 2d and 3d Battalions abreast, each in column of companies. Movement was cross-country by covered routes, as rapidly as the heavier weapons could be hand-carried. At dark, the two battalions halted for the night, with the 2d Battalion S of the SIEGBURG- SCHRECK road, and parallel to it, with its head pointed toward SIEGBURG near (663465).

In the morning the 3d Battalion was to move N across the highway and turn left (SW) along the highway, coming up abreast of the 2d Battalion. The two battalions were then to attack SW to SIEGBURG, astride the SIEGBURG - SCHRECK highway. This was done against no opposition. Both Battalions moved obliquely to the right later, the 2d

Battalion crossing the highway their continuing to parallel it. Ultimately both battalions struck the Autobahn Highway near the over-pass at AUL-GASSE in NE SIEGBURG where the Regimental Commander made contact with right elements of the 303d Infantry, already in the city.

9 Apr 1945 - The order was given April 9. Div Arty again laid down a heavy concentration of fire and, at 1800 hours, 303rd infantrymen struck across the river. The crossing was made against medium resistance but the clearing of Siegburg, directly in the 303rd's route of advance, and the buttoning up of the Glockner Works (Troisdorf Kloeckner-Mannstedt Works) at Troisdorf, near Siegburg, resulted in one of the toughest battles of the Ruhr Pocket campaign.

The regiment ripped through two-thirds of Siegburg during the first five hours of the attack. Doughs used grenades, machine guns and small arms fire to stifle the German 3rd Paratroop Div.'s bitter resistance. However, Col. Forse's troops cleared virtually all of the city by nightfall and a CP was established in the southern part of the town.

9 Apr 1945 Felix A Perretta 386th Infantry Regiment – KIA

Buried in Margraten, Netherland

9 Apr 1945 Platt Adams Jr. 386th Infantry Regiment, Company E

Platt Adams, Jr. Corporal, U.S. Army, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against a hostile force. Corporal Adams distinguished himself by intrepid actions on 9 April 1945 while serving with Company E, 386th Infantry Regiment, 97th Infantry Division. His unquestionable valor in close combat is in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon himself, the 97th Infantry Division, and the United States Army. He is buried in Netherlands American Cemetery

9 Apr – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Early this morning Battalion C.P. moved to Hove where communications with the units was re-established. General Battalion line was from Junkers field extending east to Hove and Bacher Hof. Battalion continued attack and captured approximately 16 towns including Millerscheid, Saurenbach, and Werschberg. Battalion moved rapidly and secured area around Werschberg. Battalion C.P. moved from Reischeroth to Werschberg.

C.P.'s: E Company Werschberg; F Company Stromberg; G Company Hove; H Company Hasberg.

9 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

386th at Mittel - EN Resistance strong in regimental sector. Artillery and automatic fire prevalent on all fronts. Sniper fire persisted during the day. Our artillery knocked out 3 88's, an ammo dump, and personnel in from of "I" Co Area at 1625. Over 100 prisoners captured.

1010 New White CP at Hambuchen. George Co WIA Victor W. Gellhardt. Ret to Duty
1100 New White CP Werschberg.

9 Apr 1945 - PFT Andrew Lira 386th Infantry Regiment - KIA

Lira was killed in action at Nurenburg, Germany and is buried at Netherlands American Cemetery at Margraten, Netherlands. Lira's Family lived in Beadling in Upper St Clair Township and while serving in the US Army was killed in action at Nurenburg, Germany in April 1945. He had attended Connelly Trade School and was 19 years old at the time of his death. Andrew is buried at Netherlands American Cemetery at Margraten, Netherlands. Andrew Lira was born in 1926 and was the son of Abramo and Antonia Lira.

9 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Returned from night bivouac with little sleep, moved out in the morning in reserve, carrying weapons and ammo. Crossed the Sieg on a pontoon foot bridge, stopped in a large field, witnessed the first visible result of enemy action when two Bn. Jeeps hit mines and were destroyed. Walked thru several towns, arrived at Happerschob in the afternoon, encountering 88 fire, were pinned down, returned the fire and took cover in houses. Suffered casualties. After enemy fire was lifted, Bn. Marched out, dug in the woods. During the night were subjected to intense artillery fire.

9 Apr 1945 - Rupert L Davis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company I - KIA

The 1st and 2nd Battalions attacked German positions near Ruppichterroth and Felderhoft on 8 and 9 April with the 3rd Battalion being held in reserve. Enemy resistance was light, with Volkstrum soldiers only fighting for as long as they could do so in safety and then surrendering. The main resistance encountered was from roadblocks, felled trees, blown bridges and mines. The American advance was so fast that many of the road blocks were not completed, even though the materials necessary to build them were lying on the side of the road. T/4 Davis was riding in a 1/4 ton Truck when it hit a Teller mine at the Eitorf Bridge. The truck was "torn to pieces" and three soldiers from Company I was killed, including T/4 Davis. Davis was killed in action on 9 April 1945 at Eitorf, Germany when he was struck in the neck by shrapnel from a land mine. He is buried at the Odd Fellows Cemetery, Denton, Texas. He was 24 years old.

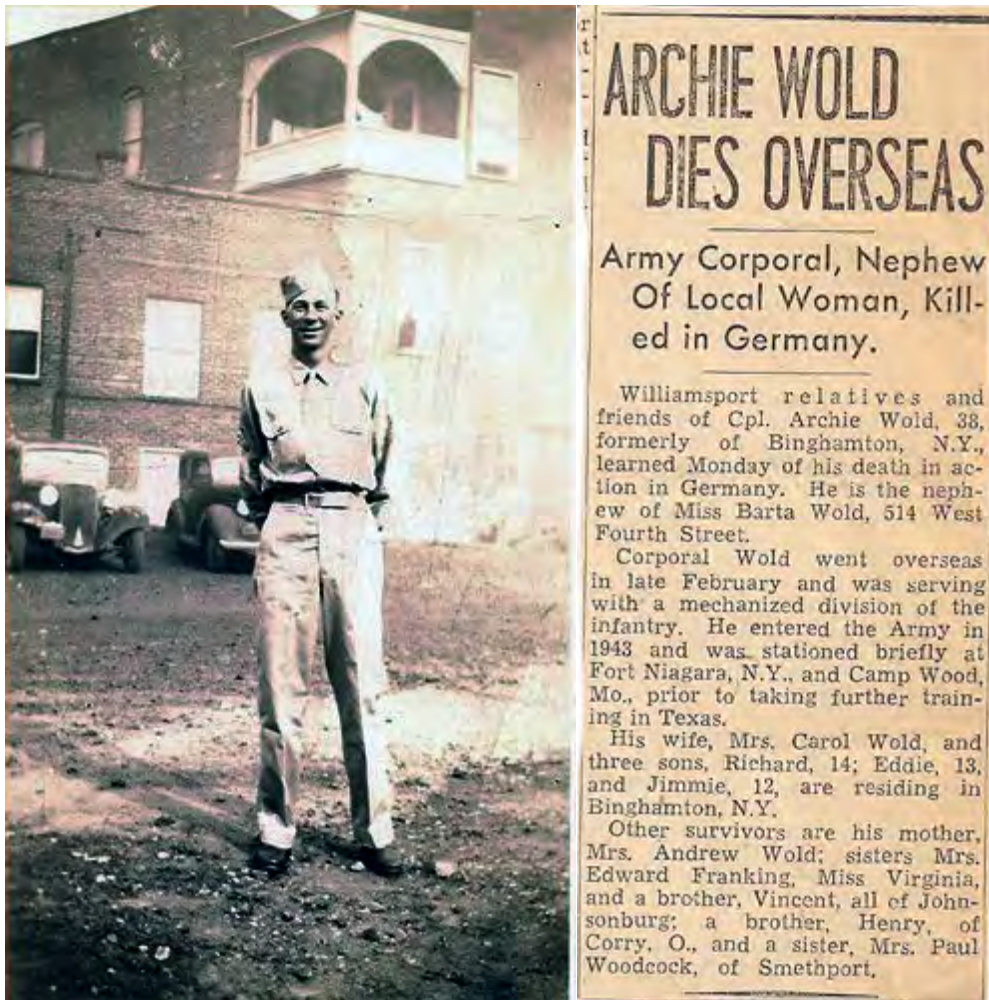
9 Apr 1945 James Paul Jr Keeney 386th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Private First Class James P. Keeney, Company "I", 386th Infantry Regiment, on 9 April 1945. Entered military service from Pennsylvania.

(Editor's Note: Jr., James P. Keeney was born in Monongahela, where his parents, Emma and J. Paul Keeney, owned and operated the Keeney Blue Spruce Nursery, the Keeney Greenhouse and the Keeney Seed Co. He graduated from Edgewood High School and the University Of Pittsburgh School of business administration, entered military service right out of high school under the Army's Specialized Training Program in July 1943 and served in the European Theater and Japan as a member of the infamous Company I, 386th Regiment, 97th Infantry Division. He was employed by the Bessemer and Lake Erie Railroad in 1948 and also was employed by several other rail lines owned by the U.S. Steel Corp. before the formation of the Transtar Group as a marketing manager. He was a member of John A. Brashear Lodge 743 F&AM, the Valley of Pittsburgh Consistory, the Traffic and Transportation Association of Pittsburgh and Shannopin Country Club and was a life member of the Traffic Club of Pittsburgh.)

9 Apr 1945 - Archie Milton Wold 386th Infantry Regiment, Company I

T/5 Sergeant Archie M. Wold 386th Infantry Regiment, 97th Infantry Division Entered Service: February 1943 Died: 9 April 1945 in Germany Buried at: Plot P, Row 4, Grave 6 Netherlands American Cemetery Margraten, Netherland. ***** ARCHIE WOLD DIES OVERSEAS Army Corporal, Nephew of Local Woman, Killed in Germany. Williamsport relatives and friends of CPL. Archie Wold, 38, formerly of Binghamton, N.Y., learned Monday of his death in action in Germany. He is the nephew of Miss Barta Wold, 514 West Fourth Street. Corporal Wold went overseas in late February and was serving with a mechanized division of the infantry. He entered the Army in 1943, and was stationed briefly at Fort Niagara, N.Y. and Camp Wood, Mo prior to taking further training in Texas.



9 Apr 1945 - Raymond A Goblisch 386th Infantry Regiment, Company K

Private First Class Raymond A. Goblisch, Company "K", 386th Infantry Regiment, on 9 April 1945. Entered military service from Minnesota.

9 Apr 1945 - Gerald D George 386th Infantry Regiment, Company K

Private First Class Gerald D. George, Company "K", 386th Infantry Regiment, on 9 April 1945. Entered military service from Nebraska.

9 Apr 1945 - Alec J. Vargo 386th Infantry Regiment, Company K

Staff Sergeant Alex J. Vargo, Company "K", 386th Infantry Regiment, on 9 April 1945. Entered military service from Michigan.

While engaged in an assault on the town of Felderhof, Germany, on 9 April 1945, Staff Sergeant Vargo voluntarily left a position of comparative safety and fearlessly moved down a fire-swept street. With heavy enemy fire falling all about him, Staff Sergeant Vargo, firing a rocket launcher, destroyed an enemy machine gun and a 20-mm. flak gun. His gallant action permitted the rapid capture of the town.

9 Apr 1945 - Joseph R. Wimsatt 386th Infantry Regiment, Company L

Joseph R. Wimsatt with Company L, 386th Infantry Regiment, 97th Infantry Division, in action near Broscheid, Germany, on 9 April 1945. Just prior to daybreak on 9 April 1945, while his platoon was the leading element of a rifle company advancing on Broscheid, Germany, Lieutenant Wimsatt, at the head of his troops, discovered an emplaced hostile artillery battery and an armored vehicle to his immediate front. Silently halting the column he skillfully deployed his platoon and supporting guns, and all weapons opened fire simultaneously on his order. Completely surprised, the enemy battery surrendered after a ten minute engagement but the armored vehicle continued to resist until driven off by mortar fire. By his superb control and cool leadership, Lieutenant Wimsatt caused the capture of four artillery pieces, three automatic weapons and approximately two platoons of enemy troops. His gallantry on this occasion reflects high credit upon himself and the Armed Forces.

9 Apr 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Received the order to cross the Sieg River at 6 P.M. Sure did feel strange for we were going under enemy fire for the first time. Many a prayer was said. We crossed the river under fire from enemy 88s, 20 mm ack-ack guns and machine gun fire, since we were the assault company. We were pinned down by machine gun fire. It was here that we had our first casualties. Lt. Woods was hit in the leg and others were wounded including Ball, Brooks, Cummings, Wedeen, Prince, Lorusso and Jagielski. Continued to attack through the town despite mortar fire. Set up security in a house for the remainder of the night. All night long we were being fired on by the 88s. The 2nd Battalion crossed the river after us and had heavy casualties in the center of the town.

9 Apr 1945 Henry W Hess 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company B

Private First Class Henry W. Hess, Company "B", 303d Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 9 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from New York.

9 Apr 1945 William J Belz 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company B

First Lieutenant William L. Belz, Jr., Company "B", 303rd Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 9 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Illinois.

9 Apr 1945 Meyrl L Groninger 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

In an assault crossing the Sieg River, in Germany, on 9 April 1945, Private Groninger, an ammunition bearer, was severely wounded in the hand and leg by enemy fire. During the next thirty hours of heavy combat, Private Groninger continued in the performance of his duties without reporting his injuries and without receiving medical attention. Only when his officers noticed that he was wounded and ordered his evacuation did Private Groninger consent to be treated.

9 Apr 1945 Alexander J Sutherland 303rd Infantry Regiment

Lieutenant Colonel Alexander J. Sutherland, 303d Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 9 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from New York.

9 Apr 1945 Howard A Winebarger 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company B

Private First Class Howard A. Winebarger, Company "B", 303d Infantry Regiment, for Meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 9 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from North Carolina.

9 Apr 1945 Truman C. Beeson 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company E

In an attack on the city of Siegburg, Germany, on 9 April 1945, Captain Beeson's company encountered strong enemy resistance and its advance was slowed. He personally led a platoon in an attack against the hostile positions and silenced an enemy machine gun enabling his company to capture its objective. On the following morning when two enemy pill boxes again held up the company advance Captain Beeson took personal command of the assaulting troops, maneuvered them to an advantageous position, reduced the strong points, and captured approximately two hundred of the enemy. By his bold, fearless leadership Captain Beeson inspired his men and their attainments contributed in a large measure to the success of the operation.

9 Apr 1945 John E Martin 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company E

Private First Class John E. Martin, Company "E", 303d Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 9 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Wisconsin.

9 Apr 1945 Rudolf P May 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company E

Private First Class Rudolf P. May, Company "E", 303d Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 9 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from District of Columbia.

9 Apr 1945 William J Barnes 303rd Infantry Regiment, HQTRS Company 1st Bn

Major William J. Barnes, Headquarters 1st Battalion, 303rd Infantry Regiment, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 9 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Kentucky.

09 Apr 1945 Edward J Bruzinski of the 387th Infantry Regiment, Company A

Awarded Purple Heart for wounds received as a result of enemy action in Germany on 09 Apr 1945.

9 Apr 1945 Ernest G Zeek 387th Infantry Regiment, Company B

While leading his platoon in an attack on Heuboddenburg, Germany, on 9 April 1945, Lieutenant Zeek and his men came under heavy fire from 20mm and machine gun fire which halted their advance. Arming himself with an automatic rifle, Lieutenant Zeek fearlessly moved forward alone to a position 200 yards away from which he could place fire upon an enemy 20mm gun. From a standing position Lieutenant Zeek killed the enemy gunner, wounded an assistant and forced the withdrawal of the rest of the gun crew. With heavy small arms and artillery fire falling about him, Lieutenant Zeek kept up a persistent fire and effectively stopped several attempts on the part of the enemy to put the gun into operation again. Entered military service from Oregon.

09 Apr 1945 Richard G Waugh of the 387th Infantry Regiment, Company B

Awarded Purple Heart for wounds received as a result of enemy action in Germany on 09 Apr 1945.

9 Apr 1945 Cecil L Eyestone 387th Infantry Regiment, Company C

At Schaaren, Germany, 2nd Lt. Cecil L. Eyestone, Burrton, Kan., 387th, was leading a Co. C platoon in destroying an enemy artillery position which was holding up the company advance. While establishing a base of fire, he was struck in the face by shrapnel. Despite this wound, he took charge of the assault squads and led the attack. Forty yards from the German emplacement, the lieutenant received a severe wound in his leg, but he continued to pace his men in a charge. Considerable enemy were killed or captured when the position was overrun. Lt. Eyestone refused medical attention for himself until the other wounded members of his platoon had received proper care.

09 Apr 1945 Clyde B Hamilton 387th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Awarded Purple Heart for wounds received as a result of enemy action in Germany on 09 Apr 1945.

9 Apr 1945 - Guy A Ringbloom 387th Infantry Regiment, Company F

One of the outstanding incidents of courage, loyalty and devotion displayed in the entire campaign occurred in the small German town of Allner when Co. F, 387th, met heavy enemy resistance as it moved in. During the fighting, 1st Lt. Guy A. Ringbloom, Minneapolis, Minn., saw one of his platoon fall, completely exposed to enemy fire.

Disregarding personal danger, the lieutenant made his way to the wounded man and attempted to move him to a place of safety. He was mortally wounded as he assisted the injured dough out of the line of fire.

9 Apr 1945 Glen R Speidel 387th Infantry Regiment, Company F - KIA

Silver Star Awarded for actions during the World War II (Citation Needed) - SYNOPSIS: Private First Class Glen R. Speidel (ASN: 37692757), United States Army, was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action while serving with Company F, 387th Infantry Regiment, 97th Infantry Division in operations against the enemy during World War II. General Orders: Headquarters, 97th Infantry Division, General Orders No. 16 (1945) Action Date: World War II Service: Army Rank: Private First Class Company: Company F Regiment: 387th Infantry Regiment Division:

9 Apr 1945 Harry K Milner 387th Infantry Regiment, Medical Detachment

Technician Fourth Grade Harry K. Milner, Medical Detachment, 387th Infantry Regiment, on 9 April 1945. Entered military service from Pennsylvania.

9 Apr 1945 Eric G Horst 387th Infantry Regiment, Medical Detachment

Technician Fifth Grade Eric G. Horst, Medical Detachment, 387th Infantry Regiment for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 9 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Michigan.

9 Apr 1945 Frank Zalusky 387th Infantry Regiment, Hq Company 1st Bn

The 97th continued to fight through Germany and into the west end of Czechoslovakia. Zalusky never made it past Siegburg. The morning after entering Siegburg, and after having captured three German prisoners of war, Zalusky and Lt. Kegley received orders to retrieve the jeep. Their goal? To continue laying wire across a nearby field to the highway located about a mile away. Frank Zalusky, crossed the Sieg River for a second time with Lt. Kegley to recover a jeep on the other side. Zalusky's memory of that day ends there. In a diary entry, Zalusky said the following: "Kegley says he jumped out of the jeep to clear a snag in the wire when he heard an explosion, turned around, and I was landing with the jeep on top of me." Nearly every bone in his body was either shattered or fractured. Zalusky was sent to a field hospital for nine days, then to hospitals in England and Scotland before he was transferred to the U.S. for rehabilitation. He never made it back to the front lines.

(Editor's Note: It took two years for Zalusky to recover from his wounds. When he was released from the hospital, he was sent to San Francisco and was discharged from active duty. He traveled to Thousand Oaks to visit his brother, Bob, who had moved to the Conejo Valley when he returned from the war. "I had only planned a visit before I was going to go back to Minnesota," Zalusky said. "But I never went back." Instead, he married Oxnard native Ida Raffetto. They had two children, and eventually moved to Camarillo. Zalusky began a career as an accountant and eventually a computer software technician. He retired in 1976. Ida lost her battle with cancer in 1979. Zalusky married a second time. He lost Mary Ellen in 2009. "When you are in the service, you've just got to

keep going," Zalusky said of hearing the news of his brother Jay's disappearance. "But it's always there with you.")

9 Apr 1945 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Germany – 0045 troop HQ & 1st and 2nd platoon to Eitorf, Germany.
0745 troop cp and 1st and 2nd platoon at Ottebach, Germany. 2nd platoon put in reserve for teamster regiment.

0800 3rd platoon continuing contact on right flank of division.

0900 left Cp of left flank. BN to contact left flank CO of same BN

1100 captured 5 prisoners at Benroth, Germany

1400 captured 1 prisoner at Geisinghausen

1515 Plat relieved of mission and returned to troop at CP

1630 troop withdraw to vicinity of Pleisersohn, Germany.

1800 troop given new mission on division left flank outpost Sieg River line from Rhine River to 8500 yards east.

9 Apr 1945 JOHN F. PATRICK LT. Col 820TH TANK DESTROYER Bn

Battalion C.P. and rear echelon no change in location.

Battalion less "A" Company and 3rd platoon, Reconnaissance Company, was relieved from attachment to the 97th Infantry Division and attached to 13th Armored Division.

Reconnaissance Company.

C.P. no change

At 1830 Pioneer platoon was sent to "A" Company.

1st platoon continued area and route reconnaissance for "B" Company.

2nd platoon. At 1400 platoon was alerted to prepare to cross Sieg river with "C"

Company. This crossing did not take place due to change in attachment of Battalion. At

1930 platoon was alerted to move and moved with "C" Company to Burlinghoven, arriving there at 2300 hours.

"A" Company

C.P. moved at 1610 to Hennef (F678416).

1st and 3rd platoon fired 96 rounds unobserved fire on town of Pinnz, Germany.

2nd platoon attached 1st Battalion, 387th Infantry, crossed Sieg river to Shreckenbergl, Germany, fired 70 rounds indirect fire on observed targets using Cannon Company observers. Captured 24 PW's and neutralized 2 pill boxes.

"B" Company.

C.P. no change.

1st platoon attached 3rd Battalion, 386th Infantry.

2nd platoon attached 1st Battalion, 386th Infantry, fired 10 rounds HE into an enemy ammunition dump and 8 rounds at an 88MM gun position. The Infantry battalion commander credited the platoon with the capture of 50 PW's. The platoon fired a barrage on the towns of Wilbenerofen and Rassel, Germany, enabling the Infantry to enter these towns without opposition.

3rd platoon attached to 2nd Battalion, 386th Infantry, fired 9 rounds at an 88MM gun position and 3 rounds at a reported tank. The platoon captured 2 PW's. In the afternoon the company was relieved from attachment to the 386th Infantry, less 2nd platoon, and attached to CCB of 13th Armored Division, and ordered to assemble to vic Mendt, Germany (F7636).

2nd platoon attached 93rd Reconnaissance Squadron.

“C” Company.

Fired 332 rounds indirect fire in preparation for attack across Sieg river by 303rd Infantry regiment.

Company was relieved from attachment to 303rd Infantry and attached to CCA, 13th Armored Division. Company moved to Burlinghoven.

9 Apr 1945 - Mon. History Background - ELIMINATION OF THE RUHR POCKET -

Interview with: Capt Milton Ponitz, Asst S-3, 387th Inf , and 97th Inf Div. 1st Lt, Robert McCaffrey, Ln 01 387th Inf , 97th Div. Place: Opladen, Germany.

Meanwhile the engineers started a tread way bridge after the battalions had clear the high ground N of ALLNER. This bridge was placed at (695425) which were quite close to the castle that had given the 2d Battalion so much trouble. It was completed for light vehicle traffic by 2200 on the 9th and at 100600B Apr 45 medium tanks could cross it. Corps had instituted a plan at this time in which the regiment was to hold its positions now occupied and Combat Command A of the 13th Armored Division was to pass through the regiment and spear-head a drive to the N. The Regiment was to follow in the wake of the 13th Armored Division and mop up pockets of resistance. On the morning of 10 'Apr the 13th Armored Division passed through on the left flank of the regiment and the battalions resumed the attack to the N W against moderate resistance, with left flank resting on the autobahn Highway. Since the 13th Armored was passing through the left flank sector of the regiment and this was held by the 2d Battalion, which had taken the toughest fighting so far, the Regimental Commander held the 2d Battalion in reserve and sent the 3d (left) - and 1st Battalions forward in this resumption of the attack on 10 Apr 45. By nightfall the 3d Battalion had taken HALBERG (652500) and LOHMAR, while the 1st Battalion took BREIDT (675508). The 2d Battalion was in reserve at KALDAUEN (665540).

9 Apr 1945 - The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

Once across the Sieg river, the infantry began their coordinated drive toward Dusseldorf. The first objective of the 303rd Infantry Regiment was clearing enemy units from the city of Siegburg, located near the northern bank of the Sieg River. The artillery began the operation by firing on suspected German positions in the city. Units of the 303rd entered Siegburg on April 9 and initially encountered very light resistance.

Sniper fire increased as the Americans advanced through parts of the city. Then several units of the elite German 3rd Parachute Regiment and a few determined SS troops opened fire. Using small arms, machine guns, and grenades, soldiers of the 303rd aggressively attacked the enemy troops, street by street, house by house. Despite fierce resistance by the Germans, by nightfall Siegburg was under American control.

10 Apr 1945 - The attack continued in the morning with rapid progress until the 303rd reached the Glockner Works (Troisdorf Kloeckner-Mannstedt Works), a machine factory. Co. G was assigned the mission of cleaning out the factory as the remainder of the division carried the assault into Troisdorf.

One platoon was immediately cut off as it entered the factory buildings. The remainder of the company soon was forced to withdraw to the north side of the area. Battalion headquarters rushed additional forces, to the rescue when it learned the job was too much for a rifle company. Meanwhile, the isolated platoon sustained casualties. Several men were killed or wounded. Heroism was commonplace.

Pfc Clyde T. Crouch, Dunns Stations, Pa., platoon aid man, was killed while braving enemy fire in an attempt to administer first aid to one of the wounded. Pfc Donald E. Rappaport, Evanston, Ill., was injured by a concussion grenade when he attempted to rescue Crouch.

Under the leadership of Sgt. Leslie Fishman, Los Angeles, the platoon took up defensive positions in a house inside the factory grounds at twilight. Pfc Maurice T. Stack, Doniphan, Mo., applying his knowledge of first aid, was instrumental in saving the lives of three wounded men.

The night was a long nightmare for the platoon. German 88s bombarded the vicinity incessantly. To leave the building meant death or capture. Members of the platoon repulsed repeated Nazi attacks.

10 Apr 1945 - The 97th entered against light resistance and fought a street-to-street engagement in Siegburg on the 10th.

10 Apr 1945 James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

The Germans had tunnels dug there and after the troops got up on land, past the river, the Germans came up behind them. They then shot at the Americans from both directions. It fought a street-to-street engagement in Siegburg on the 10th. After Siegburg, they captured Cologne (Koln) Germany. Pushing on toward Düsseldorf through difficult terrain and heavy resistance in densely wooded areas

10 Apr 1945 Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Battalion continued attack in zone. E company, plus 2nd HMG platoon and 2nd section 81-mm section H Company attached. F Company, plus 1st 81-mm mortar section attached. G Company, plus 1st HMG platoon, 3rd 81-mm mortar section. H Company and Battalion A/T platoon attached jumped off in their respective zones. Battalion captured 14 towns including Wieg, Strunkhausen, Mariafeld, and Wersch. Battalion CP moved to Wersch. Battalion came under its heaviest 20-mm flak.

10 Apr 1945 Lawrence H Kilgore 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Staff Sergeant Lawrence H. Kilgore, (then Sergeant), Company "F", 386th Infantry Regiment for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 10 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Ohio.

10 Apr 1945 Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

386th at Schornenberg, - EN Resistance Fairly strong with 88's & Tanks reported in 2nd Bn area. En Tank repair shop, field artillery, En Msg center in much by prsioners. Tanks

attacks Company "B" at 1600. Driven back to Friedenthal by air & artillery battery of 75's or 88's reported between Numbrecht and Altennymbrecht on right bounds of our regiment. Mines reported on roads leading into Much.

1200 George to White: arrange to evacuate casualties from Kamereich.

1215 Bn to move out at once. George (CO G) Roy Baldwin died from wounds at hospital.

1530 BN Jumped off an advance

1600 Brol not occupied by George (CO G)

10 Apr 1945 Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Arose early, moved out thru woods, and approached Siegburg which was taken by the 303 Infantry. Eventually hit the road into Stallberg, leaving outpost, with attached machine gun, on a road fork outside Stallberg. Entered the town, billeted and setup weapons in defense.

10 Apr 1945 Clifford Aldrich 386th Infantry Regiment, Company I - KIA

PFC Clifford W. Aldrich was killed in action in fighting between the Sieg River and Drabenderhohe on April 10, 1945. He is buried in the Netherlands American Cemetery at Margraten, Netherlands.

10 Apr 1945 Gennare Pompilio 386th Infantry Regiment, Company I - KIA

On 10 April 1945, near Hulsheid, Germany, Private Pompilio unhesitatingly volunteered to cover the withdrawal of men of his company who were evacuating a seriously wounded man. In the face of heavy enemy fire at a range of 300 yards, Private Pompilio effectively placed fire upon the enemy position until the wounded man was removed to a place of safety. While fighting his way back to his platoon, Private Pompilio was killed.

10 Apr 1945 David N Robinson 386th Infantry Regiment, Company I

On 10 April 1945, near Hulscheid, Germany, when his company's advance was halted by intense artillery and small arms fire, Technical Sergeant Robinson, and another soldier, fearlessly moved forward to within 20 yards of an enemy 88-mm. gun position, killed one of the enemy and captured three. Upon returning the prisoners to his unit, Technical Sergeant Robinson learned that his comrade had been seriously wounded in the action. Unhesitatingly and without utter regard of his own safety, Technical Sergeant Robinson moved forward under heavy small arms fire and removed the wounded man to a place of safety.



(Editor's note: David Robinson was born on August 18, 1923, in Newcastle, Pennsylvania, to Harry and Margaret Robinson. He spent his childhood in Newcastle

until the age of 18 when he joined the U.S. Army. He served first in the Infantry in Germany. On leave he married his sweetheart Bettye and they spent a lifetime of happiness together. He then became a part of the Army occupation forces in Japan and was finally discharged to Newcastle. Once home he served as an apprentice electrician to the Union Pacific Railroad. He and Bettye then moved to California where they spent the rest of their lives together. In Whittier he worked as an electrician for the U.S. Rubber Company. He then became the superintendent of building and grounds for the La Habra School District. He retired from the school district and began traveling with his beloved wife. They spent many happy years traveling Europe, China, and the United States. Dave enjoyed wood carving as a hobby, and he also delivered for the Meals-On-Wheels program. Bettye enjoys golf, cooking, and volunteering. Later in life, Dave stated that Company I provided "experiences I wouldn't trade for a million dollars, but wouldn't want to do it again." He also said that he was smarter now than 60+ years ago, because he married a girl smarter than he was.)

10 Apr 1945 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Place: Germany – changed password. Troop CP visited by Major and flight LT of R.A.F. Regiment. 0430 received G-2 periodic report #8 changed password.

1840 received G-2 periodic report #9, received G-3 periodic report #10, received G-3 operational plan #5, received advance copy operational memo #4, received terrain study #7 Nasty mine field plan (322 Eng).

1840 troop liaison arrived from division. Troop commander left CP for division headquarters per radio message from G-2.

2300 received operation memo #4 from G-2

2400 change #1 operation instruction # 7

10 Apr 1945 History Background - TRIDENT'S PRONGS, STAB DUSSELDORF

ALL three combat teams slashed ahead in near perfect coordination despite extremely difficult terrain and fanatical resistance in densely wooded areas. Col. Lansing's 386th CT had a tough nut to crack when it moved into the town of Drabenderhoehe. Germans produced intense fire with 88s, 20mm guns, 40mm dual-purpose flak guns, small arms and automatic weapons.

From a defensive standpoint, the town was ideally situated. Perched atop the highest hill in the area, Drabenderhoehe, communications center and roadnet hub loomed as the greatest single threat to the 97th's advance. In order to prevent a wide gap from developing on 2nd Bn.'s flank, a single company was given the job of taking the town. The assignment fell to Co. C, commanded by Capt. Llewellyn R. Johnson.

Co. C attacked, but after a short, fierce battle was thrown back with heavy casualties. After the 365th Bn. laid down an artillery barrage, Capt. Johnson's company again surged forward, this time with complete success.

The battle was brief, but it produced heroism unexcelled in other battles of the Ruhr. Capt. Johnson moved out in front of his troops and led an advance over 1500 yards of fire-swept terrain in the attack that took the town. He was awarded the Silver Star for this action.

T/Sgt. - Merlin C. Godsell, -Hales, Corner, WI, 386th, also played an important part in

the capture of Drabenderhoehe. - In the first attack, fire from enemy automatic weapons isolated approximately half a rifle platoon. The sergeant, acting leader of the platoon, regrouped and rallied his men, advanced in the face of heavy enemy fire, to knock out four enemy automatic weapons. Destruction of these weapons resulted in an unprotected enemy flank, which Capt. Johnson exploited to capture the town.

Although Col. Long's 387th CT made rapid progress against strong points in the central sector of the- division front, the enemy offered stiff resistance in wooded areas. Each town, was a battle in itself. But the courage and determination of the men made them equal to the task.

One of the outstanding incidents of courage, loyalty and devotion displayed in the entire, campaign occurred in the small German town of Allner when Co. F, 387th, meet heavy enemy resistance as it moved in. During the fighting, 1st Lt. Guy A. Ringbloom, Minneapolis, Minn. saw one of his platoon fall, completely exposed to Enemy fire. Disregarding personal danger, the lieutenant made his way to the wounded man and attempted to move him to a place of safety. He was mortally wounded as he assisted the injured dough out of the line of fire.

Pfc Glen R. Speidel, Burlington, La. another member of the lieutenant's platoon, was concealed from enemy observation and fire when the officer fell. He immediately left his position for the fallen platoon leader, but was killed instantly as he attempted to drag the wounded officer to safety.

10 Apr 1945 The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

The next morning the 303rd continued its drive toward the north. Company G, commanded by Captain Thomas W. Mellen, attacked the Glockner Works (Troisdorf Kloeckner-Mannstedt Works), a machine factory complex at Troisdorf, near Siegburg. The company ran into stiff resistance. Several men were killed or wounded. After reinforcements arrived, Company G resumed the attack with a frontal attack on the main building. As the American soldiers entered the building. the enemy troops retreated through holes in the floor, created by sliding lathes, and went down as deep as four floors beneath the ground level. Firefights took place in tunnels and rooms under the factory building. Finally, flame-throwers had to be used against the Nazi to force them to surrender.

The 386th Infantry Regiment also had to overcome stiff resistance at a number of enemy strongpoints in the advance northward. Perhaps the most dramatic action involving the 386th was the assault on the small town of Drabenderhohe, a communications center and roadnet hub. The town was located on a high hill defended by 88s, 20mm guns, 40mm dual purpose flak guns, small arms, and automatic weapons. Company C, commanded by Captain Llwellyn R. Johnson, was given the job of taking the town.

10 Apr 1945 Lawrence H. Kilgore 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Staff Sergeant Lawrence H. Kilgore, was in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 10 April 1945, in Germany.

10 APR 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Resumed the attack at 6:30 A.M. with enemy apparently withdrawing to next town. Reached objective at 8 A.M. Pontoon Bridge was built across the river and the 13th Armored Division crossed. Slept all night in foxholes as 88s still shelled Siegburg. Seventy-three prisoners were taken.

10 Apr 1945 Ralph H Schamp 387th Infantry Regiment, Company C

Awarded Purple Heart for wounds received as a result of enemy action in Germany on 10 Apr 1945.

10 Apr 1945 Kenneth E Vogelpohl 387th Infantry Regiment, Company D

Awarded Purple Heart for wounds received as a result of enemy action in Germany on 10 Apr 1945.

10 Apr 1945 Benjamin Fox 387th Infantry Regiment, Company D

Awarded Purple Heart for wounds received as a result of enemy action in Germany on 10 Apr 1945.

10 Apr 1945 William F Hebrew 387th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Awarded Purple Heart for wounds received as a result of enemy action in Germany on 10 Apr 1945.

10 Apr 1945 – Tue– JOHN F. PATRICK LT. Col 820TH TANK DESTROYER Bn

Battalion C.P. and rear echelon no change.

Reconnaissance Company

C.P. and Pioneer platoon no change.

1st platoon moved with "B" Company to Mendt (F7636). 1st section moved with 3rd platoon, "B" Company, to (F625475) and 2nd section moved with 1st platoon, "B" company, to (F625474). 2nd platoon moved with "C" Company to vic Hennef (F6741) at 0600. 1st section joined Task Force Delnore and 2nd section joined Task Force Satt, both of CCA, 13th Armored Division. 1st section moved with Task Force Delnore and bivouacked for the night on Autobahn near Siegburg. 2nd section moved with Task Force Satt to vic Schreck (F679475). Reconnoitered for gun positions from which 2nd platoon, "C" Company, could fire on towns of Deesem (F674511) and Breict (F588675). 3rd platoon moved to Hennef with "A" Company at 2230 and remained there for the night.

"A" Company.

1st and 3rd platoon with pioneer platoon of Reconnaissance Company and 3rd Reconnaissance platoon moved to a position of readiness at Hennef, Germany. (F678416), closing at 2345.

“B” Company.

Left Nieder Ottersbach (F822435) and arrived Mendt (F7636) at 0800. 1st and 3rd platoons moved forward with CCB, 13th Armored Division and 2nd platoon with 93rd Reconnaissance Squadron. Company Headquarters and C.P. moved to Sieburg, Germany (F6344).

“C” Company.

C.P. and 1st platoon moved to (F6248) and was with reserve of CCA, 13th Armored Division.

2nd platoon attached to Task Force Delnore. The platoon assisted in the assault on the towns of Hagen and Breid, destroying three 88MM guns and also one 20MM which was located in an observation tower.

3rd platoon attached to Task Force Satt, moved to (F640454) and remained there overnight.

10 Apr 1945 – HQTRS RECORDS – AFTER ACTION REPORTS - DATED 22 May 1945

A new order was received from Division which changed the zone of advance somewhat to the NW, and when the attack was ordered resumed at 0800, 10 April 1945, due to the fact that a turning movement was involved, it was decided by the Regiment Commander to Echelon the advance from right to left starting at 0800 for the 1st Battalion, 1000 for the 2nd Battalion, and 1200 for the 3rd Battalion. Due to a delay in transmission of the orders to the 1st Battalion, initiation of the attack was delayed until 0950. Company A had reverted to Battalion control on the 10th of April, and Company K, which had been actively engage at FELDERHOFF and SCHONENBERG, had been ordered to reserve. At 1215, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions were ordered to advance simultaneously, the 1st Battalion having moved up almost abreast of the 2nd Battalion.

11 Apr 1945 - Sgt. Fishman undertook a desperate gamble. Disregarding enemy fire, he made his way to an underground enemy bunker which offered protection to approximately 70 Germans. Second Lt. David W. Christianson, a company officer who was cut off with the platoon, soon joined the sergeant and the pair persuaded the Nazis to conduct them to enemy headquarters.

Admitting they were hopelessly surrounded but warning the Germans that more Americans were on the way, Sgt. Fishman and Lt. Christianson effected the surrender of six officers and 170 men. This action led to the capture of the factory without further casualties. Sgt. Fishman was awarded the Silver Star for his outstanding leadership.

Meanwhile, the remainder of Co. G, reinforced by other elements of the regiment, battled the enemy in the tunnels and rooms under the factory building. Under the command of Capt. Thomas W. Mellen, Burlingame, Calif., Co. G turned flame throwers on the Nazis just as the garrison surrendered.

With Sieburg cleared and the Glockner Works (Troisdorf Kloeckner-Mannstedt Works) captured, the company rejoined the 303rd, pressing rapidly forward several miles further north.

11 Apr 1945 - Thomas F. Collingwood 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A

First Lieutenant Thomas F. Collingwood, Company "A", 386th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 11 April 1945, in Czechoslovakia. Entered military service from Illinois.

11 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gurlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Battalion continued attack to capture city of Much. G Company, plus some heavy weapons attachments, launched attack for Much at 0800. With F Company in position on high ground on right of town prepared to assist, E Company, plus some heavy weapons attachments, continued attack in zone on left. Planned artillery and mortar fire on Much was very effective. G Company crossed Wahn River and entered the city of Much at 1340. F Company passed through G Company and continued attack in zone. Two German hospitals were captured. Battalion C.P. moved to Much. In this attack Battalion received SA and AW fire. Battalion secured high ground around Much in preparation for the following day.

C.P.'s: E Company Halzemich; F Company Falkemich; G Company Strinkerhof; H Company Falkemich.

11 Apr 1945 – Wed – Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

1600 White located tank repair shop at Summersback.

1615 White captured 2 half-tracks intact in Much

0120 FR George: paratrooper landed at Schmitten, said a German Division was to launch at attack this AM

0545 George reports situation same: quiet; will attack at daybreak

1340 George entered city of Much

1355 George has run into machine gun resistance 200 yards outside Much. En Strong points on hills outside of town.

1900 White-6 to C.P. at Much

11 Apr 1945 – Wed – Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

In the afternoon, with King Co. on our right, flushed woods to Lohmar, captured previously by Love Co., en-trucked and returned to Stallberg via the auto bahn.

11 Apr 1945 – George Lilmetis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Private First Class George Lilmetis, Company "I", 386th Infantry Regiment, on 11 April 1945. Entered military service from New York.

11 Apr 1945 – Alec Andras 386th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Private First Class Alec Andras, Company "I", 386th Infantry Regiment, on 11 April 1945. Entered military service from New York.

11 APR 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Resumed attack at 6 A.M. Henry and Wyatt were run over by a tank during the night while sleeping in their foxholes. Both had to be evacuated. Met no resistance. Crossed Agger River in water chest deep, wet all day. Bivouacked in the woods.

11 Apr 1945 Edwin G Brown 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Private First Class Edwin G. Brown, Company "D", 303d Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 11 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from South Dakota.

11 Apr 1945 - Donald E Rappaport 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company G

Awarded Bronze Star Medal for heroic achievement against an armed enemy of the United States on 11 Apr 1945.

11 Apr 1945 Donald L Lackman 387th Infantry Regiment, Company B

Private First Class Donald L. Lackman, Company "B", 387th Infantry Regiment, on 11 April 1945. Entered military service from Washington.

11 Apr 1945 – John P Gietz 387th Infantry Regiment, Company C

While leading two squads in an assault on the town of Busch, Germany, on 11 April 1945, Sergeant Gietz and his men came under heavy machine gun fire from a building at the edge of the town. He fearlessly led the attack across 150 yards of open terrain in the face of heavy fire to the building which was set afire. After clearing the town, Sergeant Gietz and his men were subjected to sniper and machine gun fire from a nearby woods. He unhesitatingly went forward, under fire, to reconnoiter the enemy positions and upon returning, personally guided a platoon of tanks to a position from which they could place fire on the enemy strong points. Sergeant Gietz so accurately directed fire from the tanks that 6 enemy machine gun positions were silenced.

11 Apr 1945 -Malcom H. Bruner 922 FA Battalion, Battery B

On the 11th of April, we moved into BIERKEN, chopped down a few fruit trees, fired a few rounds, acquired additional loot, and after being wrenched out of our position, moved on the following day.

11 Apr 1945 – Wed – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Germany – troop liaison arrived from division. Received G-2 periodic report #10. Request call for 1st platoon have 1 prisoner. 0830 troop company took prisoner to G-2 for questioning. Changed password. Cp visited by Major Alsberg M.C. CP visited by LT Anderson of 303rd infantry I & R Plat. 1600 two prisoners captured by 1st platoon. 2000 CP visited by Chaplain Springfellow who spent the night.

11 Apr 1945 – - JOHN F. PATRICK LT. Col 820TH TANK DESTROYER Bn

Battalion and C.P. at Oberpleis closed 1110 and opened Hennef (F681418) at 1145. Closed C.P. at Hennef at 1615 and opened in Siegburg (F630442). No change for rear echelon.

Reconnaissance Company.

C.P. left Oberpleis with Battalion C.P. moving to Hennef. Moved from Hennef with Battalion C.P. and arrived Siegburg (F628444). Several documents found in a former German C.P. were turned over to C.I.C for disposition.

Pioneer platoon released from "A" Company and joined Company C.P. at Hennef and moved with C.P. to Siegburg.

1st platoon. 1st section crossed Agger river at 1600, moving to (F538522). Knocked out enemy MG at (F539551) with .50 Cal. MG mounted on M8. Spent night vic (F5455). 2nd section crossed Agger river, knocked out MG nest and snipers in Elsdorf (F540528) and took three PW's. Bivouaced for night vic (F5455).

2nd platoon. 1st section was advance security for 3rd platoon, "C" Company, on move to Lohmar (F628492). Town was under shell and mortar fire. 2nd section performed mission of reconnoitering all towns in route of advance of Task Force Delnore. Captured five PW's, ten 20MM guns and ammunition, fired on enemy MG positions with 37MM, killing ten enemy soldiers.

3rd platoon at 0630 crossed Sieg river in advance of 1st and 3rd platoons, Company "A", and contacted Company "F", 387th Infantry Regiment at Seligenthal.

"A" Company.

C.P. moved to Seligenthal, Germany. 1st and 3rd platoons crossed Sieg river and arrived at Seligenthal at 0900. 1st platoon attached to 2nd Battalion, 387th Infantry; 3rd platoon attached to 3rd Battalion, 387th Infantry; 1st platoon moved to Kaldauen, Germany at 2300.

"B" Company.

C.P. joined elements of train of 13th Armored Division.

1st platoon engaged and destroyed 1 MK V tank near Lohmar at 1400 hours. Again engaged enemy at Elsdorf at 1700 hours where an AA emplacement was destroyed. Captured 60 PW's.

"C" Company.

C.P. and 1st platoon moved to (F6248) southwest of Lohmar on west side of Agger river. 2nd platoon assaulted the town of Deesem and then captured the town of Krah Winkel. Ninety rounds 76MM HE, thirty rounds 76MM APC, fourteen rounds 37MM and 1000 rounds .50 Cal. ammunition were fired with the following results: three 88 MM guns destroyed, one 105MM gun destroyed, ten 20MM guns destroyed, one radar and searchlight station destroyed, eighteen enemy soldiers killed and forty wounded. Platoon then moved to (F613476) and bivouacked for the night.

3rd platoon went into direct fire position near Lohmar, fired four rounds 76MM into suspected gun positions, then moved to indirect fire positions. The platoon moved into Lohmar at 2030 hours, then to bivouac area southwest of town at (F608489). During this

move, fire was received from enemy 20MM guns but no damage resulted and no casualties were suffered.

11 Apr 1945 – Wed – History Background - ELIMINATION OF THE RUHR POCKET -

Interview with: Capt Milton Ponitz, Asst S-3, 387th Inf , and 97th Inf Div. 1st Lt, Robert McCaffrey, Ln 01 387th Inf , 97th Div. Place: Opladen, Germany.

On the morning of the 11th of April at 0700, the 2d Battalion -was committed on the left and with the 1st Battalion continued the attack to the N. moving across the rolling country the 1st Battalion took WAHLSCHEID (658545) and WICKUHL) (645562) By nightfall. The 1st Battalion was supposed to take HOFFNUNGSTHAL (635576) and Company A moved up after darkness in an attempt to complete their mission of taking that town even though they had been on the move since 0700 that morning. 88's and MG fire from the vicinity of (645585) and WIELPUTZ (643520) stopped company A. The 2d Battalion was just short of MENZLINGEN (618550) nightfall by resistance. The 3d Bn was in reserve at LOHMAR (627492) but continued to hold the high ground at HALBERG and the high ground East of LOHAR.

Elements of the 13th armored Division had crossed the AGGER River S of LOHMAR and had moved N along the W bank of this River to ALTENRATH. On orders from Division the 3d Battalion was directed to reconnoiter a crossing of the AGGER at LOHMAR and secure the high ground near ALTENRATH in support of the armored operation. Shortly after this the left boundary of the regiment was extended across the highway to include a strip of Land parallel to and South of the AUTOBAHN highway about 1000 meters wide, in the direction of LOHMAR-SCHARREN-BROICH. Beyond this latter town the left boundary of the Regiment was the AUTOBAHN Highway exclusive. The 3d Battalion was committed in the left sector, attacking initially from ALTENRATH to the NW.

12 Apr 1945 – 97th infantry Division Command Posts –

Town: Siegburg

Region: Rhineland

Country: Germany

12 Apr 1945 - Pfc Clyde T. Crouch, Dunns Stations, Pa., platoon aid man, was killed while braving enemy fire in an attempt to administer first aid to one of the wounded. Pfc Donald E. Rappaport, Evanston, Ill., was injured by a concussion grenade when he attempted to rescue Crouch.

Under the leadership of Sgt. Leslie Fishman, Los Angeles, the platoon took up defensive positions in a house inside the factory grounds at twilight. Pfc Maurice T. Stack, Doniphan, Mo., applying his knowledge of first aid, was instrumental in saving the lives of three wounded men.

The night was a long nightmare for the platoon. German 88s bombarded the vicinity incessantly. To leave the building meant death or capture. Members of the platoon repulsed repeated Nazi attacks.

Sgt. Fishman undertook a desperate gamble next morning. Disregarding enemy fire, he made his way to an underground enemy bunker which offered protection to approximately 70 Germans. Second Lt. David W. Christianson, a company officer who was cut off with the

platoon, soon joined the sergeant and the pair persuaded the Nazis to conduct them to enemy headquarters.

Admitting they were hopelessly surrounded but warning the Germans that more Americans were on the way, Sgt. Fishman and Lt. Christianson effected the surrender of six officers and 170 men. This action led to the capture of the factory without further casualties. Sgt. Fishman was awarded the Silver Star for his outstanding leadership.

Meanwhile, the remainder of Co. G, reinforced by other elements of the regiment, battled the enemy in the tunnels and rooms under the factory building. Under the command of Capt. Thomas W. Mellen, Burlingame, Calif., Co. G turned flame throwers on the Nazis just as the garrison surrendered.

12 Apr 1945 – History Background - ELIMINATION OF THE RUHR POCKET -

Interview with: Capt Milton Ponitz, Asst S-3, 387th Inf , and 97th Inf Div. 1st Lt, Robert McCaffrey, Ln 01 387th Inf , 97th Div. Place: Opladen, Germany.

At 0800 on 12 Apr. 45 the 1st and 2d Battalions resumed the attack to the NW. The 2d Battalion took MENZLINGEN by noon ROSPATH (610557) by 1300. The 1st Battalion took HOFFNUNGSTHAL and thus by early afternoon the Regiment was holding the line along the SW to NE road, ROSRATH--SULZE (622587). Prior to this time the Regimental Commander was ordered by Corps to increase the speed of his attack. Emphasis was to be placed on speed, and not on screening population in Towns. The Regimental Commander had directed utilization of all three battalions in the assault, employing organic motors.

The net result for the day's operation was to narrow the front of all three Battalions, and they were ordered to move out with all speed. Each Battalion utilized all means at hand and attacked along road nets and took out all resistance as it moved. By nightfall the left flank of the regiment was just S of DELBRUCK (54065) and the right flank was just west of BERG-GLADBACH (575655). The front line positions were on the road running West - East between these towns, with the 3d Battalion on the left, the 1st on the right, and the 2d in the center. The regimental CP was at GIERATH.

12 Apr 1945 - The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

On April 12, the 1st and 3rd platoons attacked strong enemy positions defending the approach to Drabenderhohe. A number of soldiers were seriously wounding by withering enemy fire. The extraordinary courage, leadership, and determination of Private First Class Joe R. Hastings, a squad leader of a light machine gun section, helped clear the path for the company's advance into Drabenderhohe. Hastings was killed four days later in another action. for his exceptional heroism on April 12, Hastings was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously. He was the only member of the 97th Infantry Division to be awarded the nation's highest decoration for valor. A copy of Hastings's citation is included in this booklet.

After artillery fire on Drabenderhohe, Company C attacked the town, but after a short, fierce battle, was thrown back with heavy casualties. German positions on the high ground were then subjected to an exceptionally heavy artillery and mortar barrage. This effectively neutralized most of the enemy's firepower. Captain Johnson moved out in

front of his troops and led the advance over 1,500 yards of fire-swept terrain in the attack that took the town. He was awarded the silver star for his action.

The combat experiences of the 387th Infantry Regiment as it advanced in the central sector of the Division front were relatively similar to those of the 303rd and 386th Infantry Regiments. On some occasions the enemy offered stiff resistance in wooded areas and small towns. These strongpoints were overcome by the courage, skill, determination, and firepower of the 387th and its supporting artillery.

12 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Shoved off in the afternoon with weapons in trailers, crossed the autobahn, took Altenrath, continued on, and spent the night in Kalmusmeier. Were subjected to artillery fire during the night. Sent out patrols and captured prisoner.

12 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Koehn made corporal!

Pictured: 386th UPS at Farmhouse near Rhine U,P,S, Clerks, 386th Infantry Regiment
CANNON COMPANY – BEDERSON; SERVICE COMPANY – DUNN; SERVICE
COMPANY – STONE; SERVICE COMPANY – WILLEY; SERVICE COMPANY –
THOMPSON; REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS – GUBA; 1ST BATTALION HQ –
GREISHEIMER; 2ND BATTALION HQ – CLARK; 2ND BATTALION HQ – KING;
3RD BATTALION HQ – MILLER, R.; ANTI-TANK COMPANY – FURFARI; MEDIC
BATTALION – DOLOTA; A COMPANY – MARTINSON; B COMPANY --
SHRAUFNAGEL & HOFFMAN; C COMPANY -- MILLER, C. & TINDER; D
COMPANY -- LEUTTERS & SCHWABIK; E COMPANY – NELSON; F COMPANY
-- LEETI & BUCZINSKY; G COMPANY -- KOEHN * REALI; H COMPANY –
GREGORIO; I COMPANY -- MOORE & BEARD; K COMPANY – ROLLS; L

COMPANY -- HENRY & CHENOT; M COMPANY -- BERGSTROM



12 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

386th Schorenberg – main enemy resistance during period was met in Drabenderhohe. Nine enemy horse-drawn matice weapons reported in town. Horse-drawn 40MM Flak guns seen as well as one tank & other artillery (pieces dug in... discuss artillery and both our artillery fired on town. After firing troops unable to take town. En artillery field on March at 1430 trying to hit bridge at south approach.

0830 George (CO G) jumped off on attack as Scheduled, Drabenderhoe.. Objective: WIA: William F Stehl JR (EVAC) 386th on right flank of 303rd, 387th & 387th Combat team.

0940 George: everything quiet and under control, advancing steadily. WIA: Henry J. A. Condon (EVAC)

1035 George (CO G) entered OBR. Heiden.

1110 George (CO G) meeting no enemy resistance

1115 George presently at OBR. Heiden

1245 George at town of Strinkerhof.

1355 George has objective #5

1530 To George: Hold up on Objective #8, pending orders.

1640 CP to Falkenmuch.

1545 Pickup hot chow before dark

2125 George Co. has additional Force at 21. 1-IL. (7th Division rear at Oberpleis from 04 Apr to 12 Apr 1945 (through Bonn & Bad Godesburg) 386th UPS at Bad Godesburg, 8 KM s of Bonn.

Pictured: Haus Treusnfels, Bad Godesberg am Rhein – dining room (RBergstrom Collection)



Pictured: Haus Treusnfels, Bad Godesberg am Rhein (RBergstrom Collection)



Pictured: Bad Godesberg am Rhein - Haus Treuenfels (RBergstrom Collection)



Pictured: Haus Treusnfels, Bad Godesberg am Rhein (RBergstrom Collection)



Pictured: Haus Treusnfels, Bad Godesberg am Rhein(RBergstrom Collection)



Pictured: Kreuschner's Hotel Rheinland, Bad Godesberg, Rheinallee – “Chapel Services were held here” Written by Rowland Bergstrom CO M, 386th (RBergstrom Collection)



12 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Battalion jumped off at 0800. Companies had same heavy weapons attachments. Units moved very rapidly and captured approximately 14 towns including Oer, Heiden, Strinkerhof, Vovingen, and Falkemich. Battalion C.P. moved to Falkemich. Battalion secured high ground extending east and west of Falkemich in preparation for launching attack the following day. Strong enemy forces were reported occupying Marialinden. F Company sent reconnaissance patrols to the town and reported no enemy seen. G Company sent patrol to reconnoiter bridge across Agger River; reported bridge blown and ground marshy.

C.P.'s: E Company Halzemich; F Company Falkemich; G Company Strinkerhof; H Company Falkemich.

12 Apr 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Germany – changed password. 1205 2nd platoon captured German paratrooper. German paratrooper transferred to rear. 1125 message from G-2 alerting the 2nd platoons and COMP DEC to move. 1330 received G-3 periodic report #12, received G-2 periodic report #11 1015 1st man left for Paris on pass, Pfc. Wisniewski 2nd platoon.

12 APR 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Lots of mail came today. Many tanks came into our area and we were sure glad to see them. Jumped off in the attack, again at 4:30 P.M. It was really raining. No Germans sighted as we followed the armor. Continued through low, swampy land until 8:30 P.M. Slept under raincoats and froze all night long.

12 Apr 1945 Christian Elbert Hinrichs 303rd Infantry Regiment – KIA

Plot H Row 7 Grave 21, Netherlands American Cemetery, Margraten, Netherlands. Serial # 37653969

12 Apr 1945 - Joe Hastings 386th Infantry Regiment, Company C - KIA

Joe Ray Hastings (April 8, 1925 – April 16, 1945) was a United States Army soldier and a recipient of the United States military's highest decoration—the Medal of Honor—for his actions in World War II. Hastings joined the Army from Magnolia, Ohio, and by April 12, 1945 was serving as a private first class in Company C, 386th Infantry Regiment, and 97th Infantry Division. He fought gallantly during an attack against strong enemy forces defending Drabenderhohe, Germany, from the dug-in positions on commanding ground. As squad leader of a light machinegun section supporting the advance of the 1st and 3d Platoons, he braved direct rifle, machinegun, 20mm., and mortar fire, some of which repeatedly missed him only by inches, and rushed forward over 350 yards of open, rolling fields to reach a position from which he could fire on the enemy troops. From this vantage point he killed the crews of a 20mm. gun and a machinegun, drove several enemy riflemen from their positions, and so successfully shielded the 1st Platoon, that it had time to reorganize and remove its wounded to safety. Observing that the 3d Platoon to his right was being met by very heavy 40mm. and machine gun fire, he ran 150 yards with his gun to the leading elements of that unit, where he killed the crew of the 40mm. gun. As spearhead of the 3d Platoon's attack, he advanced, firing his gun held at hip height, disregarding the bullets that whipped past him, until the assault had carried 175 yards to the objective. In this charge he and the riflemen he led killed or wounded many of the fanatical enemy and put 2 machineguns out of action. Pfc. Hastings, by his intrepidity, outstanding leadership, and unrelenting determination to wipe out the formidable German opposition, cleared the path for his company's advance into Drabenderhohe. He was killed 4 days later while again supporting the 3d Platoon.

1945 Anthony E Hecht 386th Infantry Regiment, Company C

My company had been pinned down by very heavy enemy fire in Germany. Our company commander was a fool, wholly incapable of any initiative, who slavishly obeyed commands, however uninformed or ill-considered, from battalion or regimental HQ, and without regard to the safety or capacity of his own troops. (He was later awarded a Silver Star for action that took place on a day when he was behind the lines being treated for dysentery.)

Anyway, on this day when we were hopelessly kept flat on the ground by superior fire-power, some idiot at an upper echelon, far behind the lines and blissfully unaware of our situation regarding the enemy (though probably eager to keep all forward movements abreast of one another to protect all flanks) ordered my company to move forward, and the captain ordered us to ready ourselves, though there would have been nothing but total annihilation in prospect. At the last second, higher command called for artillery, which turned the trick. And as we slowly rose from prone positions, I confessed to my platoon commander, a second lieutenant just about my age, that if the order to advance had not

been countermanded I was very unsure whether I would have obeyed. 'Of course you would have,' he replied, but with a look that meant a great deal. He fully understood how foolish such a command would have been at the time, but as an officer, whose duty was to set an example, he knew that he would have had to obey.

12 Apr 1945 - 386th Infantry Regiment, Company L

Stationed at Siegburg, in the Region of Rhineland, Germany

12 Apr 1945 -Malcom H. Bruner 922 FA Battalion, Battery B

We moved to GERBER on the 12th of April and arrived at our position just in time to put our sufficient rounds to prevent a company of our infantry from being destroyed by the Germans. We had stopped in MUCHEN SEIFEN earlier for chow.

12 Apr 1945 – Thur– JOHN F. PATRICK LT. Col 820TH TANK DESTROYER Bn

Battalion C.P. and rear echelon no change.

Reconnaissance Company.

C.P. and Pioneer platoon no change.

1st platoon. 1st section moved to Dunnwald (F515673) losing two one-quarter ton trucks enroute due to enemy MG fire. 2nd section also moved to Dunnwald. Encountered sniper and MG fire at (F537557). Fire was returned and the action ceased.

2nd platoon. 1st section moved as an advance security for Task Force Satt from (F610489) to (F613514) vic Altenrath. 2nd section assisted in liberation of PW Camp (Stalag 6G) and bivouacked vic Rath (F441581).

3rd platoon. 1st section moved to Siegburg at 0015 and reconnoitered positions for 1st platoon of "A" Company to fire on enemy strong point in factory. 2nd section moved to Braschob at 1100 and to Halberg at 1830.

"A" Company.

No Change in C.P.

1st platoon attached 303rd Infantry regiment at 0015. arrived in Siegburg at 0630 where 100 rounds of 76MM was fired into a factory which was enemy strong point.

2nd and 3rd platoons returned to company control and moved to Braschob, Germany. Left Braschob for Halberg, Germany, at 1830 hours to remain in regimental reserve.

"B" Company

C.P. moved across Agger river but because of intense enemy shelling moved back and joined battalion C.P. at Siegburg at 1700 hours.

1st platoon discovered two 88MM guns, one of which had been destroyed. Platoon destroyed the other. One section fired 19 rounds HE into Urbach where 400 prisoners were taken. Then moved to Dunnwald where intermittent flak and mortar fire was received all day.

"C" Company.

C.P and 1st platoon moved to (F611492).

2nd platoon aided in the capture of a German PW Camp (Stalag 6G) which resulted in the liberation of 700-800 Allied prisoners of whom approximately 200 were American.

Camp located (F588548).

3rd platoon saw no action.

******United States President Roosevelt dies in Warm Springs, Georgia;*

******Vice President Harry S. Truman succeeds to the Presidency.*

Apr 1945 - James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

I remember one day in April very clearly. We were starting our assault on this village when the burgomaster came out, waving a white flag and carrying a radio. He was very excited and the interpreter said he was crying "Roosevelt kaput !" We listened to the radio and learned that President Roosevelt had died and Harry Truman was now president. Everyone said "Who is Truman?" The German town surrendered and all of them started hugging and kissing us, believing that now the war was over, and begging us to fight the Russians.

The German Army started retreating faster with very little resistance, with a steady stream of prisoners moving to the rear. In the border towns of Czechoslovakia - Plauen, Hof, and Marienbad, we passed by the prison camps and crematories and the smell was terrible. Special army units occupied the concentration camps and we continued chasing the Germans... Finally, we met the Russian troops at Pilsen and a cease fire was ordered.

12 Apr 1945 - William Meisekothen 386th Infantry Regiment, Company C

What we were doing, so, he probably didn't know the individual things that each group was doing. But next thing, probably, I just remember is Roosevelt died, the War was basically over. We were heading towards Pilsen and we were told to dig in and stay there and if the Russians don't stop, we're supposed to stop them. They were supposed to stop before they got—apparently this agreement on Berlin and—and Pilsen and all those things as theirs, so we started digging in there, and, gosh, we didn't hardly get dug in and I remember the word came down, trucks were loadin', everyone was to head back. So we went back and we took—trucks took us to Le Havre and—

12 Apr 1945 – HQTRS RECORDS – AFTER ACTION REPORTS - DATED 22 May 1945

The advance continued without outstanding opposition until 0700, 12 April 1945, when the right flank of the 1st Battalion encountered heavy resistance at DRABENDERHOHE. Operations against this town delayed the right flank until approximately 1750, when a coordinated attack by B & C companies, after artillery preparations, was ordered by the Battalion Commander. In the meantime, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions were ordered to delay their advance in order to prevent too wide a gap from occurring on the right flank of the 2nd Battalion.

The attack of the 1st Battalion against DRABENDERHOHE being successful, the balance of the 1st Battalion moved forward but was unable to cover enough distance to regain

contact with company A on the left flank of the Battalion, therefore, the Regiment reserve Company K was ordered to move temporarily into the gap between A and B Companies until the attack could be resumed.

12 Apr 1945 – Clyde T Crouch 303rd Infantry Regiment, Medical Detachment - KIA

KIA in Belgium – 12 Apr 1945. Born in Pennsylvania on 28 May 1923. “The body of Pfc. Clyde T. Crouch, who lost his life in service during World War II, arrived in Waynesburg today for reburial. Pfc. Crouch was killed in action April 12, 1945, in Belgium while giving first aid to an officer on the battlefield. He entered service March 3, 1943, and served the 303rd Infantry Medical Corps, in the 97th Division. He was a son of Clyde H. and Virginia Mackey Crouch, who survive, and was born May 28, 1923, in Washington. Most of his life was spent in the Waynesburg community and in Greene County. He attended Nineveh grade and high schools and was a member of the Swarts Methodist church.”

12 Apr 1945 –Otto Miller and Grover A Thomas – 83rd Medical Bn, Company A

Commanding General 13th Armored Division: On the 12th April 1945 the Medical Div. of the 45th Tank Bn. Moved into an assembly area in the woods two miles north of Siegburg, Germany. Grover A. Thomas A.S.N. 37465288 and Otto Miller A.S.N.

35339778 of A Co. 83rd Med. Bn. Armored were in the ambulance attached to our unit.

At approximately 1200 hours 12, April 1945 we were subjected to an intense artillery barrage. One of the first shells to fall in the area landed about 25 yards from the spot where the ambulance was parked. **This shell killed one infantryman and seriously wounded another of an Anti-Tank Platoon of the 97th Infantry Division.**

Disregarding the enemy artillery barrage and without consideration for their personal safety Grover A. Thomas A.S.N. 37465288 and Otto Miller A.S.N. 35339778 ran forward from cover to render first aid. Their fast action in administering first aid and their rapid evacuation was instrumental in saving the soldiers life. Their utter disregard for their personal welfare and complete devotion to duty has reflected great credit on them and was in the best traditions of the service. Written by Capt. Hershman - Lt. Sorlsine

13 Apr 1945 - Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F –

The division finished up in Wuppertal. After a few days in Wuppertal, we were trucked about 250 miles to the 3rd Army, near the Czechoslovakian border.

13 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

E Company, and 2nd HMG platoon and 2nd section 81-mm mortar platoon F Company attached; G Company, plus 1st HMG platoon and 3rd 81-mm mortar section attached, moved to flank positions to assist F Company in its attack on Marialinden. Attack started at 0830 and town secured by 0930 and advance continued to Agger River. Troops crossed river. E Company moved into Oberath at 1130. Battalion C.P. moved to Oberath at 1330. Battalion moved rapidly forward in its zone. Battalion captured approximately 23 towns including Heilingen Haus, Weberhohe, Westerhohe, Neusenhausen,

Immekeppel. Battalion C.P. moved to Immekeppel at 2030. Battalion captured 70 P.W.'s

C.P.'s: E Company Kaule; F Company Immekeppel; G Company forward and right of Immekeppel; H Company Immekeppel

13 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

386th at Oberath – EN has blown bridges at Overath & Steinenbruk. 88MM gun reported at 1600. Patrols sent out to protect existing bridges. 150 prisoners turned in during PD.

White located supply point at 1025 – new rifles and other new equipment.

0500 George move at 0700 to give fire support to Fox.

0500 George attack in zone E & 5 at 0700: place fire on F 13, Mushy, Movement across river.

0825 FR George: have obtained G10 & G1, moving into position observation very poor & F 13 appeared to be evacuated.

0845 FR. George: civilians evacuating OBJ F13, no sign of military action

1120 Front: George at 22.8 – 1.34 02.9 – 23.7

1225 George Co. Now at Misachuchau.

1230 George Co. Reports wounded German at Mesachuchau.

1240 George Co. Located D.P. of Signal & Ordnance Equipment and have secured same

1530 New White CP at Overath

2030 New White CP at Immerhappel.

13 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Moved out at 1000 thru several towns by shuttle on T.B's flushed houses. Were held up outside Dellbruck when there was scattered resistance ahead, entered town, billeted.

Passed large caches of prisoner.

13 APR 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Attack at 9 and what a drive! Led by Armor, we went about 12 miles into the Ruhr, much of the way on the Autobahn leading to Dell-Bruck. Flushed some Germans out of dug in positions; they had two multiple-barreled machine guns but didn't get a chance to use them. Spent the night in a factory under shell fire. (Battalion in reserve.)

13 Apr 1945– Jack S Manion 387th Infantry Regiment, Company A

Awarded Purple Heart for wounds received as a result of enemy action in Germany on 13 Apr 1945.

13 Apr 1945 – Anthony W Globis 387th Infantry Regiment, Company A

On 13 April 1945 near Wahlscheid, Germany, Private Globis was sent to make a bridge reconnaissance. After advancing 2000 yards he came upon a road bridge which was mined and protected by three enemy soldiers. Though outnumbered, Private Globis unhesitatingly crawled to a position from which he could place fire upon the enemy troops and forced their surrender. He then audaciously required his prisoners to deactivate the mines and returned them to his own lines. Private Globis' boldness and gallantry on this occasion permitted his company to advance and reflects great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces.

13 Apr 1945– Thomas J Roe 387th Infantry Regiment, Company B

Awarded Purple Heart for wounds received as a result of enemy action in Germany on 13 Apr 1945.

13 Apr 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Dorz, Germany – G-2 periodic report #13 received.

1225 18 prisoners captured – EVAC 1400 32 prisoners captured EVAC 1845 34 prisoners captured EVAC 1900 towns in troop 2 cleared of EN

13 Apr 1945 – Fri – JOHN F. PATRICK LT. Col 820TH TANK DESTROYER Bn

Battalion C.P. and rear echelon no change in location.

Battalion relieved from attachment to 13th Armored Division and again attached to 97th Infantry Division.

Reconnaissance Company.

C.P. and Pioneer platoon no change in location.

Pioneer platoon with Company Commander captured 13 German soldiers who were sabotaging installations behind the lines in Siegburg and turned them over to 97th Infantry Division.

1st platoon no change.

2nd platoon ordered to rally with “C” Company vic (F613495). 2nd section attacked and destroyed a radar station and captured one prisoner. Escorted 153 PW’s from (F549633) to Rath (F541581). Platoon reached rally point at 1800.

3rd platoon reconnoitered route for crossing Agger. Spent remainder of day in Siegburg.

2nd section left Halberg at 0800, crossed Agger and moved to vic Balbruck.

“A” Company.

C.P. at (F623574).

1st platoon no change.

2nd platoon and 3rd platoon supported advance of 3rd Battalion, 387th Infantry, across Agger river at Lohmar then through Altenrath, Hack, Rath, Bruck, into Bellbruck, against no opposition.

“B” Company.

C.P. at (F540645)

Company less 2nd platoon attached 303rd Infantry. 2nd platoon attached Company "C" in 386th Infantry sector.

1st platoon and C.P. under intermittent enemy artillery fire all day.

"C" Company

C.P. at (F682596).

Company and 2nd platoon, "B" Company, attached to 386th Infantry Regiment. Entire company and 2nd platoon, "B" Company, assembled at (F613495) at 2100 hours.

13 Apr 1945 – History Background - ELIMINATION OF THE RUHR POCKET -

Interview with: Capt Milton Ponitz, Asst S-3, 387th Inf , and 97th Inf Div. 1st Lt, Robert McCaffrey, Ln 01 387th Inf , 97th Div. Place: Opladen, Germany.

At 130800B Apr 45 the Regiment motorized the 3d and the 1 st Battalions for shuttling by utilizing the kitchen and baggage trucks and The Cannon Company vehicles moved the 1 st and 3d battalions up parallel road nets to the NW. the 2d Battalion the 1 st battalion as soon as possible to reserve positions near PAFFRATH. By nightfall the regiment was on the line just S of the EW road from NITTUM (535962) To UPPERSBERG (550703) to ODENTHAL (566707). On 14 Apr 45 the Battalion jumped off from this NITTUMODENTHAL line to reach A point just S of the LEVERKUSEN–WUPPERTAI River line. The 3d Battalion met heavy resistance in the vicinity of SCHILDREN and NITTUM. Numerous casualties were incurred. The resistance in the vicinity of NITTUM was not broken until late in the afternoon.

14 Apr 1945 – 97th infantry Division Command Posts –

Town: Rosrath

Region: Rhineland

Country: Germany

14 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Battalion jumped off at 0700. F Company, plus 1st HMG platoon and 1st 81-mm mortar section H Company attached, was motorized with mission to secure Bechen. E Company, plus 2nd HMG platoon and 2nd section 81-mm mortar platoon attached; and G Company, plus 3rd 81-mm mortar section H Company, were to follow and clear wooded areas behind F Company. Movement to Bechen was rapid for foot troops, but Battalion contacted 13th Armored Division going northeast across our zone at 1145 which blocked roads, slowing F Company and allowing G Company to reach Bechen first. At 1400 F Company arrived by motors and was ordered to continue attack in zone with G Company in reserve in Bechen. Leaving Bechen, F Company came under a heavy concentration of artillery, 88-mm and AW fire. After neutralizing SA and AW fire, the attack was continued on foot, G Company being committed on left of F Company. Battalion C.P. moved to Bechen. Enemy infiltration continued throughout the night. Snipers were active in the area. Bechen was shelled sporadically throughout the night by artillery. Motor patrols were established on right flank to contact elements of the 78th Division. Battalion captured 29 towns.

C.P.'s: E Company Pisterhausen; F Company west of Bechen; G Company Obersterg; H Company Bechen

14 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

386th at Oberath – Quiet. Patrols protecting existing bridge sites and maintaining contact with adjacent units. Enemy 88's encountered at 1120 in 3rd Bn area. EN Snipers reported in vicinity. Reports received at 1300 that Nazi HQA was located in Ehreshoven. 20 American .50 Cal MG's captured in Untereschbach. Two half-tracks and misc. ammo and equipment discovered. 2nd Bn reported source gave info that 60 "werwolves" were to be active in Immekeppel tonight.

0700 Jumped off on attack

1030 George to C.P.: AM now approaching objective #19 and #20. No opposition yet.

1135 George to C.P. found enemy weapons and ammo at objective #30. Friendly tanks moving through our zone.

1500 White Bn under artillery fire. Unable to move to new location

1530 White C.P. setup at junction 2 KM from Bechen

1610 White C.P. setup at Bechen

1620 Enemy artillery shelled town.

97th division rear at Siegburg from 12 Apr to 14 Apr 1945

14 Apr 1945– Humberto Lopez 386th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Private First Class Humberto Lopez, Company "I", 386th Infantry Regiment, on 14 April 1945. Entered military service from New York.

14 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Left in the morning with Item Co. in the lead. Marched into Schildgen, encountering small arms, automatic weapon, 20 mm., motor and 88 fire. Were pinned down for hours, dug in, neutralized the fire, pushed back the enemy, and suffered casualties. Met elements of the 13 armored Divisions, which has lost several tanks in this area. Moved out from Schildgen to Uppersburg, on high ground, which was assaulted and captured with automatic weapons forward. Took prisoners. Billeted after preparing a defense.

14 Apr 1945 - 386th Infantry Regiment, Company L

Stationed at Rosrath, in the Region of Rhineland, Germany

14 Apr 1945 – Veryl W. Diem 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M


Veryl W. Diem, meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 14 April 1945, in Germany. PFC Veryl W. Diem attended 2 years of high school, had a semiskilled occupation in the production of bakery products and was married. He entered into service from Harrisburg County, Pennsylvania on 13 Dec 1942 as a Private and was sent to Camp Barkley, Texas, and thence to a camp in Louisiana for further basic training. He then applied for training as aviation cadet and had begun that training when an Army decision returned all surplus aviation cadet trainees to the infantry. He received training at Camp San Luis Obispo, Camp Mercury and Camp Cook, all in California. He went overseas and landed in France on March 5, of this year. On February 15, he paid a flying visit of half hour duration to his home. He was head dough mixer at the Wright Bakery in New Holland before entering into service.

Picture of Veryl W. Diem



VOLUME LXXII

Killed in Action



PFC. VERYL W. DIEM

Son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul W. Diem, of New Holland, R. 2, was killed in action in Germany, on April 14, four days after his twenty-third birthday, according to a War Department telegram received on Friday evening.

He entered the service December 11, 1942 and was sent to Camp Barkley, Texas, and thence to a camp in Louisiana for further basic training. He then applied for training as aviation cadet and had begun that training when a Army decision returned all surplus aviation cadet trainees to the infantry. He received training at Camp San Luis Obispo, Camp Mercury and Camp Cook, all in California. He went overseas and landed in France on March 6, of this year.

On February 16, he paid a flying visit of a half hour duration to his home. He was head dough mixer at the Wright Bakery in New Holland before entering the service.

He is survived besides his parents by these brothers and sisters: T-4 Glen R. Diem, somewhere in India; Aubrey Hair Diem, Marian Ann Diem, Edith Edith Diem, Vernon P. Diem, Rosaline E. Diem, and Verner C. Diem, all at home; also by his paternal grandfather, Elias L. Diem, New Holland, R. 2.

1945 – Nathan Galloway 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

The infantry manual says 200 yard frontage for Battalion (offensive), 1000 yards (defensive). When distances prevent adequate control – weapons platoons are to be attached to Rifle Company's. I never liked to attach units to rifle companies – thinking rifle Company Commanders had a plate full without attachments. With frontages of two to two and a half miles – there were no other choices. I knew that our gunners were

without peer – all the Rifle Company Commanders need do was point – our gunners would take it from there. The ammunition and rations were another story. I made a covenant with myself to visit each platoon at least once a day to check on ammunition and rations. I wanted to see the men and I wanted them to see me. General Partridge was working the frontage of 2 ½ regiments. Occasionally our paths would cross – he would hail me down – peel 2-3 sheets from his roll of maps – point to some German Village forward and in his quiet – unemotional way say “I want to see you there at noon tomorrow.” I wanted to ask him if he had cleared it with the Germans. I did not ask.

Our attempt to accomplish these goals often led to carelessness which resulted in casualties. Such was the case with Veryl W. Diem. We were at an intersection trying to decide which fork to take – my fault – ONE LEARNS IF ONE SURVIVES.

14 APR 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Remained in reserve all day and didn't move as the 2nd Battalion was held up on our right.

14 Apr 1945 Russell W Hobbs with 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company L

Awarded Bronze Star Medal for heroic achievement against an armed enemy of the United States on 14 Apr 1945.

14 Apr 1945 Walter F Stecker JR 303rd Infantry Regiment, Medical Detachment

Private First Class Walter F. Stecker, Jr., Medical Detachment, 303rd Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 14 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Texas.

14 Apr 1945 James D Dennedy 387th Infantry Regiment, Company D

Awarded Purple Heart for wounds received as a result of enemy action in Germany on 14 Apr 1945.

14 Apr 1945 Louis P Minardi 387th Infantry Regiment, Company D

Awarded Purple Heart for wounds received as a result of enemy action in Germany on 14 Apr 1945.

1945 Homer Wilson 387th Infantry Regiment, Company D

After fighting our way through many towns, we closed in on Dusseldorf, which the Germans finally surrendered without one shot being fired. Moving up the Rhine River, we saw the horrific cost of war everywhere. All the bridges had been knocked out, destroyed by American bombers, but we cheered when we realized that our engineers had built pontoon bridges over the river. In another town that we completely covered with mortar shells and machine gunfire, it turned out that the only thing we'd killed was an old lady's pet chicken. She held it up to show us, tears in her eyes.

14 Apr 1945 Charles Cummings 387th Infantry Regiment, HQTRS Company 3rd Bn

Private First Class Charles Cummings, (then Private), Headquarters Company, 3d Battalion, 387th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in a military operation

against an armed enemy of the United States on 14 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Tennessee.

14 Apr 1945 - Harley T Wamsley 387th Infantry Regiment – KIA



14 Apr 1945 Robert T Harris JR 387th Infantry Regiment, HQTRS Company 3rd Bn

Sergeant Robert T. Harris, Jr., Headquarters Company, 3d Battalion, 387th Infantry Regiment for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 14 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Iowa.

14 Apr 1945 Robert L Eckert 387th Infantry Regiment, HQTRS Company 3rd Bn

Sergeant Robert L. Eckert, (then Private First Class), Headquarters Company, 3d Battalion, 387th Infantry Regiment for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 14 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Ohio.

14 Apr 1945 - Carl A Meeks 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

On 14 April 1945, near Schildgen, Germany, when a rifle company's advance was halted by intense enemy fire, Sergeant Meeks boldly moved forward under heavy fire to a position from which, firing rifle grenades, he silenced three enemy machine guns and a 20-mm. gun and forced their withdrawal of numerous enemy riflemen. His daring and gallantry on this occasion permitted his company to advance.

14 Apr 1945, - Joseph J D'Amico of the 387th Infantry Regiment, Company L

Awarded Purple Heart for wounds received as a result of enemy action in Germany on 14 Apr 1945.

14 Apr 1945, - Cecil C Cochran of the 387th Infantry Regiment, Company L

Awarded Purple Heart for wounds received as a result of enemy action in Germany on 14 Apr 1945.

14 Apr 1945 Leonard Gibson 387th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Private First Class Leonard Gibson, Company "M", 387th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 14 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Kentucky.

14 Apr 1945 -Malcom H. Bruner 922 FA Battalion, Battery B

On April 14th we passed through TORRINGEN, and on April 15th went into position at FEFENHENNE.

14 Apr 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Holwside, Germany – 0630 Sgt Sheehan awarded Purple Heart. Troop continued on mission. 0830 16 prisoners captured –EVAC 0900 12 prisoners captured EVAC 1200 password changed. 1225 12 prisoners captured EVAC – message received from G-2 about location of EN Mine Fison (?) 1450 message received from G-2 sending interrogator to investigate reports of EN soldiers in civilian clothing. 1500 G-2 #14 and G-3 .. reports received. 1900 2 prisoners captured.

14 Apr 1945 – Sat– 820TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION -Written by JOHN F. deV. PATRICK LT. Col

Battalion C.P. moved to Rosrath (F612556) arriving at 0930.
Rear echelon no change.

Reconnaissance Company.

C.P. and Pioneer platoon moved from Siegburg and arrived Rosrath (F609559) at 0930.

1st platoon. 1st section made route reconnaissance to (F509689) and established contact with Company “F”, 386th Infantry. Moved to Kunstfeld (F509681). 2nd section made route reconnaissance to Mulheim (F488645) and Stammheim (F478653).

2nd platoon moved with “C” Company to 386th Infantry at Steinmen Bruck (F642603).

1st section moved to Voiswinkle (F5769). Met strong resistance at (F573692). 2nd section met resistance at (F623723) where they captured 3 PW’s. Received enemy MG fire while searching the PW’s.

Picture provided by Harold Yeglin - 303rd Infantry Regiment taken in Ruhr Pocket in Germany, April 1945. Walking single file through a German victory garden at Mulheim, Germany, infantrymen of the 97th Division prepare to move northward toward the Rhine River. The army's after-action report on the Battle of the Ruhr Pocket identifies 3rd Battalion of 303rd Regiment as unit involved at Mulheim.



3rd platoon. 1st section attached 97th Reconnaissance Troop, joining it at 0600 hours. Moved to and took Kriegsdorf without opposition. Captured 4 PW's in Uchendorf and a Gestapo agent in Niederkassel. At Porg found the telephone office ready to be blown. Spent the night guarding it. 2nd section did route reconnaissance for "A" Company vic Schildgen (F542687).

"A" Company.

C.P. vic Schildgen (F542687).

1st platoon attached 97th Reconnaissance Troops. Moved from Siegburg at 0600. Assisted in clearing towns of Stockem, Uckendox, Nieder-Kassel, Zundorf, and spent the night in Porz. 2nd and 3rd platoons supported 3rd Battalion 387th Infantry. 3rd platoon fired 120 rounds direct fire on town of Nittum against enemy strong points. Company was under heavy sniper and artillery fire. 2nd platoon bivouacked at Selscheid for the night. Rest of company with attached Reconnaissance section stayed in Schildgen.

"B" Company.

C.P. and 1st platoon was at Dunnwald. 2nd platoon joined C.P. and 1st platoon at 0800 there. This group was subjected to a 15 minute artillery barrage during which one destroyer M18 was put out of action by a direct hit. The 1st and 3rd platoons joined the 303rd Infantry. C.P. Group withdrew to Dellbruck (F540644). 2nd platoon attached "C"

Company working with 2nd Battalion, 386th Infantry, knocked out one enemy SP gun, one Half-Track, and one motorcycle. Killed 12 enemy soldiers and captured 189 PW's in vic Immekeppel (F653627).

“C” Company.

At 0705 entire company moved to Overath (F682595) and reported to 386th Infantry. 2nd and 3rd platoons were attached to 3rd Battalion, 386th Infantry. 1st platoon was attached to 2nd Battalion.

1st platoon while moving near Bechen (F616726) lost one M18 destroyer which was hit by 88 MM fire.

14 Apr 1945- History Background - TRIDENT'S PRONGS, STAB DUSSELDORF

On the left flank, the 303rd whipped north from Siegburg against relatively light resistance. On April 14, the regiment was in the vicinity of Leverkusen, site of the .I. G. Farben Industry.'

Div. Arty bombarded the town, and then infantrymen closed in. A few hours later the 303rd continued its. Advance, leaving the industrial centers a pile of smoldering rubble. On April 16, all three combat teams crossed the Wupper River and advanced. Against steadily increasing enemy resistance. The 386th reached the outskirts of Solingen as the 303rd advanced through Hilden, and the 387th pushed approximately 4000 yards north of. The Wupper. In close support of these rapid advances, Div Arty fired 97 missions, a total of 3000 rounds.

The main German defenses rapidly were disintegrating. Large masses of Nazi prisoners surrendered everywhere.

Pictured: Dusseldorf (RBergstrom Collection)



Pictured: Dusseldorf (RBergstrom Collection)



14 Apr 1945 - The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

By April 14 enemy resistance was beginning to disintegrate throughout the Rhur pocket. After clearing Spiegburg and Glockner Works (Troisdorf Kloeckner-Mannstedt Works) at Troisdorf, the 303rd Infantry Regiment advanced northward against very light resistance. On April 14, the 303rd approached Leverkusen, site of the I.G. Farben Industry, one of the world's largest chemical works. After the artillery bombarded the town, the infantry closed in, but met almost no resistance. Within a few hours the 303rd continued its advance northward, leaving the industrial center a pile of smoldering rubble. Thousands of German soldiers began surrendering. Division artillery was given the responsibility for handling the large number of prisoners who were beginning to clog the roads. General Halsey was concerned about maintaining adequate communications and transportation behind the advancing troops.

14 Apr 1945 – HQTRS RECORDS – AFTER ACTION REPORTS - DATED 22 May 1945

The attack was continued with the Battalions generally abreast until the 14 April 1945 when the Regiment zone narrowed down due to contraction of the RHUR pocket. The 1st Battalion on the right was withdrawn to Regiment reserve and Company K was released to the 3rd Battalion. During the 13 April 1945, the 3rd Battalion ran into heavy opposition north of BERG GLADBACH which held them up the best part of the day. When the 1st Battalion was pinched out on the 14th by the narrowing of the Regiment front it was decided by the Regiment Commander that after they had reorganized themselves, they would be moved to the left behind the 2nd Battalion and pushed in front of the 3rd

Battalion who had been delayed at BERG GLADBACH, to make the attack on the town of BURSCHIED where heavy opposition was expected. This maneuver was completed and the attack was made. It was repulsed however by heavy automatic weapons fire from the town and by 88mm from the north of the town.

15 Apr 1945 – 97th infantry Division Command Posts –

Town: Bergisch-Gladbach

Region: Rhineland

Country: Germany

15 Apr 1945 – History Background - ELIMINATION OF THE RUHR POCKET -

Interview with: Capt Milton Ponitz, Asst S-3, 387th Inf , and 97th Inf Div. 1st Lt, Robert McCaffrey, Ln 01 387th Inf , 97th Div. Place: Opladen, Germany.

The Regimental Commander now shuffled his battalion around so that he had all three on the line for the next morning attack. The 2d Battalion was on the left, the 3d in the center, and the 1st on the right. In this formation they jumped off at 0800 on the morning of the 15th. 1st and 3d Battalions met little resistance in the movement to the line PATTSCHIED (520770) ROMBERG (530770), nor did the 2d Battalion in moving by SCHLEBUSCH toward HUSCHIED.

The attack had now become a pursuit, and every effort was made to keep the enemy on the run. The order given to the Battalions was to drive to the N with all possible speed, using whatever Battalion and Company transportation, which could be utilized. No Communication was kept between Battalions. Regiment kept Battalions informed of progress on the flanks. The TD's were kept in very close support, with one platoon attached to each battalion. There were no tanks with the Regiment.

With the Battalion sitting on the PATTSCHIED - ROMBERG line on the night of the 15th the Regimental commander Ordered all three Battalions to make a night attack starting at 160200B, with the mission of crossing the WUPPER River and securing the high ground to the N with all possible speed. This was in compliance with the directives of the higher headquarters to cross the WUPPER by noon of 16 Apr 45.

The WUPPER River runs EW into the Rhine and is just S of a heavily industrialized area between the WUPPER and the RUHR River further to the N. The populated environs of DUSSELDORF include the centers of SOLINGEN., HILDEN.- HAAN and WALD.

The battalions jumped off at 0200. The 2d Battalion (left) was held up enemy resistance in the area around HUSCHIED and WEITSCHIE (507775), where apparently the enemy did not know that the no Resistance order had been given to the rest of the units in the pocket. In the right sector, however, the 1st Battalion reached the WRUPPER at 0740 and had captured two bridges intact. The 2d Battalion (left) was delayed at HUSCHIED and did not cross the WUPPER until the early hours of the afternoon. The 3d Battalion met little resistance and was able to have Company I across the WUPPER River at approximately 1000, followed by the bulk of the Battalion in the late hours of the morning. Company I secured intact a bridge over the WUPPER which later proved extremely valuable as a focal point on the combat team MSR. The battalions continued

the advance and by nightfall the industrialized towns of OHLIGS (480850) and HAAN(490885) were taken.

15 Apr 1945 - Company C - Written by William Meisekothen

We went across the Rhine. Right when we got there they were looking, and it was very close to Cologne, too, and the biggest thing that was scary about the whole thing is we were told that the Rhine had a swift current. But man, was it swift! We were coming back, supposed to come back two miles from where we entered; we ended up about five miles. We had a rubber boat but it was too hard to paddle and the current was too great.

15 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Started out early with weapons in trailers. Company was held up for six hours approaching Altenberg, Dug in, suffered casualties, moved back to Odenthal, entrucked, sped to an open field near Holyhausen, raced for woods, received 88 fire, took refuge in houses, later moved out under cover of woods along streams to Pattscheid. Billeted and sent out patrols.

15 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

386th at bechen. Considerable 88MM fire fell in vicinity of Spitze, Schnappe and Bechen during the night. 40 MM's were also active 88 M fire met from vicinity of Odentha, later pulled out and headed for Wermeiskirchen. At 1020 reported paratroopers dug in around Attenberg. Flak guns also reported to be firing at liaison planes over R 1.7 bridge blown at r L. L/3.0. Enemy seems entrenched in Bursheid. White receiving SA and Mortar fire on left flank at 0730. Captured 56 prisoners and 8 MG and 5 Panzers at 1350.

0200 to jump off at 0700 and continue advance

0700 George Co. jumped off

0750 George to C.P.: We just knocked out Germans 17 G Inst. Killed one, captured 2. Bp short 7r.5

0800 George Co. approaching Objective #16, Obersterg. George CO. took two POW who said they were part of FLACK Regiment and was told to withdraw to Wermelskirchen.

KIA: Charles Moon at Obersterg. (#37737800)

2030 New White C.P. at Eschliansen

2300 Front: George @ c 8.4 r 2.7 8.5-r 3.7 97th division rear at Rosrath 14 Apr to 15 Apr 1945

15 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Battalion jumped off at 0700 with B Company attached. E Company was on left, B Company in center, and G Company on right. F Company already ahead of other units remained in position as flank security and reserve. When G Company took the high ground west of Bechen, it was ordered into reserve, and F Company passed through. On taken Limmeringhausen, B Company was pinched out and reverted to 1st Battalion. In vicinity of Dunweg heavy SA and AW fire was encountered. Battalion C.P. moved to Eschausen. Battalion captured approximately 25 towns and 120 P.W.'s. Battalion secured Dunweg, Hilgen, Osinghausen. There was AW and SA fire throughout the night.

C.P.'s: E, G, and H Companies at Dunweg; F Company at Hilgen.

15 Apr 1945 - 386th Infantry Regiment, Company L

Stationed at Bergish-Gladbach in the Region of Rhineland, Germany

15 Apr 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Durrig ?? Germany – 0600 1 prisoner capture – EVAC 0800 G-2 report received #15, G-3 report received #16, password changed. 1202 2 prisoners captured. EVAC 1900 1st and 2nd platoon in position along Wupper River. 2200 1 prisoner captured. EVAC

15 Apr 1945 – Hughie A. Thurlow 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A

Hughie A. Thurlow, in action at Kaltenherbergt, Germany, on the night of 15 April 1945. While leading a machine gun squad in an attack through the town against strong hostile positions, Private First Class Thurlow was wounded by enemy artillery fire. Learning that a member of his squad also had been wounded and was lying exposed and helpless near a burning building, Private First Class Thurlow without disclosing that he himself had been wounded proceeded into the fire swept street and assisted in rendering first aid to this and another wounded man and while continuing to direct the fire of his guns did he reveal that he had been wounded.

Thurlow, Midland, MI, Co. A, 386th, was wounded. Noticing one of his buddies had been hit and was lying near a burning building, Thurlow, without disclosing His wounds edged down the fire-swept street And removed his fellow dough to a protected position, Only after assisting in giving first aid to this and other wounded men did he reveal that he had been hit.

Hughie Arthur THurlow was born March 15, 1918 in Michaignan and Died Aug 1968.



15 APR 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Again in reserve. At 1 P.M. we were committed to relieve the 2nd Battalion. Crossed the Dunne River, water knee deep, and pushed onto the outskirts of Opladen, where we met fierce fire from 88s, 20 mm, and small arms. We were pinned down in an open field by machine gun fire and then shelled heavily. Shrapnel was falling in our holes as if it were rain.

15 Apr 1945 – Sun – 820TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION -Written by JOHN F. deV. PATRICK LT. Col

Battalion C.P. moved from Rosrath (F612556) to Berg Gladbach (F577662). Closing in new location at 1400

Rear echelon no change.

Reconnaissance Company.

C.P. and Pioneer Platoon moved with Battalion C.P. from Rosrath to Berg Gladbach.

1st platoon. 1st section made route reconnaissance to (F495707) and established contact with Company "F" of 303rd Infantry. 2nd section no change.

2nd platoon. 1st section did route reconnaissance for 3rd Battalion, 386th Infantry, from Odenthal (F565706) to Altenberg (F576731). Released from 3rd Battalion and attached to 1st Battalion. Bivouaced vic Holz (F566732). 2nd section reconnoitered route to Danbringham (F619773). Acted as advance security for 2nd platoon, "B" Company, and for "C" Company to Limmeringhausen (F601761).

3rd platoon. 1st section moved from Porz to Poll then to Kalk where 18 PW's were captured. 2nd section did route reconnaissance for "A" Company.

"A" Company.

C.P. at Hofen (F539715).

1st platoon moved through Poll, captured MG nest, then advanced to Bucheim screening towns and captured 114 PW's.

2nd and 3rd platoons continued in support of 387th Infantry in vic Fettehenne firing direct fire at targets of opportunity. 2nd platoon destroyed one enemy O.P. located in Lutzenkirchen. Received heavy artillery and mortar fire during the night.

"B" Company

C.P. at Manfort (F497708).

1st platoon with C.P.

3rd platoon in Kunstfeld. No action in 1st and 3rd platoon areas. 2nd platoon moved with 1st platoon, Company "C", to Limmeringhausen (F602762).

"C" Company.

C.P. moved to Bechen (F616726) and then to Altenberg (F578732). 1st platoon moved to Limmeringhausen (F502762). 2nd platoon fired on two O.P's located in houses in Burscheid (F564765). 3rd platoon moved to vic Blecher where it received enemy shell fire.

15 Apr 1945 -Malcom H. Bruner 922 FA Battalion, Battery B

On April 14th we passed through TORRINGEN, and on April 15th went into position at FEFHENNE.

At FEFHENNE we watched our liaison planes being fired on by 88's. At night we listened to the machine gun duels between the German's and our own infantry machine gunners. The cooks acquired some geese and chickens as a result of Higgen's, William's, and Mundt's efforts. From our position we could see parts of COLOGNE. Two dead Germans lay along the side of the road, which we took from Feffenhenne to

Schmitte. We were in Schmitte on April 16th when the Rhur pocket collapsed. Chief “Prone” Cyote gave five Germans attempting to surrender plenty of reason to think they had made a mistake. The following morning, still full of fire water, “Prone” Cyote became annoyed at St. Sgt. Smith. Old “Bearcat, Super’ Prone’ Smith soon had the “Chief” under the watchful eye of a guard. While at Schmitte, we rounded up prisoners and collected loot. The 97th Division took more than 25,000 prisoners. We moved to WOLFRATH on April 19th for a rest and more loot. During our stay in WOLFRATH, we moved into better houses than we had up until that time.

1945 - James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

In Dusseldorf, our unit was camped in an old tavern. The streets were narrow and half-demolished buildings. Every night shells would explode nearby, but never hit our building. We would send out night patrols, some would even cross the river, but the mortar men guarded the camp. The German Army was retreating across the river and blowing up the bridges;. We got to capture the Remagen Bridge and were the last unit across before it was blown. A Pontoon bridge was immediately constructed to bring the tanks and trucks across.

16 Apr 1945 - The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

On April 16 all three infantry regiments crossed the Wupper River.

16 Apr 1945 - Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

For the rest of the time in Europe, we lived in private homes. One of the officers would go up to a house, and tell any civilians there that their house was being confiscated (or liberated) and would be sued for billeting our troops as needed.

We were in a variety of homes. In the Ruhr Valley, there was one rather nice home where two men had been sitting in their den talking and were told they had an hour to evacuate. They left their glasses of schnapps on the table.

Looting was forbidden, but ‘souvenir taking’ wasn’t mentioned. I have some interesting souvenirs which are stored in my war trunk – little things like letter openers, some medals that were given to women for adding to the population of the Third Reich, propaganda leaflets, etc. At one home, one of the officers came into the room with several cameras over his shoulder, and threw one at each of us. I ended up with a rather nice Rolliflex, which I used quite a bit during the rest of my tour of duty, and even after I was discharged.

At another house, we came across a portable typewriter, which was in better shape than the GI issue that I was using, so that accompanied me the rest of my time in the Army, and again in civilian life after the war. It was a compact, well made typewriter – only the ‘z’ and the ‘y’ were reversed on the keyboard. This made for some interesting spellings until I remembered the difference. Also it had all the special German punctuation marks. It turned out many US Army reports for the next 10 or 12 months I was in the Army.

On one night, we were stationed in Neuss, across the Rhine River from Dusseldorf and Solingen (which was famous for making fine cutlery). The Germans had a large gun mounted on a rail car, and they would fire a few rounds across the river into our area, and then move the gun down the tracks for another barrage. It took our troops a while to find the gun and silence it.

Because the shells were landing fairly close, we went down into the basement and put mattresses over us. We ended up with a lot of dust and plaster on top of us from near hits. – it was uncomfortable night to say the least.

The next morning we looked outside at the devastation, which was considerable, but I saw some daffodils that had bloomed. They were covered by dust from the shelling, but were standing tall despite the dirt. It gave us a reassuring feeling.

One morning we were lucky enough to find some real eggs, and we were able to have a decent breakfast, which we enjoyed sitting in the breakfast nook next to the window. We pondered a few minutes as to what we should do with the dirty dishes. We decided to just toss them out the window rather than wash them.

16 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Battalion jumped off at 0730 in zone. Units retained same heavy weapons attachments. E Company came under AW fire on left front and right flank, and they were held down for quite some time until unit on left moved up on line. G Company moved forward rapidly in zone. When E Company was held up, F Company was passed through and continued attack in zone. G Company crossed Wupper River at 1330 and continued attack into Solingen. E and F Companies moved on across river, E Company going to right of Battalion zone and on into Solingen. The vast number of prisoners necessitated leaving one platoon of F Company to control P.W. enclosure at bridge site, and remainder of F Company secured the area in town south of Solingen. A combat patrol was sent out to reconnoiter and secure a bridge on Wupper River. Lt. Phelps led patrol and found a bridge intact. He crossed the bridge and posted security. During the operation, Lt. Phelps was killed by AW sniper fire. Lt. Phelps and his patrol accomplished their mission. Battalion C.P. (rear) moved to Witzhelden at 1500. C.P.'s: E, G, and H Companies at Solingen; F Company at Hasten II; Battalion C.P. (forward) at Scharfhausen

16 Apr 1945 - Charles P. Phelps 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F - KIA

Charles P. Phelps (0-1317666), Second Lieutenant (Infantry), U.S. Army, serving with Company F, 386th Infantry Regiment, 97th Infantry Division. On 16 April 1945, Lieutenant Phelps was selected to reconnoiter, seize and hold sites upon the Wupper River, in Germany, across which a battalion attack could be launched. Fighting their way to the river, Lieutenant Phelps and his men seized two unguarded bridges. After deploying his men to cover the bridge, Lieutenant Phelps fearlessly led four men over the bridge to seize high ground on the far side to protect the bridge site. During this advance he was met with heavy enemy fire from concealed positions and killed.

16 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

386th at Solingen. Commander in Solingen sent liaison officer to our regimental commander to negotiate peace terms. Unconditional surrender was arranged and we moved in with no resistance. Well over 1000 PW captured, 4 American soldiers liberated from German Military hospital among captured: General Lt. Eduard Craesemann, 12th Corps commander, 5th Army on banks of Wupper River. Also Regimental Commander with complete staff. Numerous Hitler youths and 300 prisoners taken on 17 Apr. 0500 be ready to attack at 0700. WIA: Albert J Ghirardelli (Capt. Canellas' radio man) (EVAC) caught in open field.
0730 Company George jumped off
1210 New C.P. for White at Eunemeg
1250 George Co. moving forward
1400 George Company just crossed River Wupper.
1500 New White C.P. at Witzhelden

16 Apr 1945 – Albert J Ghirardelli 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

I do remember the city of Neuss, across the Rhine from Dusseldorf where we lodged for a day or two while plans were being made for us, an amphibian division, to cross the Rhine. And the orders we received near the middle of the night to pack up and jump on the trucks where we would be crossing the Rhine on the Remagen Bridge. We completed the crossing the next morning without getting wet, but the bridge collapsed a few days later. I understand, taking the lives of some American soldiers in the process.

We were moving eastward in the Ruhr pocket. I believe it was the 2nd platoon who was leading the way for our company and they got bogged down from enemy gun fire. After a little while the Captain said, "Ghirardelli, let's go see what's holding us up". So down we went, first up the hill a bit and then over it looking for cover as we went down the exposed side of the terrain. We stopped a moment to see if we could detect anything when I felt a blast to my face. I thought it was a mortar from the noise it made, but found out later it was a rifle shot through my upper jaw, right to left, as Ralph Kane cryptically, but accurately, recorded it.

I left Company G on April 16th and spent the balance of my military as an ambulatory patient while the Medics worked on my jaw, first at a hospital in southern England and then at a hospital in Palo Alto, California, which specialized in head injury cases. They did a pretty good job on me and, thanks to the Nagasaki and Hiroshima bombings I was discharged November 17, 1945 from Camp Locket, near San Diego.

16 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Jumped off at 0530, traveling across country until noon and collecting prisoner like flies to flypaper. Met slight resistance near Buscherhof, causing casualties. Continued on to critical Wupper River phase line, crossed on a bridge at Wupperhof, took a break and organized in Breidbach. Prisoners numbered in the hundreds. Loaded on T.D's and rode thru numerous towns and villages, occasionally leaving members of the company to collect and guard surrendering Wehrmacht troops. Billeted in Ohligs.

16 Apr 1945 - John O Beauchamp 386th Infantry Regiment, Company L - KIA

Private John O. Beauchamp, Jr. while serving with Company L, 386th Infantry Regiment, 97th Infantry Division, in action near Witzhelden, Germany, on 16 April 1945. Private Beauchamp was a member of a patrol with a mission of mopping up enemy resistance in a wooded draw. The patrol was suddenly driven to the ground by fire from a hostile machine gun located only 30 yards away. In order to point out the enemy position to his patrol leader, Private Beauchamp bravely raised himself to his knees and fired at the hostile emplacement. While thus exposed and firing at the enemy, Private Beauchamp was killed by a burst from the hostile gun.

Pvt. John O. Beauchamp, Jr., Co. L, 386th, raised himself to his knees in the thick of battle and fired at an enemy emplacement in order to point it out to his comrades. He was killed by a burst from a hostile gun.

16 Apr 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Monham, Muhldorf am Inn, Bavaria, Germany – Bridge being put across Wupper river by Engineers for crossing. Password changed. 1250 45 prisoners captured at Hitlorf, Germany – EVAC. G-2 periodic #16 report received. G-3 periodic report #17 received. 1600 Pfc. Jackson wounded by enemy MG Fire. 1625 64 prisoners captured. EVAC 1654 1 OFF and 18 AM captured – EVAC 2000 Pfc. Jackson died at clearing hospital. 1st death in troop as result of enemy action.

16 Apr 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Resumed the drive at 6:30 A.M., flanked the railroad yards at Opladen. Held up twice by machine gun fire, flanked on both sides. Crossed the Wupper River, reached the Division objective, but pushed on and captured three German 150 mm guns, with their crews of 28 men. We had quite a brisk battle for a while that resulted in killing three Germans and two horses, the others were all captured. Artillery was horse drawn and when first observed it was being fired. Marched on into Hilton, where we spent the night, slept on mattresses and beds for the first time.

16 Apr 1945 Louis Peter Foppoli 387th Infantry Regiment, Anti-Tank Company

Corporal Louis P. Foppoli, Anti-Tank Company, 387th Infantry Regiment for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 16 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from California.

16 Apr 1945 Thomas J Driscoll 387th Infantry Regiment, Anti-Tank Company

Corporal Thomas J. Driscoll, Anti-Tank Company, 387th Infantry Regiment for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 16 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Massachusetts.

16 Apr 1945 Robert E Cunningham 387th Infantry Regiment, Company B

Awarded Purple Heart for wounds received as a result of enemy action in Germany on 16 Apr 1945.

16 Apr 1945– Anthony Foremski 387th Infantry Regiment, Company B

Awarded Purple Heart for wounds received as a result of enemy action in Germany on 16 Apr 1945.

16 Apr 1945 Ralph W Evans 387th Infantry Regiment, Company B

Awarded Purple Heart for wounds received as a result of enemy action in Germany on 16 Apr 1945. Crouching in a foxhole during World War II, Ralph "Buck" Evans made a promise. "God, if you get me through this war, I will find a religion and be a good man," he prayed. He was serving in the 97th Division of Patton's Third Army when shrapnel pierced his helmet, an injury for which he received a Purple Heart. He also served in Japan as part of the U.S. occupying forces.

(Editor's Note: Evans was the youngest of nine, was raised by his brothers and sisters. His mother died after giving birth to her 10th child, who also died, when Evans was just a toddler. It was her wish that the family stay together, so even though he could have been adopted, his sisters refused. "They had no money," Wyland said. "He remembered eating mustard sandwiches with salt and pepper on them; it was tough times." The first in his family to graduate from high school, Evans went to San Antonio Vocational and Technical High School, then joined the Army at the height of World War II. He was serving in the 97th Division of Patton's Third Army when shrapnel pierced his helmet, an injury for which he received a Purple Heart. He also served in Japan as part of the U.S. occupying forces. Evans returned to San Antonio and met future wife on a blind date arranged by his sister with a neighbor. The couple married in 1948 and spent almost 66 years together before his wife died in April. Settling into a career as a plumber, Evans built a house for his growing family, moving them in as soon as a living area was completed. "He laid the brick, did the electricity and plumbing," Wyland said. "We lived in the living room, like a dormitory, with two sets of bunk beds." Although Evans was a hands-on parent, changing diapers and making bottles, he also was a product of his generation. "When we were growing up, he wanted dinner by 5 p.m.," Wyland said. Around the table, he "would tell plumbing stories nobody understood." Early in his career, Evans worked for a variety of companies, never tolerating unfair treatment. "He was a union plumber; if he was on strike, he would not work for a rat shop," Wyland said. "They would send him on jobs out of town if he was laid off." He started his own business in 1969, doing contract work for the San Antonio Express-News, among other companies, and when he dissolved the company a decade later, the newspaper immediately hired him as part of its maintenance team.)



16 Apr 1945 Harold Schiffman 387th Infantry Regiment, Company C

Awarded Purple Heart for wounds received as a result of enemy action in Germany on 16 Apr 1945.

16 Apr 1945 Richard R Elwell 387th Infantry Regiment, Company D

Awarded Purple Heart for wounds received as a result of enemy action in Germany on 16 Apr 1945.

16 Apr 1945 Anthony J Giaquinto 387th Infantry Regiment, HQTRS Company 1st Bn

Awarded Purple Heart for wounds received as a result of enemy action in Germany on 16 Apr 1945.

16 Apr 1945 Rubin Saposnik 387th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Corporal Rubin Saposnik, Company "M", 387th Infantry Regiment for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 16 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Illinois.

16 Apr 1945 – Mon – 820TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION -Written by JOHN F. deV. PATRICK LT. Col

Battalion C.P. and rear echelon no change.

Reconnaissance Company.

C.P. and Pioneer platoon no change.

1st platoon. 1st section no change. 2nd section. Route and area reconnaissance to (F483718) and then to (F425855).

2nd platoon. 1st section sent patrol into Burscheid (F564765) to prepare to guide 3rd platoon, "C" Company out of town after it stormed the town. Withdrew to reconnoiter routes around Burscheid to Kuchenberg (F543766). 2nd section reconnoitered route and moved to bivouac at Witzhelden (F563798).

3rd platoon. 1st section moved to Burrig screening town under light artillery fire during the night. 2nd section flushed out towns of Lutzenkirchen and Dierath and reconnoitered for position to fire into Pottscheid.

"A" Company.

C.P. at Widdert

1st platoon moved to Burrig, screening the town.

3rd platoon with Reconnaissance section and AT platoon operated as task force to mop up towns by-passed by infantry; captured 421 prisoners including a General officer and his staff and a hospital two miles north of Pottscheid. Rescued two enlisted men of 82nd Division (AB); crossed Wupper river at 1610 and spent night in Ohlig. Route of advance was Steinbuckel, Kamp, Lutzenkirchen, Dierath, and Pottscheid.

2nd platoon with one cannon company platoon and one AT platoon acted as a task force to mop up towns of Ophoven, Bruckhausen, Lutzenkirchen, Imbach, and Huscheid. Spent night in Brend.

"B" Company.

C.P. at Manfort (F497708).

First platoon fired 28 rounds 76MMHE into a factory at Hilden flushing out 25 Germans.

"B" Company (Cont'd)

Second Platoon advanced along Autobahn west of Hilgen (F588790) to Witzhold.

Third platoon vic Erkrath had no action.

“C” Company

C.P. (F577731)

1st platoon advanced along Autobahn with 2nd platoon, “B” Company.

2nd and 3rd platoons assaulted Burscheid without infantry support. During the action one M18 destroyer was overturned and badly damaged. Road blocks and heavy small arms fire was encountered. Company commander accepted the surrender of the town by local authorities.

16 Apr 1945 – HQTRS RECORDS – AFTER ACTION REPORTS - DATED 22 May 1945

On the afternoon of the 16 April 1945, the Regiment Commander decided that rather than permit the advance to be delayed by BURSCHELD, he would by-pass the 1st Battalion in its attack on BURSCHELD by moving the 3rd Battalion around the right flank of the 1st Battalion mounted Company C on TD's and rushed the town of BURSCHELD after a fifteen minute artillery preparation which included the use of WP. While Company C and the TD's attacked the town of BURSCHELD, Companies A and B were motorized on the antitank vehicles of the 1st and 3rd Battalions and one platoon of the Antitank Company and moved through the zone of the 387th Infantry (on the Regiment Left) across the WUPPER RIVER and occupied the towns of HOHSCHIED and WIDDERT. The attack of Company C on BURSCHELD was highly successful as the troops moved through firing from the decks of the TS's behind the firing the TD's .50 calibers and cannon (all being fired simultaneously). The 2nd Battalion on the right encountered some enemy resistance in the vicinity of HILGEN but moved rapidly forward and during the early part of the afternoon Company C crossed the river on foot, and, by 1800 on the 16 April 1945, the 1st and 2nd Battalions were prepared to assault the town of SOLINGEN.

Due to the vast numbers of prisoners being taken the 3rd Battalion was pinched out of the line between the 1st and 2nd Battalions, and established a PW (Prisoner of War) cage at WITZEHEIDEN and undertook the police and security of the rear areas.

The Engineers of B Company, 322nd Engineer Battalion (Technician) were called upon frequently to repair roads and bridges, remove road blocks, and install tread way or pontoon bridges. Most of the reported mines and mine fields proved to be false alarms, but it took time to check the given locations. Often the Engineers were harassed by snipers while moving forward and while making repairs. (On one occasion, the Engineers located a Nazi staff group composed of a Lt. General and a dozen other officers and men. The machine gunner, a Colonel, was killed and the remainder captured). At night, they would have to furnish their own security which took just so many men from the job and thus delayed their assignment. Due to the pressing need for Engineers Companies in such a fast moving action, it is believed that an entire Engineer Company should be attached to the Regiment; a platoon is not sufficient to do the job when speed is the key word. On the 16 April 1945 instructions were received from the Company General to complete the drive to the Division objective without delay and it was decided that since opposition was very light, that this objective which was simply a problem of logistics, could best be achieved by motorizing one rifle company, preceding it with the M-20's of the TD

Company and the Regiment I & R Platoon. It was realized that this was an unorthodox use of the M-20's but in view of the fact that the bridges across the WUPPER RIVER would not at that time carry the TD's but would carry the M-20's and since the TD's did not need additional security in their position on the south of the river, that these vehicles might be used. It developed however that the Battalion Commanders of the 1st and 2nd Battalions had, on their own initiative, motorized units of their Battalions and had pushed through the Regiment objective, and, by 1300, on the 17th, the vicinity of SOLIGEN and the Regiment objective were thoroughly invested and all units were engaged in collecting and evacuating prisoners, securing strategic public installations, warehouses, distilleries, arms, and displaced person centers.

2,055,575 PWs Taken by Allies

Prisoner-of-war figures released at SHAEF yesterday disclosed that 2,055,575 Germans had been captured since D-Day by Allied armies in Europe.

Of this total, 760,778 were captured from April 1 through April 16.

In the Ruhr pocket alone, troops of the U.S. First and Ninth Armies took 266,806 prisoners. The First captured 220,225, and the Ninth, which had been operating at the north of the pocket only, took 46,581.

On April 16, the First Army took 97,118 prisoners, highest total for a single day's take.

1 Apr 1945 - James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

The 386th Regiment was assigned to General Patton's tank battalions and we started rolling through the industrial Ruhr Valley and the cities of Wuppertal and Bamberg., Essen and Reimschied. Our first day of battle was April 1, 1945, and I can remember firing the mortar that day at German troops running for the woods. We were so excited and scared and I zeroed in on a

building with a red tile roof and knocked the roof off with the third round.. Then, using the mortar like an artillery gun, I started lobbing shells at the German troops. One of the shells hit an ammunition dump in the woods, resulting in lots of fireworks. We celebrated and passed the Schnapps bottle around. We stayed behind the riflemen and set up our mortars every time we stopped. The sergeant would get out in front and holler or send back the fire coordinates. Many times we couldn't see what we were firing at, but following the firing orders. If the Germans counter-attacked, artillery or mortar shells would start coming in to knock us out. We would either move, or dig foxholes.

Apr 1945 - James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

One of the first villages we captured had several two story buildings and narrow streets. The German tanks counter-attacked and we could hear them coming into town, firing their cannons. From an upstairs window, my buddy had a bazooka, aiming out the window waiting for the tanks to come down the street. When he fired, the back flash blew him out the window. He hit the tank and landed in the street, unhurt and running for his life. We vacated the building and retreated to a better location.

You could hear the shells whistling as they were coming in, and if they were very close, it was a short, loud whistle. They always said if it had your name on it, you wouldn't hear it. The German 88 artillery was the worst, being a straight trajectory like a bullet. When the 88's started coming in, the explosion was deafening and very demoralizing. Private Kibbee from Iowa became shell-shocked and he was driving us all crazy. When he was outside the foxhole, he was in a crouched position with his shovel ready, continually whispering, "What was that?" Inside the foxhole, he would laugh "That one didn't hit me!"

The tanks and half-tracks would stay behind us and fire over our heads. The Germans were retreating most of the time, and their tanks and snipers would use delaying tactics. Sometimes they would make a defense in the towns and our troops would use artillery and house-to-house combat. Early in the fighting, we got orders to occupy this village at night. We were advancing through an orchard when shells started exploding in the tree-tops. They were using anti-aircraft guns on us and the shrapnel and flashes were terrific. I hugged the tree trunk, with shrapnel tearing at my back pack, and the flashes were all colors of the rainbow. I could see bodies moving through the trees, and a high woven fence ahead. Finally, during a lull in firing, I bolted to the fence, throwing my mortar and scrambling over in one leap. I came to a building with a stairway down to the basement. I could hear women and children crying in the darkness. It suddenly became very quiet and the sound of German boots pounding by the building was very distinct. Then I realized there were other G.I.'s in the basement with me. We stayed there the rest of the night until we knew who was around us. Several of the men had scratches, but nothing serious. Altogether, there were three killed in the orchard.

General Patton's tanks were spearheading our drive and we would guard the tanks at night in a circle like a covered wagon train, and try to get a little sleep in the foxholes. Sometimes we would travel 10-20 miles a day, riding the tanks until we were fired on.

The tank gunners would blast everything in their path, hardly stopping. It was very difficult for the supply trucks to keep up and we would eat chickens or anything we could find along the way. We had very few casualties, some wounded from shrapnel or front line infantry or officers killed by snipers. I got to see Gen. Patton one time, riding in his jeep, wearing the pearl-handled pistols and swearing with every breath.

Searches were always conducted of the civilians and their houses. Sometimes we would find hidden weapons and ammunition. Prisoners were searched and sent back to the rear for interrogation. The SS troops were very defiant and stubborn and one time I witnessed a massacre of SS officers by a tank gunner. Our troops were always hunting for alcohol - gin, wine, schnapps, vodka, beer and buzz bomb fluid. **If the soldier was drunk when wounded, it always resulted in shock. I saw one soldier die from a wounded elbow and then went into shock. Our platoon leader and staff sergeant were killed by snipers and the captain offered me a battlefield commission to replace the officer leader. He threatened court martial when I refused, but another soldier readily accepted and was just as qualified as I.**

17 Apr 1945 - The 97th Pushing on toward Dusseldorf through difficult terrain and heavy resistance in densely wooded areas, the Division captured Solingen, 17 April 1945

17 Apr 1945 – 97th infantry Division Command Posts –

Town: Solingen

Region: Rhineland

Country: Germany

17 Apr 1945 - James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

The division captured Solingen on 17 April. The Germans cut down trees to impede the infantry's advance thus blocking the roads in the woods.

17 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gurlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

At 0630 Battalion C.P. (rear) moved into Scharfhausen. Battalion jumped off at 0700. G Company, plus same H Company attachments, was motorized by Company Commander with German vehicles and moved rapidly to Vohwinkel. E Company, plus same H Company attachments, was motorized and moved rapidly to Aprath. F Company, plus same H Company attachments, followed on foot, cleaning woods and gathering P.W.'s. No organized opposition was encountered. Battalion C.P. moved to Grotenbeck. The area beyond Vohwinkel was secured by E and G Companies. The area included Aprath and Donberg line. F and G Companies remained in Grotenbeck. Received orders to garrison area.

Note: First day of relaxation since beginning of Ruhr Pocket campaign and was end of this battle.

17 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

New White C.P. at Scharfhausen

1100 George Co. now at Objective #15. 97th division rear at Berg Gladbach 15 Apr to 17 Apr 1945.

17 Apr 1945 - 386th Infantry Regiment, Company L

Stationed at Solingen, in the Region of Rhineland, Germany

17 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Walked thru Haan to Millrath in the morning. Halted. Dusseldorf and the Rhine were visible nine kilometers in the distance. Russian laborers in the vicinity celebrated their liberation. Billeted.

17 Apr 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Haan, Mettmann, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany – password change. G-2 periodic report #11 received. G-3 periodic report #18 received. 1st LT Yenny arrived at troop CP and reported for duty. 2200 INF Plat attached to troop had fire in there billet, minor burns and loss of equipment reported. 34 prisoners captured.

17 APR 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Started out in reserve, passed through Unkerath and beyond that we were held up by 20 mm flak guns. Flanked to the left and moved up to the western outskirts of Dusseldorf, where the company spent the night on straw mattresses in a Hitler Youth Camp. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions went on into Dusseldorf on tanks and met no resistance.

17 Apr 1945– First Sergeant Clayton S Brink 387th Infantry Regiment, Company F awarded Purple Heart in addition a bronze oak-leaf Cluster for wounds received as a result of enemy action in Germany on 17 Apr 1945.

17 Apr 1945 – Tues – 820TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION -Written by JOHN F. deV. PATRICK LT. Col

A group of approximately 40 men from the Battalion C.P. Group and Reconnaissance Pioneer platoon under command of Battalion S-2 was sent to Mulheim to restore order after a wave of looting broke out among the displaced persons in the area. Battalion C.P. moved from Berg Gladbach to Solingen (F544859). Rear echelon no change.

Reconnaissance Company

C.P. and Pioneer platoon moved from Berg Gladbach to Hilden (F436865). Seventeen men from Pioneer platoon under command of Battalion S-2 went to Mulheim to restore order among displaced persons there.

All Reconnaissance Company platoons were relieved from attachment to gun companies and reverted to Company control. **Company was attached to 97th Reconnaissance Troop** and assembled at Hilden.

“A” Company

C.P. at (F516871)

1st platoon moved from Burrig screening towns of Rhemdorf, Hitdorf, and Monheim. Moved to Baumberg where they remained for the night.

2nd platoon shuttled troops of the 387th Infantry to Division “stop line” and went into direct fire positions near village of Erkrath.

3rd platoon moved from Ohlig to Haan where they bivouacked overnight. Late in the afternoon the company was relieved from attachment to 387th Infantry and reverted to Battalion control.

“B” Company

C.P. at Benrath (F398852).

1st and 3rd platoons moved into Dusseldorf. 2nd platoon relieved from attachment to “C” Company and reported to Company C.P. at 1800 hours. **Company relieved from attachment to 303rd Infantry and returned to Battalion control.**

“C” Company

C.P. at (F557857).

Checked road nets and mopped up areas in regimental sector that had been by-passed by Infantry. **Company relieved from attachment 386th Infantry and returned to Battalion Control.**

17 Apr 1945 – History Background - ELIMINATION OF THE RUHR POCKET -

Interview with: Capt Milton Ponitz, Asst S-3, 387th Inf , and 97th Inf Div. 1st Lt, Robert McCaffrey, Ln 01 387th Inf , 97th Div. Place: Opladen, Germany.

The Regiment was ordered to jump from OHLIGS and HAAN on the morning of the 17th and to reach the Corps stop line, which was several miles to the N, along the line (450930)(510930). The 1st and 3d Battalions jumped off on the Morning of the 17th of April and by noon were sitting on the Corps stop line, thus completing the mission of the 387th Infantry in the closing of the Ruhr Pocket.

17 Apr 1945 – History Background

The 386th attacked Solingen on the morning of April 17, occupied the city one hour after launching the assault. Before the day was over, roads throughout, the entire division area was clogged with PWs. Div Arty was charged with handling the prisoners so that communications and transportation could be cleared back of the advancing troops. Both the 386th and 387th CTs pressed on to the Rhine River in an attempt to cut the escape route for German forces left in the division sector. Meanwhile, the 303rd neared the outskirts of the final objective Dusseldorf.

This huge industrial city, nerve center for the entire Ruhr Rhine district, rested on the east bank of the Rhine. Government center of the entire area, Dusseldorf's peacetime population was 400,000 to 500,000.

As the 303rd prepared to attack, a “free” movement gained momentum within the city. The purpose of the action was to salvage the remnants of the once proud industrial center. Third Bn., 303rd, commanded by Lt. Col. Victor Wallace, received official credits for its capture. The battalion had established a CP in the city's outskirts late April 16. The attack

against the city was to begin the following day. Early in the evening, two representatives of the "free" movement visited the CP, promising. The city's surrender without further resistance. . Notified of the action, Gen. Halsey went to the CP where arrangements were Completed Early April 17, elements of 3rd Bn., accompanied by the general, rolled into Dusseldorf and went directly to the police presidium, headquarters of the Gestapo and city police.

Meanwhile, elements of the regiment's other two battalions pushed through the city to the banks of the Rhine. One hour after the advance began Dusseldorf officially surrendered.

17 Apr 1945 - The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

The next day the 386th captured Solingen, headquarters of a large manufacturer of cutlery, without incident. The 386th and 387th pressed on to the Rhine River to eliminate any possible escape route for German forces left in the Division's sector. The 303rd advanced through Hilden to the outskirts of Dusseldorf, the final objective of the Division. In better days this large industrial city of 500,000 inhabitants had been the economic, political, and cultural center of the Rhur area. As the 303rd approached the city and began preparations for an attack, a "free" movement gained momentum within Dusseldorf. The purpose of this political group was to salvage the remnants of the once proud industrial center. Lieutenant Colonel Victor M. Wallace, commander of the 3rd Battalion, received official credit for the capture of Dusseldorf. On April 16 the Battalion established a command post in the outskirts of the city. Representatives of the "free" movement visited the command post and promised to surrender the city without further assistance. General Halsey and elements of the 3rd Battalion entered Dusseldorf and went directly to the police presidio, headquarters of the Gestapo and city police. After a brief discussion, Dusseldorf formally surrendered.

17 Apr 1945 – History Background - 10 POTENTIAL HEROES

During the lightning 10-day campaign, the Trident Division had driven forward along a front varying from 20 to 30 miles in width, over extremely difficult terrain, to clear nearly 1000 square miles of enemy territory, and had taken literally thousands of German towns and cities. In addition, the 97th had captured or destroyed more than 2000 German vehicles, 109 88mm guns and truckloads of small arms, automatic weapons and ammunition.

The campaign which lopped off a huge slice of the Ruhr Pocket the angle formed by the convergence of the Sieg. And Rhine Rivers, cost the German Army 21,791 prisoners, plus an undetermined number killed and wounded.

The first major combat mission proved the division's worth under Fire. In the short period of 10 days, green troops had become hard fighting Veterans. During those bitter days in the Ruhr, many heroes were born some of them were not present for the final count. One officer said wherever there were 10 fighting doughs; there were 10 potential heroes.

When Co. K. 303rd, was held Up by heavy enemy artillery and automatic weapons fire, **Pfc Max Valdez**, Taos, N.M., located a machine gun and, with only one hand grenade,

crawled up to the enemy gun and knocked it out, killing three of the crew. The action allowed his company to continue the advance and seize its objective without casualties. While leading a machine gun squad in an attack through Kaltenberg, **Pfc Hughie A.**

Capt. Mettauer E. Davidson, Raleigh, N. C., Co. B, 386th, was awarded the Silver Star for outstanding courage and leadership in the fighting at Stein, Germany. In attacking the town his company was held up by strong automatic weapons and self-propelled gunfire from an enemy roadblock. During The attack against the obstacle, the captain suffered severe wounds in both legs and his right arm. Refusing medical aid, he adjusted the fire of his 60mm mortar section on the position. When fire failed to silence the enemy defense, he gave orders to an 81-mm mortar platoon, which neutralized the obstacle and enabled his company to capture the town. Captain Mettauer Davidson died July 2, 1945 and is buried in Cambridge England Cambridge American Cemetery.

At Schaaren, Germany, 2nd Lt. **Cecil L. Eyestone**, Burrton, Kan., 387th, was leading a Co. C platoon in destroying an enemy artillery position which was holding up the company advance. While establishing a base of fire, he was struck in the face by shrapnel. Despite this wound, he took charge of the assault squads and led the attack. Forty yards from the German emplacement, the lieutenant received a severe wound in his leg, but he continued to pace his men in a charge. Considerable enemy were killed or captured when the position was overrun. Lt. Eyestone refused medical attention for himself until the other wounded members of his platoon had received proper care.

In the same battle, **PFC Francis S Compton**, Grafton, Ill., an automatic rifleman with Co. C, 386th, was seriously wounded in the right shoulder by shell fragments as he moved into position to establish a base of fire. Unable to operate. His weapon, he gave it to his squad leader and continued to advance with others. During the remainder of the engagement he assisted in locating enemy targets and in carrying and passing ammunition for the weapon.

There were others, such as 1st Lt. **Joseph R. Wimsatt**, Co. L, 386th who, with a single rifle platoon, surprised and captured two enemy artillery platoons, four artillery pieces, three automatic weapons. And forced an armored vehicle to withdraw.

Pfc Alvin J. Caprara, Co. B, 387th, firing his machine gun from the hip charged into the midst of enemy forces that pinned down his company at the approaches to a town. Completely on his own, he broke through the outer defenses of the town, continued down the main street and pumped heavy fire into the buildings. His squad moved in and occupied the town without opposition.

Pfc John Hedrick, Co. F, 303rd, seized an abandoned assault boat while under heavy enemy fire and used the craft to help ferry troops across the Sieg River.

A prize example of initiative and leadership was displayed by 1st **Sgt Ralph W. Colver**, Co. C, 387th. The mission of his five-man patrol was to mop up Ober Wintershide. After

passing through the town, the patrol discovered an enemy artillery battery of three guns, fully manned, and protected by automatic weapons. Sgt. Colver decided to attack. He placed his men within 100 yards of the guns and opened fire on the crews and a nearby ammunition dump. Taken completely by surprise, the enemy frantically attempted to depress its guns and turn them on the patrol, but the ammunition dump, struck by the patrol fire, exploded. The German positions were demolished.

Several Nazis killed. Although it was the infantrymen, who drove into the very teeth of enemy defenses,' they were not without support. Light artillery battalions blasted paths before them, knocking out heavy weapons emplacements and fortified positions. The 303rd Bn. supported the drive of the 303rd Regt., while the 922nd backed up the attacks of the 387th. On the right flank, the 365th supported the 386th R6gt. - The 389th, a medium artillery battalion, slammed its 155mm shells with deadly accuracy wherever enemy positions were toughest.

Supply was one of the biggest problems of the operation. With every mile the 97th troops advanced, supply routes became longer, more difficult. **Lt. Col. Ward T. Blackjack**, Austin, Tex., and his "Cargo Jockeys" overcame all obstacles and kept a steady stream of supplies rolling from Bonn, across the Rhine, and the Siegfried to the fighting men deep in the heart of the 'Ruhr Pocket.

The performance of the 97th QM Co., under **Capt. Elwood G. Lohela**, Jackson, Mich., was exemplified by ten men who worked on a camouflage project in conjunction with the British Second Army on the West Bank of the Rhine.

These men were **1st Lt. Thomas L. Wilson**, Paris, Ill.; **Pfc George Dehn**, Mishawaka, Ind.; **Cpl. Curtis E. Emerson**, Wolverton, Minn.; **Cpl. Norman M. Andrews**, David, Calif.; **T/5 Bernard L. Pendleton**, Campbellsville, Ky.; **Sgt. Sylvester V. Sinerl**, Mt. Kisco, N. Y.; **T/5 Jonathan E. Smith**, Falmouth, Ky.; **Pfc Robert E. Waldron**, Doylestown, Ohio; **Pfc Hiram B. Van Akystyne**, Albany, N. Y and **T/4 Harmon Taylor**, Arlington, Tenn.

The unit worked under enemy artillery fire to complete one of the largest camouflage operations of the war. Commending their work was Maj George Dobson Wells of British Second Army Main Headquarters, who wrote "On behalf of their British colleagues alongside whom they have worked most willingly and efficiently, I wish to express sincere appreciation of their cooperation.

Playing a vital role in the Ruhr campaign was the 97th Recon Troop, under the command of **Capt. John J. Swainbank**, St. Albans, Vt. Besides its customary reconnaissance and patrolling duties, the unit once was charged with protecting the entire left flank of the division.

Contributing to the 97th's success were such units as the 97th Signal Co., under the command of **Capt. Sanford M. Kaat**, Grand Rapids Mich., and the 797th Ordnance Co. Division ordnance officer was **Lt. Col. Melvin B. Harris**, North Bergen, N. J.

An outstanding performance was turned in by members of the 322nd Medical Bn. the

medics, in the detachment as well, were equal to every task. Individual initiative and heroism were commonplace.

On one occasion, **Pfc Jack L. Cotter**, Sandusky, Ohio, and **Pfc Russell W. Fox**, Andes, N. Y., cut off from the rest of their units on the north side of the Sieg, set up aid station where they continued to administer first aid.

In another campaign, 12 medics were captured. Freed by 97th doughs a few days later, they spurned a rest period in a rear area in favor of resuming their duties. **Lt. Col. Leslie P. Herd**, Elizabethton, Tenn., was CO of the 322nd Medical Bn. during the Ruhr Pocket fighting.

18 Apr 1945 – The 97th pushed through Dusseldorf fell in difficult terrain and the Ruhr pocket was eliminated

18 Apr 1945 - James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

Düsseldorf fell on the next day and the Ruhr pocket was eliminated. The infantry drove through Düsseldorf, waiting for the Germans to shoot at them, and then they would find the pockets of Germans and shoot them to flush them out.

18 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Received orders to move to Remscheid. Rear C.P. moved to new town at 1600. Battalion closed in Rhenscheid at 1630. Battalion relieved elements of 78th Division and secured area for the night. E Company occupied Kennep; F Company occupied Ronsdorf, just south of Wuppertal. Elements of H Company occupied Luttringhausen. G Company and attached units of H Company occupied Remscheid. Battalion C.P. in Remscheid. Battalion Commander received orders to have Battalion Ex O and 7 men per company to report to Regtl. Ex O at Helgen to proceed as advance group to new destination.

18 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

1800 386th at Remscheid, No EN action during period. 600 prisoners apprehended, numerous civilians recently discharged, checked, and placed in cage with rest of prisoner. 1300 Moved White C.P. to Remscheid. Battle of Ruhr Pocket complete. 19 Apr 1945 UPS located in School in Weiden

18 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Boarded trucks at noon, rode to Haan, boarded jeep trailers to Witzhelden, passing huge groups of German prisoners. Billeted and became military government. Received replacements into the company.

18 Apr 1945 - Lionel M Gonzalez 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Subject: Our activities for the past 48 hours. To: 3rd Bn. BN HQ

1. (No data)
2. Our morale is as good as ever although our company is a little on the sentimental side due to the loss of PFC. Veryl W. Diem

3. Enemy's Morale according to information gathered from various German and French PW is very low. Lack of feed, leadership, and reinforcements seems to be the reason.

4. The character of terrain is hilly with poor roads for a motorized outfit. Heavy but scattered pine woods are between villages.

5. The enemy has few snipers here and there. Two 88 MM German guns were located yesterday and supposedly wiped out by xxxxxxxx new.(Unreadable)

6. No. of PW: 15 One enemy soldier shot by out mortar PLT.

Signature.... T/5 L. M Gonazlez

18 Apr 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Roth, Bavaria, Germany – changed password. 1430 20 prisoners captured –

EVAC. 1525 troop completed mission and received following message from G-2.

Remain at present position and maintain law and order until further notice. 1620

Message from G-2 to release attachments at once. G-2 message # 18 received. 1700

Troop completed mission and is awaiting orders from division as to new mission

18 APR 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Went into Eller and later in the day went back for temporary occupation duty. Ruhr Pocket officially closed. Lived in beautiful homes not touched by the war. What a treat!

18 Apr 1945- – BLACKER, WILLIAM J., Pfc, Company A, 303rd Infantry, Thomaston:

"What I remember most is the time we were billeted in a beautiful German residence. It was a big house built of stone with more than twenty rooms. Our machine gun squad (Blacker is a machine gunner) was quartered in a nice big bedroom with two swell beds. It felt darn good to really sleep in a bed after those long cold nights in those foxholes."Concentration Camps

18 Apr 1945– Technical Sergeant Charles T Seaton 97th CIC Detachment awarded Purple Heart for wounds received as a result of enemy action in Germany on 18 Apr 1945.

18 Apr 1945- The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

Three American Armies (the First, the Ninth, and the Fifteenth) were involved in the liquidation of the Ruhr pocket. Seventeen American Divisions, including the 97th, fought in this battle which took place during the period from April 1, when the pocket was closed by the junction of the First and Ninth Armies in the vicinity of Lippstadt, to April 19, when the last resistance took place near the Ruhr River. After the battle was over, more than 325,000 Germans, including 30 general officers, were prisoners of war. The senior German commander in the Ruhr pocket, Field Marshal Walther Model, reportedly committed suicide rather than surrender. With the defeat of the Army Group B, Germany lost control of the war, and from that time on was only able to offer token opposition to the advancing Allied forces.

During the battle of the Ruhr Pocket, American infantrymen faced several levels of enemy resistance. Sometimes the Germans offered only slight or token opposition and then quickly surrendering. Advancing American units frequently encountered moderate and stiff resistance prior to enemy capitulation. SS troops, members of an elite military

unit of the Nazi party, usually fought to the death. Combat operations in the Rhur took place in the cities, villages, forests, and hilly and level rural areas. American infantrymen had to be prepared to cross rivers and canals quickly and fight in all types of terrain. The Germans did not resort to trench warfare or a solid defense line in the Rhur. They used a strongpoint system of defense. These fortified positions were made more formidable by the presence of 88mm guns. The German 88mm gun was the single most famous artillery piece used in World War II. These guns were very effective as anti-aircraft, anti-tank, and anti-personnel weapons. Because the Rhur had been a prime target of allied bombers, many 88mm guns were located throughout the area. The strongpoint defense system was designed to enable the Germans to pull back from one strongpoint to another, and then inflict heavy casualties on the attacking forces. Generally, the enemy fought a careful and often skillful delaying action. The effective use of strongpoints, the 88mm guns, understrength but veteran infantry units, and the presence of SS troops help explain why some American units sustained relatively high casualties. The Battle of the Rhur Pocket was not a simple and easy mopping-up operation.

The 97th Division's first assignment in Germany was to occupy defensive positions along the western bank of the Rhine River opposite Dusseldorf. While in this location, Division infantrymen were involved in small unit actions with German patrols. A few Nazi soldiers were killed or captured. The Division Artillery Commander was Brigadier German Sherman V. Hasbrouck, a 1920 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point. His four field artillery battalions, the 303rd, 365th, 389th, and 922nd, fired across the Rhine destroying gun emplacements, road junctions, and military installations. The 97th was soon on the move to join other divisions involved in the early phase of the Battle of the Rhur Pocket.

The Division moved south, crossing the Rhine near Bonn. Its mission was to establish positions on the southern bank of the Sieg River which runs at a right angle to the Rhine, and be prepared for offensive operations. Along the southern bank of the Sieg River to the right of the 97th were the 78th, 8th, and 86th Infantry Divisions, The 13th Armored Division was in reserve and would be committed once the terrain was suitable. These divisions formed the XVIII Airborne Corps which was commanded by Major General Matthew B. Ridgway, a 1917 graduate of the United States Military Academy. General Ridgway and General Halsey were classmates at West Point.

On the northern bank of the Sieg River, XVIII Corps faced understrength elements of four German Divisions identified as the 59th, 62nd, 363rd, and 11th Panzer Divisions. More than a dozen additional enemy divisions. Most of them understrength, were also trapped in the Rhur pocket. Located throughout the pocket were elements of many types of enemy units including airborne, armored, SS, anti-aircraft, etc. The mission of XVIII Corps, and III Corps to the east was to clear all territory south of the Rhur River. The mission of the 97th Infantry Division was to cross the Sieg River in coordination with the other infantry divisions of the XVIII Corps and attack north towards Dusseldorf.

18 Apr 1945- Wed The 97th Infantry Division during World War II -- Rhur operation

The seizure of a bridge during the Rhur operation by two members of the 32nd Engineer Battalion provided further insight into the fighting spirit of the Trident Division. Captain David P. Hale and his jeep driver, while on reconnaissance, encountered an intact Class 70 bridge. They were unaware that the bridge was defended by 80 Germans with a machine gun. As they crossed the bridge, the enemy began firing. Hale was armed only with a pistol. Twice wounded in his arm and with 26 bullet holes in the jeep, the driver held his course on the bridge. The jeep came to a stop on the German side of the river practically in front of the enemy machine gun position. The Germans were amazed at the unbelievable courage or unmitigated gall of the advancing American patrol and immediately surrendered. Without delay, Captain Hale put his prisoners to work clearing the bridge of previously placed demolitions. The seizure of this bridge and the two previous incidents bring into focus the human dimension of combat and the fiber of the men of the 97th Infantry Division.



The very last sentence from Duluth, Minnesota caught my eye about fuel. Driving a car 8,000 miles using a mixture of fuel oil and naphtha.

Yanks Cross Czech Border

(Continued from Page 1)

and were last reported in the vicinity of Gottmannsbrunn, he said.

Magdeburg, which had a 1939 population of 334,563, was cleared by Ninth Army's Second Armored and 30th Inf. Divs., according to UP reports which described the conquest of the city as a battle of men against boys.

UP reports said youths from 14 to 18 years old "manned" roadblocks and rubble heaps against veteran tank and infantrymen. The young Nazis had to be dislodged in some cases by flamethrowing tanks. They had impressed civilians into battle, according to the frontline reports.

One American tanker said he was fired on from a window by an old man at least 80 years old. Civilians, some bandaged and wearing dirty and torn clothing, stood near the bombed buildings and silently watched tanks and jeeps race down the streets.

Two other bastion cities—Leipzig and Nuremberg—were under American assault. In the Ruhr, U.S. forces entered Dusseldorf, last major city in the pocket in enemy hands.

Allied-controlled Luxembourg radio said resistance in the Ruhr had ceased.

Fighting Rages in Leipzig

At Leipzig, greatest city of Saxony, UP's Ann Stringer reported, doughs on foot assaulted and captured 88s, 105s and 128mm. guns—one by one.

Lt. Gen. Courtney H. Hodges' U.S. First Army drove around the city and entered it from the east. On the way, they had taken the sprawling, modernistic synthetic rubber plant of the I.G. Farben Industries.

Other First Army troops, meanwhile, were reducing the city of Halle, 20 miles northwest of Leipzig. The 104th Inf. Div. fought for 600 yards of houses in the city's west end, S & S Correspondent Andy Rooney said. Germans defending bitterly the city's industrial area fell back to the city's south side, where resistance was stiffest, Rooney said.

Forty miles to the south, Patton's men advanced into a hail of machine-gun, rocket and small-arms fire from dug-in German infantry defending the outskirts of Chemnitz.

In Nuremberg, the 17th SS Panzergrenadier Div. fell back block by block before the onslaught of the 45th Inf. Div. of Lt. Gen. Alexander M. Patch's U.S. Seventh Army.

In Holland, two columns of Gen. Henry Crerar's Canadian First Army

linked between Arnhem and Apeldoorn and rolled the Germans back toward metropolitan Holland, where the enemy claims to have built up strong defenses around Utrecht and Amsterdam.

Driving hard against the German North Sea defense line, armor and infantry of Lt. Gen. Sir Miles Dempsey's British Second Army reached to within 13 miles of the Elbe River.

U.S. Planes Hit Rails, Airfields

Marshalling yards, railroads and airfields in southern and central Germany and western Czechoslovakia were pounded yesterday by the U.S. Eighth and Ninth AFs and the First TAC AF.

Eighth heavies, escorted by about 650 fighters, flew more than 750 sorties, attacking targets at Klatovy, Kolin and Pilsen in Czechoslovakia, and Rosenheim, Traunstein, Passau and Straubing in southern Germany. Early reports did not disclose results.

Ninth AF medium and light bombers flew more than 900 sorties against scattered enemy armor, five railways and eight airfields in the Aschersleben area, and along the Czechoslovakian border.

Ninth AF pilots claimed 17 enemy planes destroyed in the air, 18 on the ground and 12 damaged. In a dogfight 40 miles southwest of Berlin, Ninth AF pilots shot down 10 ME109s.

First TAC late yesterday reported more than 50 B26 sorties against airfields in the Ulm area.

Twelfth TAC escort planes attacked German transport in the same area.

Berlin had its first two-way night raid by British and Russian planes Tuesday night. A second group of more than 1,000 RAF bombers blasted Heligoland and an airfield on the Island of Dune. Second TAF attacked enemy vessels off the coast of Holland.

No Gas Rationing Blues

DULUTH, Minn., April 18 (ANS).

—The local ration board brought Adolf Busch in on a speeding charge, but could find no penalty when Busch, a war worker, said he has driven his car 8,000 miles in the last 20 months using a mixture of fuel oil and naphtha.

18 Apr 1945 – HQTRS RECORDS – AFTER ACTION REPORTS - DATED 22 May 1945

During the day on 18 April 1945, the Company Troops (CT) was ordered to occupy the general area comprising the towns of SOLIGEN, REMSCHIED, and WUPPERTHAL. This move was completed by 1640, and preparations were completed for the military government of the new area and the Company Troops (CT) was prepared for further orders and instructions.

Picture provided by Rowland Bergstrom taken at SOLIGEN, GERMANY
Notice the airplanes?



18 Apr 1945 – Wed -820TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION -Written by JOHN F. deV. PATRICK LT. Col

Battalion assigned mission of occupying area vic Duisburg. All units moved to that area. Battalion C.P. established at Wedau (K341109), "A" Company at Duisburg, "B" Company at Am Grossen Graben (K304088), "C" Company at Grossenbaum (K339082). Security sections of 1st and 3rd platoons with platoon leader of 3rd platoon, Company "C", under command of Battalion S-2 went to Mulheim to put down a disturbance among displaced persons there.

19 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Searched for weapons. Townspeople removed road blocks and debris.

19 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

1800 386th Remscheid – continued mopping up operations.

19 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Battalion Ex O and party departed 0300 for destination. Battalion devoted its time to maintenance, administration, and reorganization. General patrol of city and maintaining order was the mission until our departure time.

19 Apr 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Solingen, Solingen, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany – troop officially relieved of mission and order to reform. Changed password. 1230 troop closed at Solingen, Germany and reformed. No enemy contact.

Pictured: Unknown city in Germany (RBergstrom Collection)



19 APR 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Called out about noon to run down Field Marshal Von Model, who was supposed to be in the area. No luck after a fruitless search. All we got were a bunch of drunken Russians and a lot of laughs. Rumors that we are to transfer from 1st to the 3rd Army.



20 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Sent out street patrols to question suspicious person and preserve order.

20 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Medical Detachment received orders to move by motor to Arzberg on Czech border.

20 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Usual duties—patrolling town and attending to administrative duties. Rhenscheid

20 APR 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Quiet day in Benrath.

21 Apr 1945 – 97th infantry Division Command Posts –

Town: Hof

Region: Rhineland

Country: Germany

21 Apr 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: : Solingen, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany – changed password. Not in contact with the enemy. Troop preparing for move to new area.

21 Apr 1945 – History Background - HEADQUARTERS 387TH INFANTRY APO 445 St. Sedliste, Czech. SUBJECT, After-Battle Report, (21 Apr 45 - 8 1.Day 45) TO: Commanding General, 97th Infantry Division, APO 445, c/o Postmaster, New York, New York ATTN. Historian.

With the victorious completion of hostilities in the Ruhr Pocket, the 307th Infantry departed from the vicinity of OPLADEN. Germany, on 21 Apr 45 for an unknown destination and a new mission.

21 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Prepared to move. Boarded open trucks in the afternoon to begin long eastward trip. Passed thru Leichlingen, Solingen, Remcheid, Olpe, Siegen. Spent the night near Wetzlar.

21 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

0700 Duties at Remscheid taken over by 5th Division at 1200
2200 Temporary White C.P. at Wersler. 97th Division rear at Solingen from 17 Apr to 21 Apr 1945

21 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Usual duties. Rhenscheid

21 Apr 1945 - 386th Infantry Regiment, Company L

Stationed at Hof, in the Region of Rhineland, Germany

21 Apr 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Alsfeld, Vogelsbergkreis, Hesse, Germany – troop crossed I.P. on convoy to new area. 1900 convoy spent night at Alsfeld, Germany for night. Troop lost no vehicles in convoy. Not in contact with the enemy.

21 Apr 1945 - Lionel M Gonzalez 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Subject: Daily Report ** To: Commanding Officer ** 3rd Bn. 386th Inf.

1. Left Solingen by motor convoy at 1200.
2. Co. Strength: 156 EM 7 Officers
3. Morale of our troops was excellent
4. Made no contact with the enemy while at Solingen nor while en route to our destination.
5. Traveled most of the way on good road and stayed at Wetzlar for the night. We arrived there at 2100 and slept in a School Building

Signature.... T/5 L. M Gonzalez

21 APR 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Being transferred to the 3rd Army is no more rumor as we are now in the 3rd Army. We started out at 5:30 A.M. and at 6:30 we were rolling across the Reich. It rained all day and we nearly froze to death riding in the trucks. So instead of continuing on we spent the night in a farm house.

21 Apr 1945 James A Judkins 303rd Infantry Regiment – KIA

Place of death – Drabenderhohe, Germany He enlisted and was sent to Camp Forrest, Tennessee on 19 Feb 1942. He attended high school for four years and was a sales clerk before he enlisted. He trained in Camp Swift, Texas, The Louisiana Maneuver Area, Fort Leonard Wood Missouri, Camp San Luis Obispo and Camp Cooke, California prior to going overseas early in 1945.



21 Apr 1945 - Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

Our Division cleared out of the Ruhr Pocket and headed East to meet up with the Russians.

While in Europe our Division was assigned to the Third Army, the Eight Army, and probably a couple of others. We usually wore the blue Trident (the symbol of the 97th Infantry Division) on our left shoulder and the Army Designation on our right shoulder. Whenever we moved we had to remove the emblems from our shoulders, supposedly so the enemy wouldn't be able to identify us. When we were attached to one of the Armies, we were told to reattach our division emblem and the new Army symbol. We spent a lot of time removing and sewing on patches.

After we left the Ruhr pocket, it was evident that the war in Europe was almost over. German soldiers were surrendering en masse. One group of three came up to the jeep I was in, and because we were on a Regimental errand, we told them we couldn't take care of them and to stop the next vehicle that came down the road.

It wasn't always that easy though. I remember seeing one of the jeep drivers who I know lying on the ground in a body bag with several others. I understand he was traveling down the road and a German officer decided to surrender. The driver, Joe, put him in the back seat of his jeep and headed back to camp. The German had a pistol and shot and killed Joe.

22 Apr 1945 – History Background - HEADQUARTERS 387TH INFANTRY APO 445 St. Sedliste, Czech. SUBJECT, After-Battle Report, (21 Apr 45 - 8 1.Day 45) TO: Commanding General, 97th Infantry Division, APO 445, c/o Postmaster, New York, New York ATTN. Historian.

The leading elements of the 387th Infantry arrived at MARKTREDWITZ, Germany, on 22 Apr 45, and all troops closed in the new assembly area in this vicinity on 23 Apr 45. Immediate plans were initiated for the relief of elements of the 2d Cavalry Group. Reconnaissance was immediately initiated and contact made with the 42d Cavalry squadron to effect relief. Orders were issued to battalion and attached company commanders to expedite this relief. Preparations were made to attack in order to prevent relief or assistance of the CHEB garrison, and to be prepared to seize CHEB on order.

22 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Passed thru Giessen, Hersfeld, Bad Salzungen, Billeting in Wasungen.

22 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

0600 Closed Temp C.P. at Wesler, moving forward again.

22 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Received orders to move to new destination. Battalion duties at Rhenscheid and vicinity were taken over by 5th Division troops at 1200. C.P. was closed and movement to destination commenced at 1330. Journey for new destination routed us through Lennep, Kierspe, Wegeringhausen, Wiedenau, Dillenburg, Wetzlar. The trip this far was exceedingly cold and uncomfortable. It rained, hailed, and snowed intermittently throughout the journey. Arriving at Wetzlar at 2200, Battalion was ordered to gas vehicles and billet for the night and to proceed to destination the following morning. Traveled 117 miles by motor convoy.

22 Apr 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Marktleuthen, Wunsiedel, Bavaria, Germany– not in contact with the enemy. 0600 convoy resumed road march. 1200 changed password. 1900 troop closed new area at Marktleuthen, Germany without loss of any vehicles.

22 Apr 1945 - Lionel M Gonzalez 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Subject: Daily Report ** To: Commanding Officer ** 3rd Bn. 386th Inf.

1. Left Wetzlar at 0600 to continue to our destination.
2. Co. Strength 156 EM 7 Officers.
3. Morale was kept high even though we had a cold, rainy journey. (it seemed ironical when the order was received to take off the tops of the trucks. There was some griping done about this, but as usual it did not help the situation.)
4. No activity with the enemy for this day.
5. Reached Hochstadt, Germany at 2100. Established our C.P. immediately up our arrival.

Signature.... T/5 L. M Gonzalez

22 APR 1945. William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Arrived at Rahau (seven miles east of Hoff), in the southeastern part of Germany.

22 Apr 1945 – Sun --- Written by Bruce Hirshauer

The second incident provides insight into the fine relationship, particularly the sense of loyalty that existed between **General Hasbrouck** and his enlisted personnel. During the operations against Cheb, General Hasbrouck came forward in his jeep with his aide to observe an artillery bombardment. He and his aid left the jeep and set out on foot for the high ground for a better view. Although the general did not know it, there were German patrols in the area. After observing the bombardment, the general returned to find his driver, Private First Class **Leslie I. Brooke**, and his vehicle had disappeared. At this time the general and his aide came under fire from a German patrol. General Hasbrouck and his aide

defended themselves with their pistols, and sensibly withdrew toward an American position with the Germans in pursuit. Although they used up all their ammunition, both officers made it back safely. Determined to find out the fate of his driver, General Hasbrouck borrowed a rifle squad; returned to the contested area; located his driver's carbine; subdued a small village; and learned that his driver and vehicle had been captured and were out of reach. At the end of the war the Germans released Brooke unharmed. Commenting on this event, Colonel **William D. Long**, commander of the 387th Infantry Regiment, wrote. "We took pride in the fact that our division artillery commander was one of the few general officers who had ever expended his twenty-one rounds of pistol ammunitions with genuinely serious intent."

23 Apr 1945 – 97th infantry Division Command Posts –

Town: Wunsiedel

Region: Bavaria

Country: Germany

23 Apr 1945 - Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

In the final stages of the war, the rifle companies of the regiments would be trucked to the outskirts of a small town, disembark, and proceed through the town to clean up any snipers, stragglers, etc. When all was clear, the trucks would drive through the town, the troops would load up and drive to the next town.

While the rifle companies were moving along on a daily basis, we usually stayed in our billets for 3 to 5 days. In one town, we found a barber, who could give us much needed haircuts. It turned out to be a rather large buxum blond – probably in her mid thirties. We all took turns getting our haircut – and as I remember, she did a nice job. We had some trepidation, considering that we were the ‘enemy’, who had invaded her homeland, and she was working on us with scissors and a razor – but there were no problems. Like others we asked, she was not, nor had been a Nazi, but knew some folks down the street that were Nazi’s.

After we left the Ruhr Valley and began heading east through Germany, we were in beautiful farm country. A couple of times we were billeted in farm houses. In one, the barn was attached to the kitchen, and the cows and horses were house there. We often had chicken on the menu from the local population. In a couple of the houses, we had feather mattresses to sleep on under our sleeping bags – it was a nice treat.

Near the end of the war our division ended up in southeastern Germany in the Bavarian Hills. We could see small castles on some of the hillsides – it was beautiful country – not unlike Vermont.

Picture: Not sure if this is the castle mentioned (RBergstrom Collection)



23 Apr 1945 – History Background - HEADQUARTERS 387TH INFANTRY APO 445 St. Sedliste, Czech. SUBJECT, After-Battle Report, (21 Apr 45 - 8 1.Day 45) TO: Commanding General, 97th Infantry Division, APO 445, c/o Postmaster, New York, New York ATTN. Historian.

Intelligence reports of 23 Apr 45 estimated that enemy forces on the Division front numbered approximately 1300. The 2nd **Panzer Division** was identified in this sector, and it was assumed that most of the troops in this vicinity were under its command, it was ascertained that operations of the enemy were confined to the construction of road blocks, demolition of roads and bridges, and the preparation of mine fields. It was also reported that the Czechoslovakian border had been previously fortified with some prepared defensive installations consisting of concrete pillboxes.

23 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Passed thru Meningen, Eisfeld, Markers (the small town where huge stores of gold, money and priceless treasure had been uncovered in a salt mine a few days before), Sonnesburg, Kronach, Naila, Jog, Wunsiedel. Billeted in Mitterteich near the Czechoslovakian border.

“Eisenhower and Bradley examine a trove of stolen artifacts that the Germans hid in salt mine in 1945.” Picture sent via email and found on the internet at

http://slightlywarped.com/crapfactory/curiosities/2014/january/historys_forgotten_images.htm



23 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G
0730 Setup White C. P. in Thiersheim. 1800 386th, Arzberg, Germany

23 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Closed temporary C.P. at Wetzlar and proceeded to new destination at 0600 through Linden, Grunberg, Rohod, Fulda, Weijrich, Stadt, Meiningen, Kronach and Hof after another cold motor ride. Arrived at our destination at 0730 at Thershiem where Battalion was billeted. Traveled 120 miles. Battalion C.O., Staff and Company Commanders contacted 2nd Cavalry Group whom we were ordered to relieve in this area. Arrangements were made to effect relief. G Company, plus 2nd HMG platoon and 2nd section 81-mm mortar H Company attached, occupied town of Schringling and vicinity. F Company, plus HMG platoon, 3rd 81-mm mortar section H Company attached, occupied Silverbach. E Company was in reserve in Thershiem. The road nets in the area were mined and roads blocked.

23 Apr 1945 - 386th Infantry Regiment, Company L
Stationed at Wunsidel, in the Region of Bavaria, Germany

1945 Homer Wilson 387th Infantry Regiment, Company D

Heading to Czechoslovakia in convoy, I drove a Jeep and trailer at night, no headlights, loaded with mortar ammunition. Terrified, I kept my eyes glued to a small reflector light on the vehicle in front. If a German 88-shell had hit the trailer—and they came mighty close—I would have been blown to Kingdom Come.

The final penetration by the Division extended 37 miles from the Czech border to Pilsen, where we liberated Flossenbürg, a concentration camp. We had no idea of the Holocaust, knew nothing of the unspeakable acts of horror perpetrated here. I can still see those gaunt prisoners running toward unspeakable acts of horror perpetrated here. I can still see

those gaunt prisoners running toward us, their thin arms outstretched, their bodies just skin and bones. Completely unprepared for this, we gave them all we had: little packs of cigarettes and chocolate bars from our K-rations.

During the final push, the Germans ran out of gasoline and used horses to pull their heavy artillery. They began to surrender. One soldier would come out of the bushes with his hands over his head. If no one shot him, dozens of others would slowly creep out from behind him. They didn't want to surrender to the Russians, only to the Americans. Then suddenly, it was over. On May 7, 1945, near Pilsen, Czechoslovakia, Lt. General Karl Weisenberger, Commander, 13th German Army Corps, surrendered to General Herman F. Kramer, Commander of 97th Infantry Division. The last official shot of the war in Europe was fired by Company B, 387th Regiment, 97th Division.

23 Apr 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Place: Marktleuthen, Wunsiedel, Bavaria, Germany – 0900 troop liaison visited troop CP 1000 1st platoon put on alert by division. Changed password. Received G-3 report #19, received G.O # 3, received G-2 intelligence #1

23 Apr 1945 - Lionel M Gonzalez 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Subject: Daily Report To: Commanding Officer, 3rd BN 386th Inf.

1. Established our C.P. at Hochstadt the night of the 22nd and remained there until the afternoon of the 24th.
2. No change in personnel and no activity was encountered all day. Followed normal routine.
3. PRC. James G Burton of the 81MM Mortar PLT. met with his brother while we were in this town. (Details of this meeting have been submitted to the Inf & Ed officer as material for publication.)
4. Distance from Solingen, Germany to Hochstadt, Germany - 330 Miles.

Signature T/5 L. M. Gonzales CO. Reporter CO "M"

23 Apr 1945 - Knocking the Lock Off the Gate at the Flossenbürg Concentration Camp – Unknown writer

The documented first arrival of American soldiers at Flossenbürg Concentration Camp was of the 90th Infantry Division at 10:30 A.M. on April 23, 1945. There is no documentation of the arrival of soldiers from the 97th Infantry Division, but there are several items that taken together indicate very strongly that various personnel of the 97th Infantry Division also were at the camp on April 23rd and probably were the first to arrive. There is anecdotal evidence of nine (9) individuals of the 97th that were there and with five (5) of them specifically identified. (This information was put together by Bob Hacker during several 97th M. P. Platoon reunions in the late 1990's and from several telephone calls.)

- From a copy of the log of the 2nd Battalion, 303rd Infantry Regiment, 97th Infantry Division there is an entry for 1800, 22 April, that states that they moved into position to relieve elements of the 2nd Cavalry and that the position was within the borders of Czechoslovakia. This information was received from Harold Brown, the Commanding Officer. The concentration camp was on the German side of the border, so this placed the Division forward of the camp.

- Ray Bartolo was one of a three member wire crew of the 365th Field Artillery Battalion, 97th Infantry Division. He specifically remembers being at Flossenbürg on 23 April. He has very specific memories of the camp and of talks with some of the former prisoners. Ray remembers the group at the gate was knocking off the gate lock when he and his group arrived.

Fred Huber, a squad sergeant of the Military Police Platoon of the 97th Infantry Division, was at the camp with three jeeps; six people. Other M.P. members of the party were Russell Smith, Huber's driver; Leonard Furnare; Allen Fink; and two others that are not identified. Huber and his squad were detailed to the 303rd Infantry Regiment for traffic control and other Military Police duties.

- Furnare remembers helping to knock off the lock on the camp gate. He also remembers the delousing building.

- Fred Huber remembers a colonel with a command car. After the gate was opened, some of the prisoners rushed out. The colonel had Huber and the others round them up so they could be deloused, be given medical care, and fed. This colonel was probably from the 90th Division and was the one who reported the "liberation" of Flossenbürg. The 97th had just completed their move from Soligen in the Ruhr area near Dusseldorf. For most moves division patches and identification of vehicles were removed to hinder German intelligence from identifying new units in their area. Without identification, most individuals would believe that everyone was from their division.

The above anecdotes indicate that the Huber party was probably the first American Army unit to arrive at the Flossenbürg Concentration Camp with the wire crew arriving a few minutes later. This was a casual encounter and not reported up either chain of command. The significance of the incident was not realized for almost 50 years. The 97th Division performed many duties at the camp. They treated the sick and dying; buried the dead; interviewed former prisoners and gathered evidence for trials of former camp officers and guards; etc. Brig. General Halsey, the commanding officer of the 97th Division inspected the camp as did General Hasbrouck, the commanding officer of the division artillery. Bob Hacker was at the camp with Sergeant Hrychewicz (Herky) who spoke Polish and Joe Tretter who spoke German plus probably some other members of Herky's squad.

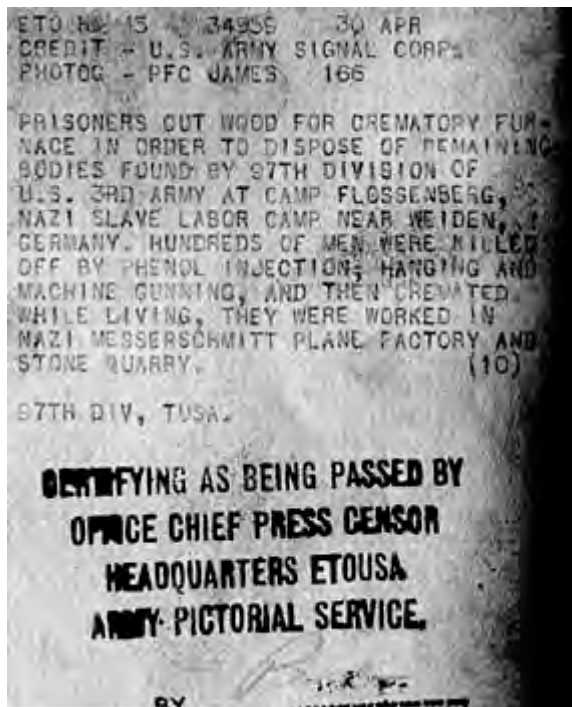
Prisoners working Flossenburg quarry. - Picture provided by Jewish Virtual Library.org



This is a view of the Flossenburg Concentration Camp after it was liberated by the 1st U.S. Army troops. A wagon load of coffins and crosses is being unloaded inside the wagon. Pictured provided by Oregon State Edu



Picture provided by Oregon State Edu



23 Apr 1945 - Michalski, Theodore 386th Infantry Regiment, Company ?

ALBANY Theodore "Ted" Michalski, proudly served his country in the Army during World War II as a member of the 97th Infantry Division 386th Regiment rising to the rank of staff sergeant. He saw action in France, Germany, and Czechoslovakia and while there his infantry liberated the Flossenbürg Concentration Camp. He also served in the Philippines and Japan

23 Apr 1945 – A Personal Memory of Flossenbürg Concentration Camp - written by Lesllie A. Thompson

In April, 1945, the 97th Division Headquarters moved to Wunsiedel, Germany, and the Division combat teams took up positions along the Czechoslovakian border. Division Rear, the service section of Division Headquarters, was located at Weiden. A day or two after arrival at Weiden, the Jewish chaplain of XII Corps visited the chaplain's section. The news had come that a concentration camp had been liberated in our combat area. This was at Flossenbürg, a few miles from Weiden.

At the time, I regarded my contacts with Flossenbürg as a normal part of military duty, although the shock of seeing this concentration camp at firsthand and the memory of it is unforgettable. I was the Division chaplain of the 97th Infantry Division which was in combat near the Czechoslovakian border, later crossing the border to Cheb and Pilsen in Czechoslovakia.

23 Apr 1945 – ULATOWSKI, RAYMOND H., Pfc, Company D, 303rd Infantry, New Britain:

"You have to see one of those Concentration Camps where they kept the political prisoners and the Jews, Poles, and Russians, to really know the Germans. You have to see Europe to know what it is the Germans did. Conditions there are terrible. France is in ruins and in most of the places we saw it was the same story — ruins, hungry, starving people. All over Europe there are breadlines, especially in the countries occupied by the Germans. The people don't even have the ordinary things and luxuries are out of the question. I don't see how Germany is going to survive either, but I wouldn't give them a nickel's worth of anything. They brought the war on. They brought all that on themselves."

Apr 1945 - Milton S Boule 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company G 2nd Bn

I and my squad walked through the gate of Flossenbug Concentration Camp late April 1945. I don't know the exact date but we were the first after the SS troops left, the gates were open in and out and not a mouse in sight. We waited in place until our officers investigated then we moved on. Officers and men were left to take care of the prisoners.

23 Apr 1945 – Hobert Winebrenner 90th Division, 358th Infantry Regiment

In his book, *BOOTPRINTS*, Hobert Winebrenner

"It stung in that there had been days, although few and far between, when I'd actually felt sorry for the Krauts—like those anti-aircraft gunners at Mainz, literally burned alive," he wrote. "But as we moved farther east and continued to unmask the Nazi prison and labor camps, my heart soured. After witnessing the carnage at Flossenbug, I raged with hate. I still find myself at a loss for words to describe it. Terms like 'war crimes' or 'atrocities' fall short. They're too sterile, too bookish when compared to the ghastly sights, sounds and smells of that place. Although words must suffice, they'll never do it justice. Words don't make you retch or reel away or cover your nose and mouth, but Flossenbug did.

"I viewed the ovens, the bleak housing, the despicable sanitation system, the dead and perhaps worst of all, the living. I saw stacks of corpses. Apparently, the crematorium couldn't keep up with the brisk pace of death. Those who survived looked like living skeletons, dead men walking.

"... It was humanity at its worse, and I saw enough to last me a lifetime. But sadly, the Flossenbug facility was not where the story ended. With word of our imminent assault, camp guards and officials fled the grounds, force-marching over 10,000 inmates southeast."

23 Apr 1945 – Joseph J D'Amico 387th Infantry Regiment, Company L

387th Infantry, Bridgeport: "We haven't got much use with Germans. We don't like the way they act or the way they treated the slave laborers."

View looking down into Flossenburg Concentration Camp - April 1945. (U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo, Courtesy National Archives)



23 Apr 1945 - The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

After operations in the Rhur pocket were completed, the 97th Infantry Division was quickly transferred to the Third Army sector along the Czechoslovakian border. On April 23, 1945 the division, under control of XII corps, opened its command post at Wunsiedel, Germany. Its mission was to help protect the left flank of the Third Army as it advanced southeast to attack enemy forces in southern Germany and Austria. The first objective of the Trident Division was to seize the city of Cheb, located just inside the Czechoslovakian border. Cheb was the site of the communications and administration center, a war factory, and a large airport.

As the 97th prepared for the invasion of Czechoslovakia, Flossenburg concentration camp was discovered in the Division's sector of the Bavarian forest. Established in 1938, Flossenburg was originally used for political prisoners. By World War II, it had become an important forced-labor center housing 30,000-40,000 worker-prisoners in the main camp and several satellite facilities. Flossenburg was operated under the supervision of SS troops. Later in the war, Flossenburg also served as a transit camp for Jews detained for extermination camps.

When American troops arrived at the gates of Flossenburg, they discovered about 2,000 extremely ill prisoners and scores of unburied corpses inside the compound. The Division rushed medical personnel to Flossenburg and initiated a preliminary war crimes investigation. Shortly before the liberation of the camp, approximately 15,000 prisoners had been force-marched to other camps. In addition to many shallow graves of prisoners shot during the forced march, American soldiers discovered mass graves in the area around Flossenburg. The Americans learned that thousands of people had died at Flossenburg from starvation, disease, and at the hands of Nazi executioners. Some prominent individuals were murdered at this camp. For example, pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a well-known Lutheran clergyman and outspoken anti-Nazi, was executed at Flossenburg about a week before the arrival of American troops. General Hasbrouck, the first senior American military officer to arrive at the camp, was shocked by what he saw and learned. The general, who spoke German fluently, directed a local official to have all able-bodied men and older boys help bury the dead. Photographs, transcripts of interviews, and other evidence of war crimes were collected and forwarded to appropriate military authorities. Allied soldiers and the people of the world were beginning to understand the magnitude of the atrocities committed during the period of the Third Reich.

23 Apr 1945 – Mon – History Background - WHEN THE BELL RANG

With the end of the Battle of the Ruhr Pocket the 97th was ordered to the Third Army sector along the Czechoslovakian border. Its mission was to protect the left flank of Gen.-Patton's spearhead, plunging southward toward the National Redoubt.

The major offensive action for the 97th was the seizure of Cheb (Eger) war factory, administration and communications center, and site of a large airport. Division headquarters moved to Wunsiedel, Germany, and the combat teams took up positions along the Czechoslovakian border. The 97th became operational under XII Corps, Third Army, April 23, 1945. Two days later, 3rd Bn., 387th, jockeyed into position at dawn. At 0900 the attack on Cheb got under way, spearheaded by Co. I commanded by Capt. Harold F. Selesky, Rochelle Park, N. J., and Co. K, under Capt. John R. Wilson, Sikeston, Mo.

Doughs met strong resistance from mortars, machine guns, small arms, 88s and rockets as the attack swept into the southwest section of the city. Mine fields and booby traps also impeded the advance. But despite stiff opposition, doughs drove-ahead and by 1800, nine hours after the attack began; they were in the center of the city. Most of the enemy garrison defending Cheb withdrew before the advancing infantrymen. Only scattered sniper resistance remained.

Partial credit for the capture of Cheb goes to 2nd Bn., 386th, commanded by Lt. Col. Dale B. Lillywhite, Los Angeles. The 386th had been advancing only a short distance north of the 387th and along a parallel course. Before the 387th succeeded in penetrating strong defenses in the southwestern sector, elements of the battalion entered the city's

northwest corner. This advance constituted's pincers threat. As soon as contact between the two units had been established, the 386th withdrew from the city. Direct artillery support for 387th troops was furnished by the 922nd FA Bn. The 775th, 771st and 731st FA Bns. supported both 387th's and 386th's advances.

24 Apr 1945 Campbell L Reed 386th Infantry Regiment, Company B

Private First Class Campbell L. Reed, Company "B", 386th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 24 April 1945, in Czechoslovakia. Entered military service from Pennsylvania.

24 Apr 1945 - William R Tinney 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

William R. Tinney, was in a fierce battle on 24 April 1945, in Germany - Private First Class William R. Tinney, Company "F", 386th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 24 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Pennsylvania.

24 Apr 1945 - Bernard Keller 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Bernard Keller, of Duncansville served in the 97th Infantry Division, 386th Infantry Regiment. Keller's wife, Carol, said he prefers to remember the lighter parts of his time as opposed to the gore and horrors that met the men as they fought their way through the Rhineland. It's something that helped get him through his stay in a German POW camp. Keller, whose unit was among Gen. George S. Patton's army, was captured by the Germans with 19 other soldiers on April 24, 1945. They were interred in a German prison camp until May 9, when the Germans released the men ahead of the advancing Russians, he recalled. While the stay was short, the men at the time didn't know how long they would be held or if they would ever leave alive. When they were captured after an ambush, Keller and the men were lined up in a field as the Germans set up a machine gun. "We thought, 'Uh oh,'" Keller said, adding a German officer came by and put a stop to it. "I concentrated on the funny things. That's the only things that kept me going," Keller said. He laughed as he recounted a misguided attempt to come up with an alternative to the constant diet of turnip soup in the POW camp by making dandelion soup. "Boy did I get sick," Keller said.

24 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Launched attack to secure LD for Battalion jump off on 25 April 1945. E Company, 1st section HMG platoon attached, moved into position at Sommahau for jump off. F and G Companies jumped off as planned. F Company secured Libstien and area. G Company secured Schindling and area. One platoon G Company took Eickleberg. E Company moved To Eickleberg and also jumped off for Hoensberg. E Company secured part of town. Battalion secured area for night. G Company's right platoon received AW fire throughout the night. Resistance stiff; casualties high.

Note: F Company sent two squads by motor in direction of Sommahau. The platoon Sgt. missed the town and drove down to Eger River by blown-out bridge. The following morning the truck was found burned. The men's equipment and weapons were found, but the troops were missing. No accurate report to this date on what happened. Capt.

Garrity, driver and Supply Sgt. passed through C Company's zone, Shindling, to reconnoiter for bridge crossings across Eger River. Capt. Garrity and party went too far forward and came under enemy fire. **One squad from G Company was sent out to help him.** Squad was reported missing the following day. Capt. Garrity captured. Reports received to this date about squad are that five were killed; others captured.

24 Apr 1945 William A Fraser JR – 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

“Two thirds of our platoon was captured by the Germans on April 24, 1945. We were sent to Stalag IVC in Tieplitz Schoene, Czechoslovakia. The Russian's liberated us on May 8, 1995

(Editor's note: All PW's (we were not called POWS) were given 60+ days of furlough and a raise in grade. We reported to a re-assignment to now forgotten Jacksonville, FL and later, in (my memory is weak on this) Georgia. Finally in February 1946, my "points" permitted me to get discharged.)

24 Apr 1945 Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

386th C.P. in field. Libstyn is defended by approximately 400 men and Erchelberg by approximately 40 men. PW's state 4 88MM guns are in POS around Hohenberg, without ammo. En Captured patrol leader from Co. G at Hehenberg.

0835 George Co. gave information on patrol: KIA: Rex F Brown, Don C. Schorling JR, Frank Ramsey JR and Fishern. MIA: Harold D. Marcus, Paul H Ketter, Donald J Kracken, Howard C. Overbary, Maurice L. Johnson, John Rains, Edward A. Neverdusky – helmets and rifles found at Schernding. WIA: Don P Silva (EVAC)

0920 Goerge Co. can take troops out of Azebach

2325 Take S36 and 300 Battery to George Co. wire crew to George.

1330 S-2 to White: 88MM 200 Meters out of Hohenberg and 3 more to Fischer line setup: Ident. 639 HU AA Bn 7th Btry-LT. Kohlmann, Co, HQ in Hohenberg- Rest near church pioneer brigade 655 C.P. in Lichenstein in Castle as of midnight. Co LST LT groups around Eischelberg – ammo and food supply from Lischenstein ident 621 Lanschtzen Bn 3rd company.

1900 White C.P. from Markhausen to Russig, Czech.

24 Apr 1945 - Donald J. Kraker 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Don participated in the Rhineland and Central Europe Campaigns. From April 24, 1945 until May 9, 1945, he was a prisoner of war in Eger, Germany (Sudetenland).



(Editor's Note: From April 24, 1945 until May 9, 1945, he was a prisoner of war in Edgar, Germany (Sudetenland). On January 18, 1946 Don was given an Honorable Discharge, and received a Good Conduct Medal and a Purple Heart Medal. After the war, Don moved to St. Paul and worked for the Veterans Affairs at Fort Snelling as an Insurance Underwriter. Don spent many weekends coming to Melrose to visit his parents, his brothers, Jack and Joe, and their families. After retirement, Don moved back to

Melrose. He enjoyed traveling by tour bus across the country, trips to the State and World Fairs and casino trips as well. Don was gentle-natured and very generous.)

24 Apr 1945 - Donald C. Schorling, 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G - KIA

D. Clark Schorling Killed In Action – SGT Donald Clark Schorling was killed in action on April 25 according to a war department telegram received from his parents, Prof. and Mrs. Ralieg Schorling of 403 Lenawee Dr. After enlisting in October 1942, SGT Schorling was chosen for Air Corps Navigation training while stationed at Denver University, but when the 29 Air Forces schools were closed, he was among the 36,000 who were transferred to infantry replacement. He was sent to FT Leonard Wood, Mo, Camp San Luis Obispo, Camp Callan and Camp Cooke California. Since going overseas last February, he had been fighting with Patton's Army. In December he was awarded the Infantry Combat Medal. SGT Schorling attended Obe College in 1940-1941 where he was a member of the all campus football eleven. During 1941-1942 he attended University of Michigan and received his freshman football letter. He was a member of Phi PSI Fraternity. Last Christmas SGT Schorling was home on furlough with his parents.



(Editors Note: Shorling was the one that Ralph Kane talked about on beer night. Albert John Ghirardelli 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G advised at the age of 90 "I also remember Cpl. Schorling. He was always upbeat and playful")

24 Apr 1945 Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Moved out at noon by trucks. Convoy was halted in Waldsassen when the two leading jeeps were struck by 88 fire. Received artillery fire while setting up weapons in defense. Moved out in attach across-country, with attached Mike Co. machine guns, at 1230 , combed woods, prepared to bivouac near a road junction where we captured prisoners. By Bn. order, moved to Wies and spent the night after the third platoon had cleared part of the town.

24 Apr 1945 Lionel M Gonzalez 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Subject: Daily Report To: Commanding Officer, 3rd BN 386th Inf.

1. Arrived by motor convoy at Grafenwohr, Germany at 2130.
2. Co. Strength 156 EM – 7 Officers.
3. Moral of our troops was excellent.

4. While en route to our destination, Mother Nature gave us a show; snow, drizzle, "liquid sunshine", and then sun came out after all.
5. Blue Battalion took over our assignment of guarding the XII Corp C.P. We established our out-posts and a motorized patrol kept close contact between these posts and Bn C.P. 24 hours a day

Signature T/5 L. M. Gonzales CO. Reporter CO "M"

24 Apr 1945 John Guthrie 322nd Eng Bn, Company B

Technician Fifth Grade John Guthrie, Company "B" 322d Engineer Combat Battalion, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States during the period of 28 March 1945 to 24 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Massachusetts.

24 Apr 1945 Roy A Griffith 322nd Eng Bn, Company B

Staff Sergeant Roy A. Griffith, Company "B" 322d Engineer Combat Battalion, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 24 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from California.

24 Apr 1945 Jake C Stern 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company A

Second Lieutenant Jake C. Stern, Company "A", 303d Infantry Regiment for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 24 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Mississippi.

24 Apr 1945 Wilbur D Burress 387th Infantry Regiment, Company K

Private First Class Wilbur D. Burress, Company "k", 387th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 24 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Missouri.

24 Apr 1945 - Joseph F Roggenburg 387th Infantry Regiment, HQTRS Company 2nd Bn

On 24 April 1945 near Huntsbach, Germany, Staff Sergeant Roggenburg was a member of a road reconnaissance patrol which came upon an enemy machine gun position. After returning and reporting the position of the gun Staff Sergeant Roggenburg volunteered to guide a patrol to attack the position. Approaching the enemy gun, he challenged it and was met with heavy fire which wounded one man of the patrol. In the face of enemy fire, Staff Sergeant Roggenburg helped to remove the casualty to a ditch and move to the rear for assistance. After calling for fire upon the position, Staff Sergeant Roggenburg guided an aid man to his fallen comrade.

24 Apr 1945 - Elmer L Diede 387th Infantry Regiment, HQTRS Company 2nd Bn

On 24 April 1945, near Huntsback, Germany, Private Diede was a member of a road reconnaissance patrol which came upon an enemy machine gun position. After returning and reporting the position of the gun Private Diede volunteered to guide a patrol to attack the position. Approaching and challenging the enemy gun, he was met with heavy fire which wounded one man of the patrol. In the face of enemy fire, Private Diede helped to remove the casualty to a ditch and remained there with him with enemy machine gun fire falling and ricocheting all about them until the wounded man died in his arms.

24 Apr 1945 Arthur W Kendall 387th Infantry Regiment, HQTRS Company 2nd Bn

Technician Fifth Grade Arthur W. Kendall, Headquarters Company, 2d Battalion, 387th Infantry Regiment for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 24 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Illinois.

24 Apr 1945 William Kazakawitz 387th Infantry Regiment, HQTRS Company 2nd B

Private First Class William Kazakawitz, headquarters Company, 2d Battalion, 387th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 24 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from New York.

24 Apr 1945 Dennis J McMahon 387th Infantry Regiment, HQTRS Company 3rd Bn

Lieutenant Colonel Dennis J. McMahon, Headquarters, 3d Battalion, 387th Infantry Regiment, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 24 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from New York.

24 Apr 1945 Frank L Virgin 387th Infantry Regiment, Company M

First Lieutenant Frank L. Virgin, Company "M", 387th Infantry Regiment for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 24 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Alabama.

24 Apr 1945 Leotus Miller 387th Infantry Regiment, Company K

First Lieutenant Leotus Miller, Company "K", 387th Infantry Regiment for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 24 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Tennessee.

24 Apr 1945 Jesse L Pollard 387th Infantry Regiment, Medical Detachment

Private First Class Jesse L. Pollard, Medical Detachment, 387th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 24 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from North Carolina.

24 Apr 1945 Louis B Kost 387th Infantry Regiment, Medical Detachment

Major Louis B. Kost, Medical Detachment, 387th Infantry Regiment, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 24 April 1945, in Czechoslovakia. Entered military service from Texas.

24 Apr 1945 Ivo H Meinerding 387th Infantry Regiment, Medical Detachment

Technician Fifth Grade Ivo H. Meinerding, Medical Detachment, 387th Infantry Regiment for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 24 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Ohio.

1945 - Armond Jiuliano 389th FA Bn, Battery C

"You had to watch the German civilians more than the German soldiers. Every one of them has a gun, a pistol or a revolver. The houses were full of guns and swords, particularly in the Sudeten Area in Czechoslovakia."

24 Apr 1945 Morris T Moore 782nd Tank Bn, Company A

Second Lieutenant Morris T. Moore, Company "A", 782d Tank Battalion for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 24 April 1945, in Germany.

24 Apr 1945 -Malcom H. Bruner 922 FA Battalion, Battery B

After our period of rest at WULFRATH, we moved to STEINMULLER where we went into action again on April 24th. SIEGEN and GIESSEN were among the bomb damaged towns we passed through. We stopped three times Enroute to STEINMULLER for sleep. On the 21st of April at BURG, where we spent the night in a barn, again on the 22nd of April, where we slept in apartment houses in the city of MEININGEN, and again on the 23rd of April, in MARKTREDWITZ. It was the original plan to spend the night in HOB, where our Division Headquarters was located, but the city had been bombed the previous day. So we went on to MARKTREDWITZ where several bottles of wine were liberated. STEINMULLER was selected as a position for our occupation on the 24th of April because the town of MUNCHENREUTH was still a hot spot for us. We did however move to MUNCHENREUTH the following day, April 25th.

24 Apr 1945 - Tue – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Marktleuthen, Wunsiedel, Bavaria, Germany– 1015 received G-2 verbal order for 1 A/C to go with QM CO. convoy for guard. 1055 1 A/C left on mission per verbal order G-2. Changed password. Received G-2 periodic report #23, received ADM O. # 4. 1540 CP had phone installed. 1910 received G-3 periodic report #20, received G-2 periodic report #24. Exec of plat LDRS completed short mission into Czechoslovakia. 2300 troop liaison sect arrived CP received Operation instruction #13

Prisoners of War on 24 Apr 1945

Edward F Jr Gerrity	24-Mar-45	Germany
Aurel W Rendleman	24-Mar-45	Germany

24 Apr 1945 – HQTRS RECORDS – AFTER ACTION REPORTS - DATED 22 May 1945

The Battle of the RUHR ended, in so far as this Regiment was concerned, when battle conditions ceased at 1816 on (24)4 April. Prisoners of War continued to move toward the rear, but the weary men of the 386th Infantry knew that their first battle had been successfully completed, and that they had earned their star.



24 Apr 1945 - Tue – History Background - HEADQUARTERS 387TH INFANTRY APO 445 St. Sedliste, Czech. SUBJECT, After-Battle Report, (21 Apr 45 - 8 1.Day 45) TO: Commanding General, 97th Infantry Division, APO 445, c/o Postmaster, New York, New York ATTN. Historian.

The 387th Infantry moves forward to the vicinity of WALDSASSEN, Germany, on 24 Apr 45. Patrols were put into operation in the BRTNA, DOLZANDOV and CHEB sectors to determine any concentration or troop movements of the enemy. The 2d Battalion initiated relief of the 42d Cavalry Squadron on the left of the Regimental Zone. Light resistance was encountered in this sector, but steady progress was made. The 3rd Battalion on the right met heavy mortar, automatic weapons, and 20mm fire on the northern outskirts of WALDSASSEN, which delayed their advance toward CHEB. It was

necessary for the 3d Battalion to make a forced night march through the woods west of WALDSASSEN -CHEB highway in order to avoid delay from resistance on this road. By this means the 3rd Battalion had at daylight 25 April 45 secured jump-off positions on the high ground south of CHEB and east of the main highway.

Magdeburg Seized by Ninth Army

Lt. Gen. George S. Patton's U.S. Third Army entered Czechoslovakia, frontline reports said yesterday, splitting the Reich geographically in two, while 80 miles to the north the Elbe River citadel of Magdeburg fell to Lt. Gen. William S. Simpson's U.S. Ninth Army.

Czechoslovakia was the fifth Nazi-occupied nation to be penetrated by Gen. Eisenhower's armies, which have swept through France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Holland. Patton's troops had crossed more than 225 miles of Germany to begin liberation of the first democracy to fall to Hitler.

Tank-borne doughs of the 90th Inf. charged across the border 20 miles northwest of Asch yesterday morning, AP front reports said. They rode into the Sudetenland, which six and a half years ago was granted to Hitler in the Munich agreement.

North, South Germany Split

Politically and geographically, Patton's entry into the Sudetenland severed northern from southern Germany. But Germans were using the soil of the former democracy as a battleground and had concentrated the Luftwaffe there.

Nazi routes through the narrowing Czech corridor between the Third Army and the Russians have been under terrific air bombardment to pave the way for Patton's men and hamstring Nazi flight to the southern redoubt area.

S & S Correspondent Patrick Mitchell with Third Army said doughs of the 90th Div. advanced six miles to cross the frontier. They pushed two more miles farther east

(Continued on Page 8)

25 Apr 1945 - James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

The 97th Division entered Ash, Czechoslovakia before Cheb. Moving to protect the left flank of the Third Army on its southern drive, the 97th took Cheb, Czechoslovakia, on 25 April 1945

25 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Battalion ordered to attack in zone and jumped off at 0730 with E Company on right with same F Company attachments plus one platoon T.D.'s. Company G on left with same H Company attachments and one platoon of tanks. F Company moved back in Battalion zone in reserve. The following towns were captured: Hoensberg, Markhausen, Reissig, and part of Cheb, also known as Eger, plus 20 or more smaller towns. This operation was our first one with tanks. Battalion secured the high ground north of Cheb, part of Cheb north side of Eger River, the small towns of Stien, Reissig, as well as smaller villages in zone.

Note: One tank knocked out by Panzerfaust when G Company was moving to occupy north Cheb. We received artillery, 88-mm and 20-mm flak throughout night.

25 Apr 1945 -Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

0135 Right flank of George receiving fire: 20-88 time fire

0600 attack on Cheb, Czech begins, gun flashes from Hammerneuhle, MG fire on right flank.

WIA: Earl T Cutter (EVAC)

1545 White C.P. setup temp @ Hohenberg

1200 386th in the field, EN continues to construct roadblocks in regimental area. Two A-T Guns in 387th area. Enemy activity at Cheb, Rocket launching site at Lebendeck. En 88's in Franzenbad, 88's at Mulcach, En CP at Hazlow.

1330 386th OP attacked by 4 En. One was wounded and others evacuated him while withdrawing. En Reported in woods. Polish Prisoner stated SS troops meeting in factory in Arzberg. Factory making ammo until arrival of American soldiers 5 PW's turned in.

25 Apr 1945 -Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Left Wies at 0500, Item Co. Leading. Arrived at a point on the edge of woods five kilometers from Egar, followed by King and Love Co. Elements of Dog, How and Mike Companies were present to support the advance on the city. Item Co. jumped off at 1230 across open fields (third and first platoons in Echelon to the right and flanking Co HQ., light machine guns attached to the first, second platoon in the rear and mortars in support), using the road as left boundary. Engaged enemy to the right of the city, setting houses and haystack afire. A prisoner taken from the haystack told of the other German soldiers in the city. Forward elements halted in open fields to await air bombardment of Eger, which never materialized. Artillery and mortars pounded the city. Continued the attack at 1445 after digging in under enemy mortar and 88 fire (third and first platoons abreast, second in reserve), We encountered terrific small arms fire from the enemy entrenched in a deep railroad cut, engaged in a heavy fire fight, reorganized beyond the railroad, suffered casualties. Fought on about three blocks thru the city (three platoons

abreast with attached light and heavy machine guns), one squad advancing to a point where Germans traveling about in vehicles were caught unaware of their presence. Support elements received small arms and artillery fire when crossing the fairlead cut. Riflemen and machine gunners were pinned down by German small arms and machine gun fire. Company reorganized and spent the night in houses located for maximum protection. Since the Third Bn. Aid station was captured intact by an enemy patrol, casualties' were treated by Gear medics in a nearby hospital. Received heavy enemy artillery fire directed into the city; forward observer believed that ammo jumps were stuck. Captured prisoners. At 0130 a carrying Artillery left to replenish our low ration and ammo supply.

25 Apr 1945 - Lionel M Gonzalez 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Subject: Daily Report To: Commanding Officer, 3rd BN 386th Inf.

1. Maintained our XII Corp C.P. Guard at Grafenwohr, Germany.
2. No change in personnel and no activity with the enemy.
3. Troops had a rest from the tiresome journey of the previous day.
4. Three hot meals were served this day.

Signature T/5 L. M. Gonzales CO. Reporter CO "M"

25 APR 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Moved in a regimental convoy to Mitterteich. Acted as a flank guard at Tirschenreuth for the 3rd Army. Our home for the next week was a farmer's large hay barn.

25 Apr 1945 Harley A Wentworth 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company C

Private First Class Harley A. Wentworth, (then Private), Company "C", 303d Infantry Regiment, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 25 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Iowa.

25 Apr 1945 Thomas A Merriss 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company C

Staff Sergeant Thomas A. Merriss, Company "C", 303d Infantry Regiment for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 25 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Ohio.

25 Apr 1945 Ian H MacDonald 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company C

Private First Class Ian H. MacDonald, Company "C", 303d Infantry Regiment, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 25 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Massachusetts.

25 Apr 1945 Leland L Eggerling 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company C

Private First Class Leland L. Eggerling, Company "C", 303d Infantry Regiment, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 25 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from California.

25 Apr 1945 Robert J Draper 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company C

Private First Class Robert J. Draper, Company "C", 303d Infantry Regiment, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 25 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Illinois.

25 Apr 1945 Michael W Bray 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company C

Private First Class Michael W. Bray, Company "C", 303d Infantry Regiment, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 25 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Michigan.

25 Apr 1945 Roy E Couch 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company C

Private First Class Roy E. Couch, Company "C", 303d Infantry Regiment, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 25 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Arkansas.

25 Apr 1945 William A Bassett 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company C

Private First Class William A. Bassett, Company "C", 303d Infantry Regiment, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 25 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from New York.

25 Apr 1945 Paul H Montgomery 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company C

Technician Fifth Grade Paul H. Montgomery, Company "C", 303d Infantry Regiment, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 25 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Missouri.

25 Apr 1945 LaDurin H Sherwood 303rd infantry Regiment, HQTRS Company

Technician Fifth Grade LaDurin H Sherwood, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 303d Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 25 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Michigan.

25 Apr 1945 Marco L Berro 303rd Infantry Regiment, Medical Detachment

Technician Fourth Grade Marco L. Berro, Medical Detachment, 303d Infantry Regiment for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 25 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from California.

25 Apr 1945 Rudolph T Swarowsky 387th Infantry Regiment,– KIA

Mrs. Blance Swarowsky
402 Gulf
San Antonio, Texas

Telegram: Washington, DC May 6, 1945

The Secretary of War desires me to express his deep regret that your husband PFC Swarowsky Rudolph T was killed in action in Germany 25 Apr 1945 Confirming letter follows.

J A Ulio, The adjutant General of the Army

25 Apr 1945 Robert A Roy 387th Infantry Regiment – KIA

PVT Service # 31376464 – 387th Infantry Regiment. Entered service from New Hampshire and died 25 Apr 1945 – Buried at Plot D, Row 46, Grave 28 at St. Avold, France Lorraine American Cemetery with awards: Purple Heart.

25 Apr 1945 – Delbert Isaacs 387th Infantry Regiment, Company K

On 25 April 1945, during an attack on the city of Eger, Czechoslovakia, Private Isaac volunteered, with another soldier, to contact friendly troops within the city with whom his platoon was out of communication. Boldly dashing across 800 yards of open terrain under heavy enemy fire of all types, he contacted the friendly troops and returned to his platoon with enemy small arms fire falling all about him. He then led elements of his platoon into the city over dangerously exposed ground.

25 Apr 1945 – Alford Popp 387th Infantry Regiment, Company K

On 25 April 1945, during an attack on the city of Eger, Czechoslovakia, Private Popp volunteered, with another soldier, to contact friendly troops within the city with whom his platoon was out of communication. Boldly dashing across 800 yards of open terrain under heavy enemy fire of all types, he contacted the friendly troops and returned to his platoon with enemy small arms fire falling all about him. He then led elements of his platoon into the city over dangerously exposed ground.

25 Apr 1945 – John Price Mattfeldt 387th Infantry Regiment, Company M - KIA

On an assault on the city of Egar, Czechoslovakia on 25 April 1945, Lieutenant Mattfeldt, commanding a platoon of machine guns attached to the leading elements of the assault forces, came under heavy enemy fire from two nearby strong points. Putting his gun into operation, Lieutenant Mattfeldt forced the withdrawal of the enemy troops and continued the advance across a ravine in the face of enemy machine gun fire for a distance of 75 yards. He entered the city with the first troops and encountered heavy fire which halted the advance. Fearlessly moving ahead of the riflemen, Lieutenant Mattfeldt placed heavy fire on the enemy while moving down a fire swept street. Deploying his guns at an important intersection Lieutenant Mattfeldt was killed by a sudden burst of fire from concealed enemy positions.

25 Apr 1945 John R JR Pitcher 387th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Private First Class John R. Pitcher, Jr., Company “M”, 387th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 25 April 1945, in Czechoslovakia. Entered military service from Pennsylvania.

25 Apr 1945 Ira J Wooster 387th Infantry Regiment, Medical Detachment

Private First Class Ira J. Wooster, (then Private), Medical Detachment, 387th Infantry Regiment, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 25 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Michigan.

25 Apr 1945 Harold Weisberg 387th Infantry Regiment, Medical Detachment

Private First Class Harold Weisberg, (then Private), Medical Detachment, 387th Infantry Regiment, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of

the United States on 25 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Connecticut.

25 Apr 1945 Hugh E Murphy 387th Infantry Regiment, Medical Detachment

Corporal Hugh E. Murphy, Medical Detachment, 387th Infantry Regiment for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 25 April 1945, In Germany. Entered military service from New York.

25 Apr 1945 Carl A Froehlin 387th Infantry Regiment, Medical Detachment

Private First Class Carl A. Froehlin, Medical Detachment, 387th Infantry Regiment, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 25 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Michigan.

25 Apr 1945 Eugene A Lillis 922nd FA Bn, Battery A

Technician Fourth Grade Eugene A. Lillis, Battery "A", 922d Field Artillery Battalion, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 25 April 1945, in Czechoslovakia. Entered military service from Pennsylvania.

25 Apr 1945 Joseph A Zimmerman 922nd FA Bn, Battery A

Technician Fifth Grade Joseph A. Zimmerman, Battery "A", 922d Field Artillery Battalion, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 25 April 1945, in Czechoslovakia. Entered military service from Illinois.

25 Apr 1945 -Malcom H. Bruner 922 FA Battalion, Battery B

While at MUNCHENREUTH we fired on the airport of Eger, Czechoslovakia which our Infantry Division eventually took. Our Battalion Commander got pinned down a few miles outside of this town, but was freed by 65 rounds from "B" Battery. At one time we were firing two missions at once. Another time we shelled a house in which a German machine gun squad was hiding. From the hill near the mess truck we could see our own guns firing and observe the hits. When the house became enveloped in flames, the Nazi machine gunners made a break across the open field for the woods. They were immediately cut down by our waiting infantry machine gunners. The Division Artillery General's driver was killed near MUNCHENREUTH and several Medics of the 97th were captured by German's.

25 Apr 1945 -97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Rossback, Czechoslovakia – 0600 1st and 3rd platoon left Markteutheh to relieve elements of 303rd infantry. 0900 COMD GP and 2nd platoon moved to front. 1000 1st and 3rd platoon moved into line against the enemy relieving elements of the 303rd Regiment. 1230 2nd platoon moved into line. 1405 COMD GR moved into new CP AT 1500 troop train and 1 plat light tanks arrive CP. Received message from 3rd platoon that they had been fired upon and requested an ambulance. 1630 CPL Conklin killed by enemy action. Pfc. Harper wounded and Pvt Brady missing on dismounted (?) patrol against the enemy in vicinity of Thonbrunn, Czechoslovakia. 1730 26 Em and 1 OFF

ASCND to troop ASALT PLAT. 3 EM and 1 OFF – ARTY observers. Attached to troop.

25 Apr 1945 –Lewis W. Conklin 97th MECI RCN - KIA

Corporal Lewis W. Conklin, on 25 April 1945, near Thonbrunn, Czechoslovakia, Corporal Conklin volunteered to guide a patrol being sent to rescue a wounded man from an area known to be under heavy enemy small arms and rocket fire from concealed positions. As the patrol approached the point where the casualty lay, Corporal Conklin observed an enemy soldier approaching but soon lost contact because of the heavily wooded terrain. In order to locate the enemy position, Corporal Conklin fearlessly and courageously exposed himself to enemy fire and was fired upon and killed after he located the enemy position and endeavored to point it out to his patrol leader.



25 Apr 1945 Delegates from some 50 countries met in San Francisco to organize the United Nations.

25 Apr 1945 -D-Day Meeting at the Elbe in Torgau

The British Second Army took over the command of the US XVIII Corps for its final advance from the Elbe to the Baltic coast. British XXX Corps forces were still embroiled in fierce fighting in Bremen.

The 11th Armored Division's Combat Command B under the US Third Army's XII Corps advanced out of Regen to Tittling, crossed the Olz River, occupied Perlesreuth, and took charge of a bridge over the Ohe River near Prombach. Because Combat Command A came upon a road that was impassable for tanks near Zwiesel, it changed the direction of its advance behind Combat Command B columns through Regen to Kirchdorf, where it rotated to the west to Schwarzach and southeast to Grafenau. Infantry regiments from the 26th Infantry Division reached the Danube in the Neukirchen – Mitterfels – Steinach area. The 90th Infantry Division's 359th Infantry Regiment, currently reinforced by the 90th Reconnaissance Company, attacked through the positions of its sister 358th Infantry Regiment to the southeast and advanced to the area

northwest of Waldmünchen. The division's 357th Infantry Regiment continued to the Schwarzach River between Rötz and Schönthal, while the 358th Infantry Regiment secured the sector along the Czechoslovak border and mopped up several villages on the Czech side. The 2nd Cavalry Squadron (Mechanized) headed southwards after being relieved by the 97th Infantry Division's 303rd Infantry Regiment. Assault battalions from the 97th Division's 386th and 387th Infantry Regiments occupied the hills north of Cheb and launched an attack on the city.

25 Apr 1945 -The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

On April 25 regiments of the 97th Infantry Division, supported by armored units, invaded Czechoslovakia and advanced toward Cheb. Division headquarters, however, remained on the German border. Intelligence reports indicated that the 97th might encounter elements of the 2nd Panzer Division, which by coincidence also had a Trident as its insignia. Some units of the 97th met only light opposition while others advanced against considerable resistance including 88s, minefields, small arms fire, roadblocks, and booby traps. The effective use of infantry, artillery, armor, and engineers forced the enemy to retreat westward. Nine hours after the attack began, units of the 97th were in Cheb. The enemy garrison had withdrawn to the east. Only snipers and a few small units remained in Cheb. Most of these enemy soldiers escaped during the night.

25 Apr 1945, – Brent J Morrison 2nd LT. 386th Assistant Adjutant – Regimental History

Name: German – Czechoslovakian Border (within THIRD ARMY sector).

Place: Between HOF, ARZBERG and WAIDHAUS.

Date: 25 April 1945 to 8 May 1945

Campaign of which battle was a part: Central Europe

Forces engaged: Elements of the 2nd Panzer Division, 508th A.A. Frig.

Results: Termination of hostilities with German Government prevented further advance.

During the period 1 April to 8 May, 13,597 German prisoners were captured.

Commanding Officers in Important Engagements:

Neuss

Names of Commanding Officers:

- Regimental Commander: Colonel Samuel M Lansing
- 1st BN CO Lt Col George D McCarthy
- 2nd BN CO Lt Col Dale B Lillywhite
- 3rd BN CO Lt Col Clifford L Dier

Ruppichterorth – Felderhoft

Names of Commanding Officers: same as above

Solingen

Names of Commanding Officers: Same as above

Vicinity of Cheb –

Names of Commanding officers: Same as above, with exception of Lt Col Clifford L Dier, attached to 12th Corps as Security Guard.

Vicinity of Muchov, Tachod, and Stribro

Names of Commanding officers: same as above Par F

Vicinity of Pilsen

Names of commanding officers: same as above

25 Apr 1945 -History Background - HEADQUARTERS 387TH INFANTRY APO 445 St. Sedliste, Czech. SUBJECT, After-Battle Report, (21 Apr 45 - 8 1.Day 45) TO: Commanding General, 97th Infantry Division, APO 445, c/o Postmaster, New York, New York ATTN. Historian.

Relief of the 42d Cavalry Squadron was completed at 1825 24 Apr 45 in this sector. Company G was ordered to clear the woods east of WALDSASSE N to HUNDSBACH, Germany, so that the 3d Battalion could be supplied over this route. Company G moved forward at 0130, 25 Apr 45, Progress was slow due to enemy snipers, mortar and automatic weapons fire.

The 3d Battalion moved into position for the attack in the woods East of SVATY KRIS where they surprised German soldiers sent there a dawn to install defensive positions. Resistance was encountered from a Factory in the southwest portion of CHEB Czechoslovakia, and artillery was called in to reduce it in the morning. The attack continued with Company I advancing to determine the strength of the enemy, Approximately 500 yards from the edge of town Company I received considerable enemy fire, and a tactical withdrawal was made according to plan. Artillery laid down a concentration of fire According to Plan. Zebra and Company I advanced on the left with Company K on the right, while Company L provided flank protection, light resistance was encountered until Company I attacked the edge of town, at which time the enemy slowed the advance with automatic weapons fire from dug in positions.

This resistance was soon overrun, and by 2000 hours CHEB was occupied in the south third, to the south edge of the park.

Difficulty was encountered in opening the main supply route, but our infantry and tanks overran the town of HUNDSBACH Germany, which resulted in the road being secured at 2030. Enemy resistance was light in number, but they fought with determination and were cleverly placed, making full use of all means available to them.

Prisoners of War on 25 Apr 1945

Leslie I Jr Brooke	25-Apr-45	Germany
Peter Budy	25-Apr-45	Germany
Elden J Colf	25-Apr-45	Germany
Abel R Contreras	25-Apr-45	
James A Densel	25-Apr-45	Germany
Robert E Dierker	25-Apr-45	Germany
Harold L Eberbach	25-Apr-45	Germany

John A Fallon	25-Apr-45	
William A Jr Fraser	25-Apr-45	Germany
Sylvester P Gamble	25-Apr-45	Germany
Gene V Good	25-Apr-45	Germany
Bernard A Keller	25-Apr-45	Germany
Paul H Kettler	25-Apr-45	Germany
Jack L Kopenkoskey	25-Apr-45	Germany
Donald J Kraker	25-Apr-45	Germany
Thomas R Lamm	25-Apr-45	Germany
Erwin G Lee	25-Apr-45	Germany
Harold Marcus	25-Apr-45	Germany
Andrew Medrick	25-Apr-45	Germany
Woodrow L Motley	25-Apr-45	
Paul E Nash	25-Apr-45	
John M Robinson	25-Apr-45	Germany
Robert O Jr Rudick	25-Apr-45	
Clarence W Scofield	25-Apr-45	Germany
Tommy P Sheets	25-Apr-45	
Ernest V Sherman	25-Apr-45	
William R Smith	25-Apr-45	Germany
Donald R Tierney	25-Apr-45	Germany
Charles S Tongret	25-Apr-45	Germany
Charles R Townsend	25-Apr-45	Germany
Oliver G Wilson	25-Apr-45	Germany

MISSION: Proceed by Truck to Sommerhau, Germany –

BRIEF RESUME OF CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING DISAPPEARANCE: Cpl William A Fraser JR was one of the 26 men who were riding 2 1/2 ton 6x6 truck which was found burned and its driver found from burns and gun fire at Hohenberg, Germany. –

STATEMENTS OF WITNESS IF ANY: Pfc Boyd J Hiskey 39937053, Co ?? who was on the truck transferred to above was found wounded at a German Hospital at Franz, Laz??, Germany on 26 April 1945 by other Americans and he is reported to have made the following statement. "The ?? which we were riding evidently passed its proper destination ?? at the town of Hohenberg, Germany where German gun fire from ? set the truck afire and hit the driver. All other men detrucked attempted to fight the enemy but were overcome, forced to surrender and all were captured.

REMARKS: All helmets and some weapons and equipment of the 26 men who were in this group were found near the burned truck at Hohenberg, Germany.

DATE OF REPORT: 3 May 1945 - Written by William C Parker

(Editor Note: This document was burned and the remains are difficult to read)

26 Apr 1945- Edward J. Marn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company D

Near Franzenbad, Germany, on 26 April 1945, Lieutenant Marn. an 81-mm. mortar section leader supporting a rifle company in attack laid 400 yards of wire in the face of

intense small arms and artillery fire to a forward observation post which he established and maintained. His gallant conduct on this occasion materially aided the advance of his company. (Note: appeared to be working with Andrew J Sabad)

(Editor's Note: Edward J. Marn, of Belt, Montana, who established the first rodeo in Japan, and later became a rancher and range rider.)

26 Apr 1945- Andrew J Sabad 386th Infantry Regiment, Company D

Near Franzenbad, Germany, on 26 April 1945, Corporal Sabad, a forward observer for an 81mm mortar section supporting a rifle company in attack, laid 400 yards of wire in the face of intense small arms and artillery fire to a forward observation post which he established and maintained. His gallant conduct on this occasion materially aided the advance of his company. (Note: Appeared to be working with Edward Marn)

25 Apr 1945 – Clarence W Scofield 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Clarence Scofield was nearly shot by a German SS lieutenant in the closing days of World War II. Scofield and the surviving members of his platoon had just surrendered when that lieutenant ordered the guards to move away so he could start shooting. "It seemed that it was all over when another German soldier ran toward us with his arms waving in the air. He proved to be a white-haired colonel who must have been 50 or older," Scofield said. "That SS officer was just a kid, and the colonel gave him a chewing out like I'd never heard before. That lieutenant stomped away in a huff. Our German speaking member told us later that the colonel pulled rank and forbade the lieutenant from executing us." So, Sgt. Scofield and his men spent the last couple days of World War II in an improvised POW camp. They lived on a diet of rutabaga soup, black bread and boiled potatoes. "Our overall treatment was good," he said. Combat began March 29 and would continue day after day until the day Scofield was captured during the Battle for the Ruhr Pocket in Germany. He called April 17, "the worst day of the war for me." Other days stand out, too. One evening after his platoon had dug in, Scofield was nearly hit by an enemy shell. "It was a dud. I periodically think of the conscripted laborer who screwed up that detonator," he said. On other day, his platoon fought off a German attack. "After they retreated, we went out and brought in two of their wounded that they left behind. One was seriously wounded and we could do nothing for him, as in effect, we were surrounded and had no medical personnel with us. He died later that night as he was asking for his mother while I held his hand." The most memorable day for Scofield came when he and his men walked into a German village and encountered women dressed in long white dresses and colorful jackets and blouses. Then two elderly men dressed in black suits covered with sashes and medals presented themselves to the weary American riflemen. "It was like something out of 'The Student Prince,'" Scofield said. "They approached, and it turned out that they were the town mayor and band director, the official welcoming committee." Soon after, Scofield and his buddies were cut off and pinned down in a building by machine gun fire. A German 88 shell hit the building and knocked Scofield unconscious. When he awoke, he was a prisoner of war and in trouble with that murderous SS lieutenant. Life in a prisoner of war camp near Prague, Czechoslovakia, was short. Before long, the Russian army came calling, and the prisoners

joined up with them, heading west toward American lines. Scofield's impression of the Russians was poor. He said many had no idea of how to use even primitive outhouses. They also killed each other, usually by accident during drinking sprees. During a skirmish with the Germans, Scofield said a Russian officer had his men charge. Forty of them were lost in the process. Eventually, Scofield and his mates broke away from the Russians, captured a German staff car and drove for one hour before reaching American troops. The war ended a few days after that. Scofield remembers the swarms of refugees fleeing the Russian advance and German soldiers changing into whatever civilian clothes they could find to help them escape. Not all the Germans fled. Scofield said one unit of the fanatic SS troops hid in some woods and then came out at night to shoot up Russian soldiers who were in the midst of a drunken party. "The streets were littered with the dead," he said.

26 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Battalion remained in position. No enemy activity reported. G Company Commander was instructed to send contact patrol by bridge this side of Eger River to contact unit on our right. Patrol reported no contact. The C.O. sent several patrols across river into Cheb to try to contact unit on our right. No troops of this unit were in the town. G Company patrolled to outer edge of the city. Contact was later established with unit on right. Battalion liberated 1600 Russian P.W.'s. Received orders to move Battalion to Selb upon relief from 1st Battalion, 387th Infantry.

26 Apr 1945- Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

1200 386th Regiment in Field. EN Resistance during early afternoon rather heavy in towns in Hohenberg, Liebstein, Shirnding and Cheb considerable resistance was encountered. Overcome with tanks, TD's and FA and enemy were routed to north. Our companies reached objectives in early night. Three rounds of phosphorous shells fell in rear of 2nd Bn area. Enraptured 2 ENGR officers, 34 EM, destroyed one 2 ½ ton truck and 1 ½ ton vehicle. The 1 ½ ton truck lost its way and 28 men on truck were lost to enemy. ENGR officer captured while on recon and other 8 EM trying to find him. B Battery of 365th artillery captured one 88 MM with ammo and two prime movers, plus 15 man crew at 0930. Two 88MM plus 150 round per weapon captured in Hohenbert at 0630 by White. 100 PW's turned in including one office and one nurse. 0915 Two tank men George CO. reported dead can be reported missing. Germans came last night and took them out of tanks. KIA: Vernon R. Humpries (A Replacement Rec'd on 17 Apr 1945) Barry V. White (A Replacement received 09 Apr 1945) at Hohenberg. (Tanks were from 14th armored division caught in tank trap)
1300 New White C.P. at Seib
1347 George Co. located warehouse type building with supplies and equipment at 3L.L-75L. Tank knocked out yesterday is at same location
1400 to be relieved by 1st Bn 387th Infantry. I7th Division (Dillon's squad was last one out of the area)

26 Apr 1945- Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Received orders to continue attack to the east and of Eger, marked by the Eger River. Screened to the river with tanks which had arrived at 1700. Met elements of the 386

Infantry, who had entered Eger a few hours after item Co. Took over from the 386 the guard of 2000 liberated Russian laborers and moved them to the rear; billeted in new houses.

26 Apr 1945- Lionel M Gonzalez 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Subject: Daily Report To: Commanding Officer, 3rd BN 386th Inf.

1. Left Grafenwohr, Germany at 1000 by Motor Convoy.
2. Travelled 45 miles to Schwarzenfeld, Germany on good roads and excellent weather.
3. While en route to our destination we met numerous liberated PW and Slave labor from Russia, Poland and France. (Their appreciation was noticeable; they saluted the American soldier with honesty and gratefulness.)
4. Arrived at our destination at 1500 and established the new outposts. Maintained our assignment
5. No major change on our activities and the Co. Strength was the same.

Signature T/5 L. M. Gonzales CO. Reporter CO "M"

26 Apr 1945- 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Rossback, Czechoslovakia – 0645 LT Walther and T/5 Noyes, T/5 Silver carried litter with CPL Conklin's body out of woods where he was killed, they were supported by 6 EM with mortar and MG fire and small arms. Received G-2 periodic reports #25, received G-3 periodic report #21, received change 1 to Advance to O #4, changed password. 1600 Received ARTY fire on CP

26 APR 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Took up a defensive position guarding the 3rd Army's right flank. During the day we slept in the barn; but at night we had to stand guard in our fox holes just in case enemy's patrols did get through. We spent a whole week here in a defensive position.

26 Apr 1945 Earle R Terry 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company C – KIA

Earle Ross Terry was born on March 2, 1925 to George and Eleanor Terry who lived at 403 South High Street in West Chester Pennsylvania. He was one of two children, including his brother George Jr. His father, George, was a Deputy Sheriff of West Chester. Earle, who liked to be called "Zeke" by his friends, attended West Chester High School, then located at the northeast corner of Church and Washington Streets. The Yearbook says Earl was "noted for his "smooth" dancing...he thrives on baseball and automobiles. If there is anything left when he is done tinkering with a car, "Zeke" likes to drive it. His future plans include either the Army or Penn State." Earle played the varsity basketball and was the star pitcher on the baseball team. He also played in the West Chester Community League with the Elks team, and pitched for the Bernhard Schlegel Post American Legion team. Earle was a member of the First Presbyterian Church in West Chester, and the Brandywine Grange, No. 60. Earle enlisted in the Army July 2, 1943, one month after graduating. He received basic training at Camp Hood, Texas, and advanced training at State College of New Mexico, Fort Leonard Wood and Camp Cook

in California. Earle served with Company C, 303rd Infantry Regiment, 97th Division. During his training he played basketball and baseball in the service. He pitched his team to the 303rd Infantry championship at Camp Cook in a dramatic extra inning game. It is reported that he was contacted by a major league team about tryouts when he returned home from the service. Earle's unit, The 97th Infantry Division*, sailed from New York harbor after assembling at Camp Kilmer, N. J. in February 1945. They arrived at Camp Lucky Strike, a few miles from Le Havre on March 2nd. Sergeant Earle Ross Terry was Killed In Action near Tachov, Czechoslovakia on April 26, 1945, just eleven days before the war ended. His parents later received a letter from their son dated April 24th saying he was in Czechoslovakia. The fateful telegram was received by his parents on May 11, 1945. Services were held at the Hicks Funeral home 239 South High Street, West Chester, Friday December 10, 1948. Pastor J. Garrett Kell, from First Presbyterian Church conducted the service. Blake Bradley from Michigan who service in the same company as Earle, and former classmates were pallbearers. Interment with full military honors was at Birmingham Cemetery. His brother, George Jr. served in the Army in Italy.

26 Apr 1945 John C Schoeberlein 387th Infantry Regiment, Company ? - KIA

John C Schoeberlein was born Jan. 11, 1926 in Maryland, and died on Apr. 26, 1945 in Czech town of Cheb (Eger). John served as a Private First Class, 387th Infantry, 97th Infantry Division, U.S. Army during World War II. He resided in Baltimore, Maryland prior to the war. He enlisted in the Army on March 30, 1944 at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland. He was noted as being Single, without dependents. John was "Killed In Action" during the war and was awarded the Purple Heart. He was originally interred in France and was later repatriated in the US on December 9, 1948.

26 Apr 1945 Joseph W Compton 387th Infantry Regiment, Medical Detachment

Captain Joseph W. Compton, Medical Detachment, 387th Infantry Regiment, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 26 April 1945, in Czechoslovakia. Entered military service from Illinois.

Prisoners of War on 26 Apr 1945

William F Guest	26-Apr-45	Germany
John W Hays	26-Apr-45	Germany
Robert P Jacobson	26-Apr-45	Germany
Eugene W Johnson	26-Apr-45	Germany
Conard P King	26-Apr-45	Germany
Donald T Kuntz	26-Apr-45	Germany
Robert L Lockwood	26-Apr-45	Germany
Francis J Schailey	26-Apr-45	Germany
Ernest G Winstanley	26-Apr-45	Germany

26 Apr 1945 The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

On April 26 all resistance in the city ceased. Cheb was the first Czechoslovakian city liberated by American forces.

26 Apr 1945 Lester Yollick 820th Tank Destroyer Bn, Company A

Corporal Lester Yollick, Company "A", 820th Tank Destroyer Battalion, for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 26 April 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Michigan.

26 Apr 1945- XII Corps History by Lt COL George Byer -

Infantrymen of the 387th Regiment, 97th Infantry Division in the only week the division was with XII Corps, approach the Czech town of Cheb (Eger) beside an overpass demolished by retreating Germans on April 26, 1945

26 Apr 1945- Thur – History Background - HEADQUARTERS 387TH INFANTRY APO 445 St. Sedliste, Czech. SUBJECT, After-Battle Report, (21 Apr 45 - 8 1. Day 45) TO: Commanding General, 97th Infantry Division, APO 445, c/o Postmaster, New York, New York ATTN. Historian.

During the early morning hours of 26 April 45 the enemy staged a counter attack on the 3rd Battalion Command Post, using an estimated three platoons of approximate strength of 45 men each, which resulted, in the capture and evacuation by the enemy of the 3rd Battalion aid station, including Lt. W. STANLEY from Company H, and 6 Enlist Men.

It is believed that this counter attack was staged to cover the withdrawal from the town of CHEB of some high-ranking military personnel and Nazi party officials.

During the period 26 Apr - 27 Apr 45 our troops continued to mop up enemy resistance in this area, with the 3rd Battalion in CHEB, and the first and 2nd Battalions to the rear. The enemy continued harassing artillery and rocket fire in CHEB and the 2nd Battalion area. Contact With the 386th infantry was made in north CHEB at 1815, 26 Apr 45. 713 prisoners were taken in this action and they comprised of miscellaneous troops from various organizations. 1st Battalion relieved elements of the 386th Infantry on the line FRANTISKOVY LAZNE - CHEB north of the OHRE River during daylight hours on 27 Apr 45.

27 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

F Company moved to Selb. E and G Companies moved northwest to occupy a 5,000 yard front centered around Haslov. Continued routine duties.

27 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

1330 386th Regiment in Seib. Road blocks and mines reported scattered on road from Hazlov to Asch. 150 enemies captured. Lansing's instructions for operation inside Czech. 0610 to George: have you any contact with enemy during night? Have troops ready to move?

0915 to George: tanks revert to Bn control after relief by 387th. Move White C.P. plus attached heavy weapons to Seib. 6 personnel carriers furnished.

1426 Divisional and regimental numerical designs to be marked on all vehicles at once. Helmets to have tridents painted on them.

27 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Screened the remainder of the city by 1300 and returned to billets. First platoon established an outpost in the northern end of the city across the Eger River.

27 Apr 1945 - Lionel M Gonzalez 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Subject: Daily Report To: Commanding Officer, 3rd BN 386th Inf.

1. Maintained our C.P. at Schwarzenfeld, Germany.
2. Continued our XII Corp C.P. Guard, keeping continuous contact with the 18 outposts by motorized patrol.
3. Co. Strength: 156 EM – 7 Officers
4. Morale of our men could be excellent if we only had mail.

Signature T/5 L. M. Gonzales CO. Reporter CO "M"

27 Apr 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Place: Rossback, Czechoslovakia – 0930 3rd ARTY fire on CP, changed password. 1230 captured two prisoners – EVAC. 1900 EN dug in vicinity Rossback (approx.) 100 men per PW RPTS) lost one m-8 from Panger Faust fire. No casualties (EN engaged by members of HQ & 1st platoon) 1930 CP visited by troop liaison. Received G-3 report #22, received G-3 report #23, received G-2 report #26. Pfc. Harper awarded Purple Heart per Gen O. HQ 39th EVAC hosp.

**27 Apr, – Headquarters, 386th Infantry APO 445 by John V Rick Major Inf. S-4
OPERATIONAL SUPPLY DURING RUHR VALLEY CAMPAIGN**

- a. CLASS I SUPPLIES: Ration components and issue factor were excellent. Unit was operating on a four day request cycle resulting in considerable difficulty in anticipating, four days in advance, the type of ration required for the particular operation. It was desirable to feed a maximum of hot meals to troops and requests were made with that intent. Tactical situations and last minute changes in orders made such feeding impossible resulting in waste of "A" type rations. Unit adopted two-thirds "A" and one-third "K" type rations as the standard operational ration plus one "K" type ration in reserve. This worked out very satisfactorily.
 - Water: Engineer Water Point functioned well, however, it was not always possible to supply small patrols and sections of units which might be cut off from company contact. Unit consumed all halazone tablets on hand and replacement could not be effected.

- b. CLASS II SUPPLIES: Clothing: replacement of salvage was good, with the exception of socks. Unit was unable to procure sock in sufficient quantity to maintain a desirable standard of replacement.
- Equipment: Replacement of salvage and combat losses was excellent. Replacement requirements were very low.
 - Ordnance: Small arms functioned well and replacement requirements were surprisingly low. It was evident that 1st and 2nd Echelon maintenance was of a high standard and thus evacuation to 3rd Echelon was very low.
- c. CLASS III: Regimental Gas DP and OIL DP was operated and proved to be very satisfactorily. Due to fast moving situation and the continual draw on transportation, and abnormal amount of gasoline and POL products were consumed. Difficultly was experienced in maintaining a standard level.
- d. CLASS IV: Requirements were low and supply of items normal
- e. CLASS V: Ammunition requirements and expenditures exceptionally low. Re-supply was obtained from ASP's. On various occasions Unit was required to contact several ASP's to obtain the required type of ammunition. This resulted in considerable loss of time but did not develop into a major problem, in that the ammunition supply was kept very constant and troops were never critically in need of ammunition.
- f. TRANSPORTATION: Transportation organically assigned to the Regiment was severely strained during the period. Supply lines were long and routes of supply complicated by demolitions, road blocks and one way traffic. ASP's were well stocked except at the close of the period when an acute shortage of gasoline and lubricants developed. The situation was still bad when the regiment left the area. Organic vehicles were diverted to many purposes other than that for which they were intended. The division rear near Echelon was moved forward, the regimental trains were moved forward, troops of other organizations were moved and many prisoners evacuated. This diversion of transportation hampered the movement of the Regiment and caused many breaks in the continuity of supply. The proper handling of the dead also required diversion of transportation from tactical purposes. Routing scheduled maintenance as prescribed proved to be impossible and the operations inadequate. Regardless of the number of miles since the last inspection or the time interval, our section pulled all wheels for a check each time a vehicle came into the shop. This practice caught a number of wheels which were going bad and has been established as SOP in the regiment future.

28 Apr 1945 – History Background - HEADQUARTERS 387TH INFANTRY APO 445 St. Sedliste, Czech. SUBJECT, After-Battle Report, (21 Apr 45 - 8 1.Day 45) TO: Commanding General, 97th Infantry Division, APO 445, c/o Postmaster, New York, New York ATTN. Historian.

Plans were made on 28 April 45 for the 3d Battalion to attack the CHEB Airfield at 1500. The attack was to be preceded by an Artillery concentration at H-15 to H Hour, Company L plus two platoons from Company A, 820th Tank Destroyer Bn and 13 tanks from Company C 782nd Tank Battalion, were to be used in this attack. Resistance continued to be generally light with no definite enemy line established other than enemy defensive installations at the airfield northeast of CHEB, Czechoslovakia.

The attack jumped off as planned, and the opposition continued to be light, automatic weapons and Panzerfausts were employed by the enemy, but the positions were soon overrun by our tanks, The towns of REICHERSDORF and DOL_SCHON, Czechoslovakia, located in the vicinity of the airfield, were taken, and the airfield along with the commanding ground in this area, was secured by our troops by 1815. 541 prisoners were taken in this action, and large quantities of materiel were captured, including 100 machine guns, 15, 40mm AA guns, and ammunition, 30 enemy dead were counted on the field. Our losses in this action were extremely light, with 8 Enlisted men being slightly wounded, and 2 Enlisted men seriously wounded, none were killed.

With the capture of the airfield and surrounding villages, the possibility of counter attacks was eliminated, as the enemy had no organized forces left in this sector. No definite front line was established by the enemy and contact after this action was lost. Our front extended along line FRANTISKOVY LAZNE-CHEB, —WALDSASSEN, —FFAFFENREUTH.

Enemy units committed in this sector consisted of the combat team Ludwig and Schultz, both of which were replacements for the 13th Landoschutzen Battalion and the combat team Herst, attached. The Jaeger Herst were Air Corps troops organized as infantry, and the 2 nd company Panzer Jaeger detachment, organized from the Hungarian artillery school At EGER (CHEB) Czechoslovakia, were identified.

28 Apr 1945 – XII Corps History by Lt COL George Byer –After Action Report

Overcast. Night quiet. Study of yesterday's changes indicates 90th Division must hold present front; cavalry, when relieved, can screen mountain area on the left flank; Danube flank should be secured by XX Corps; 5th Division, if assigned, can go forward in left zone; 4th Armored should assemble in Shaef reserve somewhere south of Gham. This setup will provide strength where needed, sufficient reserves, and will permit advance to Linz and somewhat beyond. Until new infantry division starts arriving, I do not feel justified in ordering armor to make a further advance, and therefore am directing they clear right portion of zone to Danube. About 1100 Gen Gay called to say we got 5th Division. Ask him to have advanced detail report promptly and suggested 4th Armored be moved to reserve position southwest of Cham to get them out of First Army zone. Gen Patton called at noon to say to take bridges at Passau under artillery fire as soon as possible – that he would notify us of bombing of those bridges (over Danube and Inn) – and that we continue on our Linz objective. Also he said to sideslip 97th Division as far as possible so that can hold on to 90th Division. Col Franson, Chief of Staff 5th Division, called before noon to learn what I wanted. I told them to get representatives here as soon as possible, which he said he would do this afternoon by air. At about 1500 Gen

Warnock and Lt Col Thackeray from 5th Division arrived, got situation and orders and returned by air to Bamberg where division is assembled. We will furnish 100 trucks, which should get division up by Monday night.

28 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Remainder of the company moved at 0800 by trucks to Franzensbad, relieved Dog Co. as guard, billeted in hotels. Suffered casualties on an outpost, caused by an infiltrating German Patrol. With King Co. in reserve, Love Co. attacked and captured an airfield nearby.

28 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

1330 386th Regiment in Sieg. Enemy action during period consisted mainly of sabotage and sniping action. Road blocks were constructed behind our lines. L.9 KM from Seib on road to Arzberg, Shoe mines also found in this vicinity sniping approximately 5 KM from Wunsiedel on road to Arzberg, one truck hit.
1900 White C.P. to Rozvadon, CZECH.

28 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Received march order at 0600 to proceed to new destination. Battalion C.O., Staff and Co. Commanders moved to new destination at 1200. Battalion moved to new destination at 1600. Route followed to new destination took us approximately 90 miles. Battalion C.O. and party received relief plan from 2nd Cavalry Group at Vohenstrass. Battalion C.O., Staff and Company C.O.'s moved forward to Rosvadov. Company C.O.'s went on reconnaissance of area they were to occupy. Battalion moved in at approximately 1900. E Company, with 2nd HMG platoon and 1st and 2nd 81-mm mortar section H Company attached occupied area around Hoska. F Company, with 1st HMG and 3rd 81-mm mortar section H Company attached, occupied Katerinske-Chalupy. Battalion C.P. moved into Rosvadov. G Company was in Regimental reserve.

28 Apr 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Place: Rossback, Czechoslovakia – 0830 all attachments relieved from duty with troop. 0906 received G-2 report #29. 1200 troop left Rossback, Czechoslovakia and moved towards new area. 1730. Troop less 1st platoon closed at new area Stornstein, Germany. 1745 1st platoon closed new area at Floss, Germany.

28 Apr 1945 –Dorsie C Elan 387th Infantry Regiment, Medical Detachment

While advancing on Nemenreuth, Germany, on 28 April 1945, a rifle platoon received sudden fire from enemy automatic weapons at a range of 700 yards. The first burst of fire inflicted four casualties and for half an hour the platoon was held in place along an open road. Disregarding the enemy fire falling in the area Technician Fifth

Grade Elan moved among the wounded men giving aid and assisting in removing them to covered locations.

28 Apr 1945 – History Background – WHEN THE BELL RANG

Cheb was the first major Czechoslovakian City to be liberated by American forces. It was one of the 37 towns and cities that fell to 97th Division troops in the first two days of fighting along the Czechoslovakian border.

Despite bad weather, which slowed operations in the entire sector, 3rd Bn., 387th, made preparations to attack dug-in enemy positions at the Cheb airfield. Following a 30-minute artillery barrage supported by tanks from the 782nd Tank Bn. and by two platoons of. The 820th TD Bn. 3rd Bn. attacked at 1500, April 28.' Within a few hours, the airfield- was overrun and secured with extremely light casualties to 97th troops. More than 600 prisoners were taken in the brief engagement.

By now, German troops in Italy, Austria and northern Germany were surrendering by thousands. Soviet forces had taken Berlin; Hitler was reported dead. However, one more phase remained before the complete and utter defeat of all German forces in Europe could be realized - the Czechoslovakian Pocket.

28 Apr, -Written by Seyffardt – from Europe

<http://www.97thid.com/cgi-bin/index....261817188&cr=1>

During WW II US Air Force damaged high Cheb in March 25 and April 8, 1945.

At the end WWII due to the relocation of the German population the number of inhabitants fell, in 1950 from 45 000 to 18 350. The town of Cheb has today 32 000 inhabitants.

Division headquarters moved to Wunsiedel, Germany, and the combat teams took up positions along the Czecho-slovakian border. The 97th became operational under XII Corps, Third Army, April 23, 1945.

Two days later (April 25), 3rd Bn., 387th, jockeyed into position at dawn. At 0900 the attack on Cheb got under way, spearheaded by Co. I, commanded by Capt. Harold F. Selesky, Rochelle Park, N. J., and Co. K, under Capt. John R. Wilson, Sikeston, Mo.

Doughs met strong resistance from mortars, machine guns, small arms, 88s and rockets as the attack swept into the southwest section of the city. Mine fields and booby traps also impeded the advance. But despite stiff opposition, doughs drove-ahead and by 1800, nine hours after the attack began, they were in the center of the city. Most of the enemy garrison defending Cheb withdrew before the advancing infantrymen. Only scattered sniper resistance remained.

That night was quiet until the hours before dawn when the 3rd Battalion Command Post in the village of Svaty Kriz received a night attack from an estimated force of 130 Germans.

For a short time the fire fight was brisk and the situation uncertain, but Germans captured medical detachment of 3rd Bn (officer and 32 unarmed medical soldiers). They also secured an officer and six soldiers from the edge of the woods on the west side of the highway at Svaty Kriz.

As it later developed, this was a diversion to cover the German withdrawal from Cheb.

Partial credit for the capture of Cheb goes to 2nd Bn., 386th, commanded by Lt. Col. Dale B. Lillywhite, Los Angeles. The 386th had been advancing only a short distance north of the 387th and along a parallel course. Before the 387th succeeded in penetrating strong defenses in the southwestern sector, elements of the battalion entered the city's northwest corner. One tank of Company "B" 782nd Tank Bn.(which supported 2nd Bn 386IR) knocked out by Panzerfaust on outskirts of CHEB. Three members of crew evacuated to rear station hospital. Two members of tank crew captured. This advance constituted's pincers threat. As soon as contact between the two units had been established, the 386th withdrew from the city.

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Company "C" 782nd Tank Bn. engaged in battle at CHEB 26 April 1945. Destroyed several MG nests and riflemen in buildings and dugouts. On April 26 US recc. armored car killed German commander of city Major Geissler and all resistance in the city ceased. The burgemeister entered into negotiations for surrender. Cheb official captured 14:40. US soldiers liberated approxiamtely 2000 PW's (Rusians, Poles and French) in Cheb area. German casualties were reported as 51 killed, 69 wounded (minimal, because more German wonded soldiers was evacuated), with 483 prisoners.

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The Allied command, for logistics reason, rejected the Czechoslovak request that Czecholovak ground and air units (in British uniforms) participate in the liberation of their country with US Army.

1st Czechoslovak Independent Armored Brigade (6200 men) was incorporated into the 21st Army Group headed by Marshal B.L. Montgomery. From October 1944 to the war's

end participated in the siege of heavily fortified Dunkirk (Dunkerque) with its strong but cut-off German defenders.

Only Marshal Montgomery agreed to send a symbolic, 140-men strong unit from the siege of Dunkirk which, on April 23, joined with the 3rd US Army and raised the Czechoslovak flag on its homeland border crossing on May 1, 1945 at Cheb.

At this point it is interesting to revert to an incident which occurred on the first day of the attack. Brig. General Sherman V. Hasbrouck - Division artillery commander - had come forward in his jeep with his aide (and driver pfc. Leslie I. Brooke) to observe the bombing and artillery bombardment incident to the attack.

Owing to the blocking of the main road to Bavarian little city Hundsbach he had used forest trails, which he had found road-blocked in some cases. Eventually he reached an unguarded road block in the woods to the south-west of Cheb, which from the map appears to be just south of Czech village Dolni Pelhrimov. Since it was approaching time for the bombardment, the General left his jeep and driver Brooke south of the road block and with his aide set out on foot for the high ground to the north-east.

After observing the bombardment he returned to find that his vehicle and driver had disappeared. Upon investigation it was determined that the road block had been removed, the vehicle driven northward through it in the direction of the German positions, and the road block then replaced. At this time General Hasbrouck was the recipient of small arms fire from the German side of the road block. He and his aide defended themselves with their pistols. Hearing the sound of our firing in the engagement at the railroad cut south of Cheb, he and his aide sensibly withdrew in that direction. They eventually reached the 3rd Battalion (387 IR) Command Post then half-way between village Svaty Kriz and the railroad cut.

General Hasbrouck was very much upset over the loss of his driver, whose fate he was bound to determine. Borrowing a rifle squad from a nearby company, he returned with them across the open fields to the vicinity of the previously mentioned village, which was situated near a pond. Placing the automatic rifle team on the high ground commanding the village, he subdued civil opposition in the village and entered it with the remainder of the squad. His driver's carbine was located and he was able to determine that the vehicle and driver had been captured and were beyond reach. Today this is only an incident, but it was real and earnest then. "Boys from Trident" took pride in the fact that his division artillery commander was one of the few General Officers who had ever expended his twenty-one rounds of pistol ammunition with genuinely serious intent.

Cheb was the first major Czechoslovakian city to be liberated by American forces. It was one of the 37 towns and cities that fell to 97th Division troops in the first two days of fighting along the Czechoslovakian border. The 27th of April passed without other incident save reconnaissance for the attack on the Cheb airfield.

Despite bad weather, which slowed operations in the entire sector, 3rd Bn.', .387th, made preparations to attack dug-in enemy positions. at the Cheb airfield. Company L of capt. Stanley Richard, had not been heavily engaged in the attack on Cheb. Consequently, this Company was selected for the mission with tanks and tank destroyers.

Following a 30-minute artillery barrage, supported by tanks from the 782nd Tank Bn. and by two platoons of the 820th TD Bn. 3rd Bn. attacked at 1500, April 28, 1945. For example Co C 782 Tk Bn destroyed two AT guns, two rocket projectors, several panzerfausts and four 20mm AA guns. Within a few hours, the airfield - was overrun and secured with extremely light casualties to 97th troops. Company L had suffered only 16 casualties.

Minimum German losses were 30 killed, 74 wounded and 632 prisoners. In this action Capt. Richard had proved himself worthy of his predecessor and was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action, because he received a wound in his right arm but had continued with the assault, disregarding his wound and the loss of his personal weapon.

On 29 April 1945 the Cheb area was turned over to the 18th Infantry Regiment of 1st Inf. Division (Big Red One) at 12.30 hours. Trident moved to occupy the frontage other new areas on the Czechoslovakian borders (for example Rozvadov - Ples - Sv. Katerina). Battle of Cheb ended...

28 Apr 1945 - The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

On April 28 units of the 387th Infantry Regiment, supported by artillery and armor, attacked and secured the Cheb airport. More than 600 prisoners were taken in a brief engagement. American casualties were very light.

29 Apr 1945 – the 97th on the 29th. It had advanced to Konstantinovy Lazne, Czechoslova

29 Apr 1945 – 97th infantry Division Command Posts –

Town: Weiden

Region: Bavaria

Country: Germany

29 Apr 1945 - James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

Attacked the Czechoslovak pocket near Weiden, Germany, on the 29th.

29 Apr 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Did not jump off this morning. Carried on routine administrative and maintenance matters. Patrolled forward area in preparation for attack following morning.

29 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

386th Infantry relatively quiet. 97th Division rear at Windshiedel from 21- 29 Apr 45 (Via 97th Division rear at Wetzlar, Alsfeld, Hersfeld) 386th UPS with Division rear.

29 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Were relieved by the First Division. Returned to Eger to join the first platoon and the Bn. Traveled by trucks to Waldsassen. Billeted.

29 Apr 1945 - 386th Infantry Regiment, Company L

Stationed at Weiden at the Region of Bavaria, Germany

29 Apr 1945 - Lionel M Gonzalez 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Subject: Daily Report To: Commanding Officer, 3rd BN 386th Inf.

1. Viechtach, Germany – Left old C.P. at Schwarzenfeld, Germany by motor at 1000 (Forward party left at 0630) and arrived at new C.P. at 1330.
2. Continued duties as XII Corp C.P. Guard.
3. Co. Strength: 156 EM - 7 Officers
4. Morale of the troops very high due to optimistic rumors concerning V-E day.

Signature T/5 L. M. Gonzales CO. Reporter CO "M"

29 Apr 1945 Abraham Nadler 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company G

After recovering in the field hospital, my father demanded that he be permitted to return to his company, which had fought its way into Czechoslovakia. Still in pain, the injury was not, in the mind of this just-turned 19-year-old, enough to keep him from his duties. Informed that he would be reassigned to another unit, my father refused under threat of court-martial.

You see, my father explained, these were the men that he trained with, and trusted. They were a "Band of Brothers." The Army let him find his way to his original company, which he did, arriving just after VE Day.

29 Apr 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Stornstein, Germany – 0830 Captain went to division to establish contact and obtain information. 0830 LT Lewis left CP to establish contact with 386th infantry regiment. LT Yenny left CP to establish contact with 303rd infantry regiment. 1030 LT Yenny returned to CP 1100 Troop commander returned to CP, CP visited by troop liaison officer. Received G-3 report #24. 1245 LT Lewis returned to CP

29 Apr 1945 -Malcom H. Bruner 922 FA Battalion, Battery B

On the 29th of April 1945, we moved from MUNCHENREUTH to DESLARN, Germany. At this place the gun sections again had to sleep in a barn, (T.S.), we were high in the mountains and had plenty of rain, snow, sleet, hail, and wind. It was a good place to leave. St. Sgt Smith was caught in the storm with our canvas shelter in his hands, and

when the sleet and hail started beating him in the face, he wanted to know what he should do. His would be advisers had taken off for the nearest barn.

29 Apr 1945 – XII Corps History by Lt COL George Byer –After Action Report

Bright with broken clouds. Moved CP at 0800 to Viechtach, opening about 1200.

General Patton and General Brown (Fifth Division) arrived about noon. General Patton said (1) there is some change of a surrender on Tuesday, (2) we turn southwest at Linz to move on Salzburg and Berchtesgaden, (3) to start for Linz tomorrow morning and (4) to exercise greatest economy in gas and rations. General Brown was briefed on operation, and is moving to Regen to setup his CP. The 11th CT (5th infantry Division) should close this evening, and the rest of the Division tomorrow night. General Patton said First Army will eventually take over our front as far as Regen, not quite enough in my opinion if we are to cross Danube as our rear will be vulnerable. General Koeltz, French Army, with staff (arrived at CP).

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Conferences and reconnaissance were initiated with the advance elements of the 18th infantry to take over our sector, and with the 2nd cavalry group for their relief in our sector. Preparations were made on 28 April 45 for the new mission, and the 387th infantry was relieved of responsibility in the old sector at 1230 29 April 45. The 387th Infantry moved to the vicinity Of ESLARN, Germany, on this date, Via VOHENSTRAUS __EIDEN, Relieving the 42nd Cavalry Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Group, on the front SVATA KATERINA–NOVA VES-- PLES.

The initial operation in the new sector consisted of patrol activity and screening which resulted in the capture of a German Colonel with his Headquarters and staff, who were in command of the “Werewolf” organization in this vicinity, his capture resulted in the subsequent round up of the members of this organization.

Picture: Werewolf (RBergstrom Collection)



29 Apr 1945 - The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

Division units on April 29 were ordered to shift a few miles southwest to the area near Weiden Germany. On April 30 the Trident Division came under the control of V Corps. The broad mission remained the protection of the left flank of the Third Army. Corps plans called for coordinated infantry and armored attack toward Pilsen, and anticipated eventual contact with the advancing Russian forces. By late April, German resistance was disintegrating throughout Europe. In early May, Russian forces were in control of Berlin; Hitler was reported dead. In this setting, V Corps began the attack.

The 97th had the 1st Infantry Division on its left flank and the 2nd Infantry Division on its right. The Trident Division's drive to Pilsen, which began on May 5, encountered very little resistance. Fearing harsh treatment at the hands of the Russians, German soldiers surrendered in large numbers to American units. More than 10,000 prisoners were taken by the 97th during the first 14 hours of the assault. The Division drove deeply into Czechoslovakia halting northwest of Pilsen. General Halsey had the Division headquarters moved to Tachov. The 97th became the first American division to establish a command post in Czechoslovakia. The command post was later moved east to Konstantinovy Lazne. Acting on orders from V Corps, the 16th Armored Division passed

through the lines of the 97th Infantry Division and entered Pilsen on May 6 as liberators. Some units of the 97th also went into the city later that day.

Battalion completely relieved the 2nd Cavalry Group and secured area. Patrols were sent out by E and F Companies. E Company sent out reconnaissance patrol. Patrol came under enemy AW and SA fire. Lt. Pound, patrol leader, was killed. Two other members of patrol killed and several others wounded. F Company sent one reconnaissance patrol to their front led by Lt. Zalenski. Patrol was successful. Received order to launch attack in morning.

(Editor Note: Zygmunt F Zalenski 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F and Donald J Pound 386th Infantry Regiment, Company E)

1945 – Unknown see resource link below

The major offensive action for the 97th was the seizure of Cheb (Eger) war factory, administration and communications center, site of a large airport. Intelligence reports indicated that there were about 1300 German troops (and Hungarian artillery school and other little units) on US combat team front.

CHEB is one of the oldest towns in Bohemia. The first time it is referred to is in the year 1061 as Egire (celtic genesis: river Agara/later German: Eger). It became known by its Czech name as late as in 1322.

Finally, in 1322, during the reign of John of Luxemburg Cheb was given by Bavaria to the Czech kingdom in lieu of a sum of money which it owed to Bohemia as a forfeit. It had a special status in the constitution of the Czech kingdom as an almost independent territory. In those days was the third most important town, after Praha and Kutna Hora, in Bohemia.

The most significant of Cheb's history was assassination of generalissimo Albrecht Wallenstein, general of imperial army, in February 1634.

The Munich capitulation (1938) was followed by a loss of large areas of Czechoslovak borderlands for Germany. Hitler captured too Cheb for show. Cheb was strong centre of Nazi party.

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Doughs met strong resistance from mortars, machine guns, small arms, 88s and rockets as the attack swept into the southwest section of the city. Mine fields and booby traps also impeded the advance. But despite stiff opposition, doughs drove-ahead and by 1800, nine hours after the attack began, they were in the center of the city. Most of the enemy garrison defending Cheb withdrew before the advancing infantrymen. Only scattered sniper resistance remained.

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1st Czechoslovak Independent Armored Brigade (6200 men) was incorporated into the 21st Army Group headed by Marshal B.L. Montgomery. From October 1944 to the war's end participated in the siege of heavily fortified Dunkirk (Dunkerque) with its strong but cut-off German defenders.

Only Marshal Montgomery agreed to send a symbolic, 140-men strong unit from the siege of Dunkirk which, on April 23, joined with the 3rd US Army and raised the Czechoslovak flag on its homeland border crossing on May 1, 1945 at Cheb.

At this point it is interesting to revert to an incident which occurred on the first day of the attack. Brig. General Sherman V. Hasbrouck - Division artillery commander - had come forward in his jeep with his aide (and driver pfc. Leslie I. Brooke) to observe the bombing and artillery bombardment incident to the attack.

Owing to the blocking of the main road to Bavarian little city Hundsbach he had used forest trails, which he had found road-blocked in some cases. Eventually he reached an unguarded road block in the woods to the south-west of Cheb, which from the map appears to be just south of Czech village Dolni Pelhrimov. Since it was approaching time for the bombardment, the General left his jeep and driver Brooke south of the road block and with his aide set out on foot for the high ground to the north-east.

After observing the bombardment he returned to find that his vehicle and driver had disappeared. Upon investigation it was determined that the road block had been removed, the vehicle driven northward through it in the direction of the German positions, and the road block then replaced. At this time General Hasbrouck was the recipient of small arms fire from the German side of the road block. He and his aide defended themselves with their pistols. Hearing the sound of our firing in the engagement at the railroad cut south of Cheb, he and his aide sensibly withdrew in that direction. they eventually reached the 3rd Battalion (387 IR) Command Post then half-way between village Svaty Kriz and the railroad cut.

General Hasbrouck was very much upset over the loss of his driver, whose fate he was

bound to determine. Borrowing a rifle squad from a nearby company, he returned with them across the open fields to the vicinity of the previously mentioned village, which was situated near a pond. Placing the automatic rifle team on the high ground commanding the village, he subdued civil opposition in the village and entered it with the remainder of the squad. His driver's carbine was located and he was able to determine that the vehicle and driver had been captured and were beyond reach. Today this is only an incident, but it was real and earnest then. "Boys from Trident" took pride in the fact that his division artillery commander was one of the few General Officers who had ever expended his twenty-one rounds of pistol ammunition with genuinely serious intent.

Cheb was the first major Czechoslovakian city to be liberated by American forces. It was one of the 37 towns and cities that fell to 97th Division troops in the first two days of fighting along the Czechoslovakian border. The 27th of April passed without other incident save reconnaissance for the attack on the Cheb airfield.

Despite bad weather, which slowed operations in the entire sector, 3rd Bn., 387th, made preparations to attack dug-in enemy positions at the Cheb airfield. Company L of Capt. Stanley Richard, had not been heavily engaged in the attack on Cheb. Consequently, this Company was selected for the mission with tanks and tank destroyers.

Following a 30-minute artillery barrage, supported by tanks from the 782nd Tank Bn. and by two platoons of the 820th TD Bn. 3rd Bn. attacked at 1500, April 28, 1945. For example Co C 782 Tk Bn destroyed two AT guns, two rocket projectors, several panzerfausts and four 20mm AA guns. Within a few hours, the airfield - was overrun and secured with extremely light casualties to 97th troops. Company L had suffered only 16 casualties.

Minimum German losses were 30 killed, 74 wounded and 632 prisoners. In this action Capt. Richard had proved himself worthy of his predecessor and was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action, because he received a wound in his right arm but had continued with the assault, disregarding his wound and the loss of his personal weapon.

On 29 April 1945 the Cheb area was turned over to the 18th Infantry Regiment of 1st Inf. Division (Big Red One) at 12.30 hours. Trident moved to occupy the frontage other new areas on the Czechoslovakian borders (for example Rozvadov - Ples - Sv. Katerina). Battle of Cheb ended...

source: <http://www.97thid.com/cgi-bin/index....261817188&cr=1> this link is no longer valid or available...

30 Apr 1945 - Donald J. Pound, 386th Infantry Regiment, Company E - KIA
Killed April 30, 1945, near Bohuslav, Czechoslovakia.

30 Apr 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

386th Infantry at 1230 A combat patrol of three men fired upon a jeep of white Bn reconnoitering for an OP. at 1530 EN patrol of one officer and 2 EM fired upon by D CO. at 0945 A Co. patrol ran into 25-30 men guarding a mine field. Tanks reported by PW in woods along highway. Another PW stated tanks were 8 KM east. Crashed B-17 observed civilians said plane crashed last Wednesday and everyone left plane 25 PS's apprehended. 386th UPS at Wundseidel.
2400 Patrols preparatory to jump off on attack tomorrow (Snowed on April 30th)

30 Apr 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Entrucked at 0800 to Eisendorf, combed woods in the area, moved at 2000 by jeeps to Schonau, slept in barns.

30 Apr 1945 - Lionel M Gonzalez 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Subject: Daily Report To: Commanding Officer, 3rd BN 386th Inf.

1. Maintained our C.P. at Viechtach, Germany.
2. Co. Strength; 156 EM – 7 Officers
3. Continued our daily routine without any change whatsoever.
4. Good rumors are keeping our morale way-up-high

Signature T/5 L. M. Gonzales CO. Reporter CO "M"

30 Apr 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Stornstein, Germany – HQtrains, CP and 3rd platoon at Stornstein, Germany. 1st and 2nd platoon maintaining contact and patrolling roads between 1st Bn 386th Regiment and 2nd BN 303rd regiment. Received G-3 report #25, received G-2 report #29, changed password. 1400 CP visited by troop liaison section. Received change 2 to HDM O #4. 1600 troop alerted for move. 1800 CP visited by Major Ramsey. Assisted G-2

30 Apr 1945 – Billy H Pruitt 303rd Infantry Regiment, Medical Detachment

On 30 April 1945, Near Barnau, Germany, Private Pruitt unhesitatingly went to the side of a wounded officer in the face of heavy enemy fire and administered aid. He then crawled to the side of another wounded man and administered aid until the casualty he was attending was again hit by enemy fire and died. Only when it was determined that further aid was useless did Private Pruitt withdraw to a place of safety.

30 Apr 1945 – XII Corps History by Lt COL George Byer –After Action Report

Overcast and some snow. The 11th (CT 5th Infantry Division) and some of 10th closed last night. Armor, 5th and 26th all jumped off this morning, 90th attacking to clear woods in the front. General Patton called about 1000 to get situation in Passau and Linz. Urged capture of Linz and to let him know the progress. General Koeltz decorated several offices had 0930. Left at 1330 to visit 11th Armor. Met General Brown on road and talked over his situation. Finally found armor's CP at Sonner, about 6 KM from

Austrian Border. Armor made a very limited advance yesterday due to (1) bad roads, (2) fairly well-organized resistance, and (3) starting from positions considerably further west of the border than we understood they had reached and consolidated. Their 48 – hour rest permitted the enemy to close up on them and form a line. Returned to CP about 2200, having stopped and 10th Infantry Enroute. Roads in poor shape from rain and snow, and traffic congestion very bad due to arrival of the 5th Division which closed less one infantry battalion.

30 Apr, Mon. – Grossadmiral Karl Doenitz proclaims himself head of the German state by Hitler's appointment.

Prisoners of War on 30 Apr 1945

Carlyle B Antel	30-Apr-45	Germany
Lloyal D Paugh	30-Apr-45	Germany

May

Combined Reports:

1 May 1945 - Overcast and snow. An immediate plan was made to attack at 0730 with three battalions abreast, on a front 2400 meters. The 303rd Infantry Regiment (with the 97th Meci RCN TRP) in the north, advanced its right flank about a 1,000 yards and cleared out a defended enemy roadblock. The attack jumped off on schedule, and the first 1st Battalion reached its objective at 1520, a sizable number of Germans were killed or captured. Shoved off early in the morning thru several small towns, capturing a German communications patrol. After separating, the first platoon moved through Picon into Hvoslany, the third to Sklaar, the second, fourth and Co. HQ. to Minichov, where a German tank approached and fired. Captured or killed enemy in all three towns. Third platoon contacted the 90 Division on our flank. The Burgemeister of Ronsperg traveled to Minichov and asked that we enter his town but reports persisted that 300 SS troops were there. One member of Item Co. was captured by the enemy. We traveled on poor roads and mostly on black out under terrific inclement weather. We entered Czechoslovakia, a few hours after the Nazis had moved out. Mined road blocks were removed by civilians, in spite of their protest, so troops and vehicles could travel the roads. Twelve were killed removing the road blocks. We fired several missions from this position, and again had trouble with the mud.

1 May 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Shoved off early in the morning thru several small towns, capturing a German communications patrol. After separating, the first platoon moved thru Picon into Hvoslany, the third to Sklaar, the second, fourth and Co. HQ. to Minichov, where a German tank approached and fired. Captured or killed enemy in all three towns. Third platoon contacted the 90 Division on our flank. The Burgemeister of Ronsperg traveled to Minichov and asked that we enter his town but reports persisted that 300 SS troops were there. One member of Item Co. was captured by the enemy.

1 May 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Jumped off in limited objective attack at 0730. Companies moved forward rapidly. Objective was only 7,000 yards away. Towns that were captured included Primda, Bohuslav, Bel Dvorce, N Sedliste, Labut, and 8 others. Battalion B.P. moved to Ujzed. Companies secured these areas for the night.

1 May 1945 - Tue – Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

1800 86th Infantry at Pleystein. Little action

1000 to George: find out when you will be released.

2000 White Bn New C.P. at Ujezed. George Co. to remain in Regimental rear

1952 Censorship: write anything that happened in Europe to Apr 16 except between 17-24 Apr, including and after 27 Apr.

1 May 1945 - Bernard Anthony Palli – 386th Infantry Regiment, Company ?

Killed in Action in Czechoslovakia Bernard Anthony Palli was subsequently transferred to the infantry. Private Palli was a member of the 386th Infantry, 97th Division. He was sent overseas in March of 1945. On May 1, 1945, he lost his life in Czechoslovakia from a land mine explosion

Prisoners of War on 1 May 1945

Irwin Ohrnstein	1-May-45	Germany
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1-2 May 1945 - Lionel M Gonzalez 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Subject: Daily Report To: Commanding Officer, 3rd BN 386th Inf.

1. Waldheim, Czechoslovakia.
2. We left Viechtach, Germany at 1530, 1 May 45 and traveled 105 miles to reach Waldheim, Czechoslovakia and established our C.P. There.
3. One of our jeeps was accidentally turned over on the gutter and PFC. Joe O. Martinez was evacuated to Collecting Co. Diagnosis Traumatic shock.
4. We traveled on poor roads and mostly on black out under terrific inclement weather.
5. Moral of troops very high, do to some extent to the fact that mail came in at last.
6. Co. Strength: 156 EM – 7 Officers.

Signature T/5 L. M. Gonzales CO. Reporter CO "M"

1 May 1945 Cornelius Hoogewerf 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company A

Staff Sergeant Cornelius Hoogewerf, Company "A", 303d Infantry Regiment for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 1 May 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Indiana.

1 May 1945 -Malcom H. Bruner 922 FA Battalion, Battery B

We entered BELANRADB, Czechoslovakia on May 1, 1945, a few hours after the Nazis had moved out. Mined road blocks were removed by civilians, in spite of their protest, so troops and vehicles could travel the roads. Twelve were killed removing the road blocks. We fired several missions from this position, and again had trouble with the mud.

1 May 1945 - Tue - 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Stornstein, Germany – 0800 troop visited by troop liaison. Received G-2 report #30, received G-3 report #26 1015 Sgt Kelly shot and fatally wounded by sniper fire while leading patrol in vicinity of Pavluv Studenec, Czechoslovakia. 1600 troop CP and 2nd and 3rd platoon closed. New area Mossback, Germany. 1st platoon on contact mission between 1st BN 386th infantry regiments and 2nd BN, 303rd infantry regiment. SGT Kelly was from 1st Platoon.

1 May 1945 – XII Corps History by Lt COL George Byer –After Action Report

Overcast and snow. Last night 4th Armor was turned over to us and was ordered to assemble south of Region. We are ordered to cross Danube and move on Salzburg and Berchtesgaden. Directed the 4th Armored and 26th Division do this operation, as logistics will not permit any other arrangement with too much delay...”

1 May 1945 - Tue – History Background - HEADQUARTERS 387TH INFANTRY APO 445 St. Sedliste, Czech. SUBJECT, After-Battle Report, (21 Apr 45 - 8 1.Day 45) TO: Commanding General, 97th Infantry Division, APO 445, c/o Postmaster, New York, New York ATTN. Historian.

It was reported that the enemy was active in the towns of BEZDEKOV and DUBEC Czechoslovakia, and immediate plan were made to attack at 0730 1 May 45 with three battalions abreast, on a front 2400 meters. The attack jumped off on schedule, and the first 1st Battalion reached its objective at 1520, with company B meeting light resistance in the town of BEZDEKOV and DUBEC. The 2nd Battalion advanced against very light resistance and by 1630 had extended the 1st Battalion's flank from BELA N RABD and at NIN. The 3rd Battalion advanced against light resistance and at 1930 all companies were in their objective with right flank at SCHONAU, with the exception of company K, which had run into resistance from to Mg's and a self-propelled artillery piece in the vicinity of SIDLAKAV, By 2110 Company K had taken this town and halted there for the night, continuing its advance in the morning and reaching its final objective at 0840 2 May 45.

1 May 1945 Robert Paul Fuller Last Shots for Patton's Third Army

On May 1, the 97th Infantry Division (97th I.D.) with headquarters at Weiden, Germany was assigned to the V Corps, First Army (April 29). The division had the 387th Infantry Regiment (387th Inf.), on its southern flank, which strengthened its frontal positions. Wooded areas were cleared out despite some enemy small arms fire and defended roadblocks. The towns of Bezdekor and Dubor were captured.

In the center the 386th Infantry Regiment launched a limited attack in order to gain better grounds for defense. The regiment moved forward about 6,000 yards with troops occupying Schonbrunn and St. Sedliste. The 303rd Infantry Regiment in the north, advanced its right flank about a 1,000 yards and cleared out a defended enemy roadblock. A sizeable number of Germans were killed or captured.

May 1945 -James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

At a race horse farm and fancy stables and chateau that we captured, Private Croft, from Chicago, grabbed a wine bottle and took a big swig. It was horse medicine for compaction instead of wine and was he sick!

When attacking some villages, the burgomeister's would come out waving a white flag. We learned not to trust them every time. German tanks would counter-attack and we would have to use bazookas and anti-tank grenades to drive them back.

Wiznowski was a one-man army who hated the SS troops and several times killed them instead of taking prisoners. If artillery pinned us down, he usually disappeared and after the shelling stopped, he would show up carrying all kinds of souvenirs taken from the Germans. Nobody interfered with him for it was hard to tell just how crazy he was. He carried a German hatchet on his belt and knives strapped to his legs, two pistols and a Cal. 45 grease gun. We captured some SS troops trying to cross the river and one of them spat on Wiznowski. He raked him with the grease gun, chopped off his head with the hatchet, and kicked his head down the road.

We carried grenades and 45 caliber pistol ammunition on our belts. Lt. Goldberg was issuing grenades and one made a loud pop. We scattered and dived for cover, but he held it in his hand and said, "One, two, three, four, five - it didn't go off!" One of my good friends, Charles Short, was an artist and carried a sketch pad, drawing soldiers and war scenes. He was killed by shrapnel and we had to gather his personal things to ship to his parents.

2 May 1945 - Duane C. Hess 386th Infantry Regiment, Company D

Staff Sergeant Duane C. Hess, was in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 2 May 1945, in Germany Staff Sergeant Duane C. Hess, Company "D", 386th Infantry Regiment for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 2 May 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Nebraska.

2 May 1945 Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Received orders from Regiment to hold present positions and establish defensive line. E Company sent out two patrols to towns of Mohov and Luzna. Towns were captured. We liberated 59 American soldiers. The Bourgemeister of Doly, a town about 2,000 yards forward of our stop position, surrendered the town. G Company was released to Battalion and moved into position in Battalion area. F Company jumped off for the town of Muchov and captured the town. Battalion maintained defense of area.

2 May 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

1530 White Bn liberated 59 allied PW's, captured 4 EN at Chov.
1800 386th Infantry in field. Provisional COS Hastily formed at Straggler collection points included members 655th Engineer brigade.
0800 George Co. reverts to 2nd Bn in position at 0800
2400 Cheb Operation completed. (Cheb and Seib are the same)

2 May 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Setup weapons in defense.

2 MAY 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Started an attack to the east at 8 A.M., toward Czechoslovakia border with plans to patrol. No enemy! At 5:30 P.M. we let up in the woods but because of intense cold and sleet, we moved into a nearby town for the night.

2 May 1945 William J Arterberry 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Private First Class William J. Arterberry, Company "D", 303d Infantry Regiment, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 2 May 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Oklahoma.

2 May 1945 Robert F Whittington 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Staff Sergeant Robert F. Whittington, Company "D", 303d Infantry Regiment for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 2 May 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Indiana.

2 May 1945 Max Randleman 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company E

On 2 May 1945, Sergeant Randleman was advancing with his company in an assault on Hermansreuth, Germany, when it came under withering enemy fire. With utter disregard of his own safety, Sergeant Randleman advanced alone over 100 yards of open terrain to a position from which he placed such effective machine gun fire upon the enemy positions that his company's advance could continue.

2 May 1945 William L Heidel 322nd Eng Bn, Company A

Sergeant William L. Heidel, Company "A", 322d Engineer Combat Battalion, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 2 May 1945, in Germany. Entered military service from Indiana.

2 May 1945 - Lewis W Twibell 387th Infantry Regiment, Company A

On 2 May 1945, while a member of a combat patrol which came under intense fire near Konraditz, Czechoslovakia, Private Twibell unhesitatingly volunteered to go to summon aid. He fearlessly crossed 1000 yards of open terrain with enemy fire falling all about him and brought up reinforcements which relieved the halted patrol.

2 May 1945 Alfred A Renzella 387th Infantry Regiment, Company B

Alfred A. Renzella, while serving with Company B, 387th Infantry Regiment, 97th Infantry Division, in action against enemy forces on 2 May 1945. Technical Sergeant

Renzella's intrepid actions, personal bravery and zealous devotion to duty exemplify the highest traditions of the military forces

2 May 1945 David C Ham 387th Infantry Regiment, HQTRS Company

Chaplain (Captain) David C. Ham, Headquarters 387th Infantry Regiment, for meritorious achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States during the period of 25 April 1945 to 2 May 1945, in Germany and Czechoslovakia. Entered military service from Kansas.

2 May 1945 Paul F Thon 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Private First Class Paul F. Thon, Company "I", 387th Infantry Regiment, for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 2 May 1945, in Czechoslovakia. Entered military service from Michigan.

2 May 1945 Marion E Erlandson 387th Infantry Regiment, Medical Detachment

Technician Third Grade Marion E. Erlandson, (then Technician Fourth Grade), Medical Detachment, 387th Infantry Regiment for heroic achievement in a military operation against an armed enemy of the United States on 2 May 1945, in Czechoslovakia. Entered military service from Minnesota.

2 May 1945 John B Hemingway 387th Infantry Regiment

Captain John B. Hemingway, 387th Infantry Regiment, for meritorious achievement in military operations against an armed enemy of the United States during the period of 26 April 1945 to 2 May 1945, in Germany and Czechoslovakia. Entered military service from Iowa.

2 May 1945 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Mossback, Germany - Troop alerted to move back to Stornstein, Germany. Changed password. Received G-2 report #31, received G-3 report #27, received operation instruction #15. 1410 troop minus 1st platoon closed Stornstein, Germany. 1st platoon continuing mission as contact between 1st BN 386th infantry and 2 BN 303rd infantry regiment. 1500 troop assigned man from G-2 section for diversion. Church services held at troop CP for both Protestants and Catholic faiths by two division chaplains.

2 May 1945 XII Corps History by Lt COL George Byer –After Action Report

On 2 May General Irwin's diary records, "about 1400 we received word from Army that there is a radical change in plans; that we are not to cross the Danube; and to limit the number of troops we send to the east. Apparently we are to invade Czechoslovakia..." and that is what we did."

Captain Thomas M Stewart "“through top secret information obtained at Karlback (just outside Eslarn) we learned of the presence of 200 allied PW's – both American and British – and a stable of Lippizaner and Arabian horses about 10 miles from us across the Czech border. Colonel Reed, Group CO, called me in to attempt to bargain with the Germans, try to affect the release of the PW's and secondarily, the horses, to the American lines."

For more After Action Reports: (Byer tells an amazing story about the horses!!)
<http://www.90thdivisionassoc.org/90thDivisionFolders/mervinbooks/XII/XII1603/XII16031.htm>

3 May 1945 Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Continued defense of area and handled administrative details.

3 May 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

386th Infantry reported by French prisoners that several hundred bodies were burned about 20 days ago at Tachov. These bodies were those of allied prisoners forming from prison camp at Chehenwald and killed on way. 600 men leaving prison camp at Zwickan – 200 killed on way by Nazis. These were allied civilian prisoners. PWs state counter attack can be expected from north east at Tachov tonight.

0100 George spotted 2 men prowling around. Halted them.. They ran.

0700 George patrol action

1145 PW captured by "E" Co. reports Co. of engineers (1 off, 6 NCO, 80 EM) bivouacked and withdraw. They are willing to surrender because of lack of food. White Bn says 2 PW's state no German soldiers in town of Bor. Roads leading into Bor is mined.

3 May 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Were relieved by the second division. Walked four kilometers to trucks, boarded, moved to Neustadt E.N. in division reserve.

3 MAY 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Up at 5:30 and into our positions in the woods. Hung around all day and at 7 P.M. we moved up 2000 yards to the Czech border. Spent the night in the woods and froze all night long.

3 May 1945 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Stornstein, Germany – Received G-2 #32 report, Received G-3 report #28, received change 3 to ADM 0 #4, received change in password. 0800 1st platoon relieved of mission and moved to Floss, Germany 1540 CP visited by G-2 Col Kilpatrick.

3 May 1945 History Background

The 23rd Infantry relieved combat team 387th on 3 May 45 and assumed responsibility for this sector at 1140 3 May 45, all elements of the 387th infantry closed into Division reserve in the vicinity of NEUTADT, Germany, by 1555, 3 May 45. The 387th Infantry, after 36 hours rest, closed into a new assembly area in the vicinity ST SEDLISTE, Czechoslovakia, still in division Reserve, On 5 May 45 the 3rd Battalion attacked in the direction of PAVLOWITZ—ZADUB—KONSTANTINOVY—NECTINY. Vehicles were forced to join battalion by detour over route N HOSPODA—SVOISIN—CERNOSIN.

3-4 May 1945 - Lionel M Gonzalez 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Subject: Daily Report To: Commanding Officer, 3rd BN 386th Inf.

1. Left Waldheim, Czechoslovakia at 1000, 3 May 45: and arrived at Wosent, Czechoslovakia at 1230.
2. Our troops are maintaining a defensive position in this sector. There has been no action with the enemy so far.
3. Co. Strength; 156 EM – 7 Officers
4. PFC. Earl C. Samstag was awarded the Bronze Star and a seven (7) day furlough to go with it. PFC Loy O. Collins was also awarded the Bronze Star. (More information on these awards may be obtained from me if any publicity is desired by the Special Service officer.)
5. Hot meals was served today (4 May 45) and it really boosted our morale.

Signature T/5 L. M. Gonzales CO. Reporter CO "M"

3 May 1945 Elements of the 97th Division are at Flossenbug with German Civilians burying the dead. Film starts at 02:18:58 (LIB 6259)

http://www.ushmm.org/online/film/display/detail.php?file_num=5528

4 May 1945 Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Battalion C.O. left for a three-day leave to London. Battalion received orders to continue the attack 5 May in zone to capture city of Stribro (Mies). Plans were made for the following morning's jump off.

4 May 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

386th Infantry St. Sedliste, Czech. Enemy action almost negative during period. 5 round of 155 MM artillery fell on Tachov at 0900 from North east. At 1045 our artillery forced approximately 30 EN to leave woods and move into Fysozany. 133 PW's captured. Civilians reported leaving Bor on all roads. 2 Green Flares and one white flare seen in the vicinity of Bor at 1850. Civilians reported 15 officers in Daby are forcing them to dig in. Two PW's reported 3 COS of EN in woods around Bohuslov, Burgermeister confirmed this at 0900 this morning. 10 EN seen at water mill at 1215 by White. White reports able CO and Red Bn receiving artillery fire at 1215. Reduced RD BLK on E Edge of Bor at 1400.

0700 George patrol action.

2230 George to jump off tomorrow at 1000 for Philsen.

4 May 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Continued Division reserve.

4 May 1945 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Place: Stornstein, Germany – 0730 Received operation instruction #17, received G-3 report #30, received G-2 report #34, received order of new mission for troop by way of troop liaison sect. 1000 Received G-3 #29 report, Received G-2 report #33, Received operation instruction #16, changed password. 1000 1st platoon and ½ headquarters going to show at divisional headquarters. 1700 1st platoon and ½ headquarters platoon returned

from show. 1745 elements of 2nd and 3rd and headquarters platoon went to show. 2000 elements of 2nd, 3rd and headquarters platoons returned from show.

4 MAY 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Sent patrols into Czechoslovakia.

5 May 1945 97th infantry Division Command Posts

Town: Tachov

Region: Bohemia

Country: Czech

5 May 1945 - Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

Finally we ended up in Czechoslovakia – in a small town call Kauseeloupey about 8 miles east of Pilsen. Pilsen is known for its beer. We had a Warrant Officer, who was from Portland, who was quite a character and he also liked his beer.

He came and told us that there was a brewery a couple of blocks away and he was assigned to get a contingent of troops to seal off the brewery to prevent looting. He strongly hinted that we round up all the buckets, and containers we could find and make the trip to the brewery. We filled up several, and headed back to our area and as we did we passed him and his contingent heading for the brewery to close it down.

On our travels we also came across a sauerkraut factory, which you could smell from quite a distance. We had no suggestions to visit there before they posted guards.

5 May 1945 Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Battalion jumped off at 1000. E Company, plus same H Company attachments, attacked in left; F Company, plus same H Company attachments, on right; and G Company, plus same H Company attachments, following F Company. Initially, movement was slow, but soon Battalion moved rapidly ahead. F Company moved on tanks up main highway leading to Pilsen. F Company encountered many road blocks. F Company secured objective which was 17 miles away at 1945 that night. E Company tanks ran out of gas, and two platoons became separated from their company. Company Commander requested to remain where he was that night to locate platoons and reorganize and move forward in the morning. Permission was granted. E Company remained at Malkovice. The Battalion captured about 7,000 P.W.'s and liberated 600 Russian P.W.'s. In movement forward, Battalion captured 24 towns including Bor (Had), Holostrevz, Ceskovice, Benesovice, Stribro. G Company moved into Stribro (Meis). Battalion secured area for the night and prepared its attack toward Pilsen in the morning.

5 May 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

1800 386th Infantry St. Sedliste, Czech. Enemy action has been in form of delaying action with sporadic artillery fire in left half of zone. About 50 rounds of 150 MM) Two PW's report 40,000 SS in Beneschau, 35 KM south west of Prague with ammo and POL dumps in woods around the city. 245 PW's captured. White C.P. to move to **Bor**. 1000 George jumped off for Pilsen.

1100 George Co. reports little opposition being met, advancing steadily.
1145 George Co. now has 150 PW's on hand. Dillon reports some in bad shape. Some were Russians.
2000 White C.P. now at Stribo, Czech. 97th division rear at Wesiden from 29 Apr – 05 May 1945

5 May 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Entrucked at 0930, traveled thru Wieden to N. Sedliste, close to the front. Billeted.

5 May 1945 - 386th Infantry Regiment, Company L

Stationed at Tachov, in the Region of Bohemia, Czechoslovakia

5 May 1945 - Lionel M Gonzalez 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Subject: Daily Report To: Commanding Officer, 3rd BN 386th Inf.

1. Left old C.P. at Bazantov, Czechoslovakia by motor at 1400 arriving at Doly, Czechoslovakia at 1700.
2. Co. Strength 155 EM – 7 Officers
3. No direct contact with the enemy so far
4. Moral of the troops seem very high.

Signature T/5 L. M. Gonzales CO. Reporter CO "M"

5 May 1945 - LOMBARDI, FRANK, Cpl., Battery B, 389th Field Artillery, Hamden:

"Put in a good word for the Czechs, they really tried to help us out. On the outskirts of Pilsen the women offered us food and even offered to wash our clothes. We couldn't take them up on it, because the anti- fraternization rules were in force. The way those people work — why even on V- E Day they started to plow and plant the ground right around the guns of our battalion."

5 May 1945 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Place: Stornstein, Germany and Vicinity of Tachov, Czechoslovakia
0730 2nd and 3rd platoon moved out on new mission (contact mission)
1200 Commander General and 1st platoon move out on mission, changed password.
1530 CP and troop trains left for new area
1800 troop trains and CP close new area.
1930 received message from troop commander that he would not return to CP tonight.

5 May 1945 History Background – WHEN THE BELL RANG

The 97th Division was one of the units chosen for the assignment. Ordered into position along the, south sector near Widen, Germany, the 97th had the 1st Infantry Division on its left flank and the 2nd Infantry Division on the right. Col. Lansing's 386th and Col. Forse's .303rd Combat teams attacked simultaneously at 1000, May 5, and progressed so rapidly that the 97th Division Headquarters was able to follow across the Czechoslovakian border four hours later. Consequently, the 97th became the first U.S. division to set up a camp in Czechoslovakia.

During the first 15 hours of the campaign, infantrymen chalked up gains of 15 miles and by- next afternoon, 97th troops had advanced up to 28 miles. All enemy resistance along the division front disintegrated; German soldiers surrendered en masse. An entire enemy field artillery battalion surrendered to Captain Oliver M. Smith.

Communications officer, 387th Infantry Regt. Col. Long's 387th was in reserve during the first day of the attacks but it roared into battle at 0600, May 6th advancing with the other combat teams, despite its heavily mined sector and all bridges blown in its path. The 922nd FA Bn., part of the combat team, remained in the lines lending support to the other regiments throughout the attack.

In 30 hours-from the signal to attack until the order to halt all advances-the Trident Division drove 28 miles along a 25-mile front to clear 700 square miles of enemy held territory. During the first 14 hours of the assault 10,696 prisoners were taken.

One hundred and twenty communities including Mesto, Tepla, Lestkov, Mesto Touskov and Kladruby, were liberated by the 97th elements in the swift advance.

All offensive activity suddenly ceased pending the announcement by- governmental heads of the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union that the war in Europe officially was ended. The last shot in the European conflict had been fired.

5 MAY 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Plans changed; moved out at 9:30 A.M., through Malmemy and into Czech. Took town of Drmanl after 15 mile march. 75 prisoners were taken by surprise.

6 May 1945 Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

The 16th Armored Division passed through Battalion at 0700 this morning. The highway leading to Pilsen was jammed with traffic extending at least 20 miles. Battalion jumped off at 0930. E Company, with 2nd HMG platoon H Company attached; F Company 2nd section, 1st HMG platoon attached; G Company, with 1st section, 1st HMG platoon H Company attached; and 81-mm mortar platoon in general support. Movement forward was rapid, and Battalion was on objective by 1130. Battalion was ordered to hold and not advance to Pilsen. Battalion secured and held an area which was 5 miles from Pilsen. Battalion captured 21 towns including Kozolupy, Mesto, Touskov, Ceminy, and Vejprnice. We captured at least 2,800 P.W.'s and huge quantities of German military equipment. The highways and roads were jammed all the way back to rear with P.W.'s. Battalion secured area for night in preparation for movement forward the following day. Battalion C.P. moved to Kozolupy.

6 May 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

1800 386th Infantry Atribro, Czech. Scattered fanatics sniping on personnel and vehicles. Wholesale surrendering. Withdrawal of a few units'. PW's captured: 2,000 have captured battery of 105MM guns and 890 men. (Horse-drawn unites) 0430 Td's and Tanks out of gas to support Rifle Company in attack.

0730 all companies jumped off at 0700
2730 White New C.P. at Kozolnjay, Czech
2140 Improve military courtesy.
2245 George reports all O.K. contact maintained on flanks. No enemy activity. 386th left Wunsiedel for Tachou.

6 May 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Shoved off at 0600 in trucks, then on foot when we encountered road blocks. Passed forward elements of the 386 Infantry, Item Co. (CO I, 386th) jumping off in lead of the Bn. Passed thru Zadab, Konstantinsbad and other towns to Nichetin, the third platoon separating to screen other villages. Remainder of the company billeted in Nichetin, collecting hundreds of prisoners taken during the day. A German convoy, with officers in charge, surrendered intact.

6-7 May 1945 - Lionel M Gonzalez 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Subject: Daily Report To: Commanding Officer, 3rd BN 386th Inf.

1. Left our old C.P. at Doly, Czechoslovakia at 1530. 6 May 45. And arrived at Mies, Czechoslovakia at 1630, 6 May 45.
2. Co. Strength 155 EM – 7 Officers
3. Strong rumors are responsible for an exceptionally excellent morale among our men.
4. Our routine of evacuating prisoners has continued.

Signature T/5 L. M. Gonzales CO. Reporter CO "M"

6 MAY 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Jumped off at 8 A.M. and after taking one small town moved into Marienbad without firing a shot. A lovely resort city turned into Nazi Hospitals. Moved on to take three towns on tanks. Spent the night in an old farm house, in Hirschau.

1945 - GORSKI, BENJAMIN J., T/ 5, Battery C, 303rd Field Artillery, New Haven:

"Those Germans had a wonderful country, rich farms and no wasteland. I don't see what they were fighting for." He told how good the champagne was and he has a good story about a liberated Pole who set himself up as Burgomeister at Hermannsreuth, Germany, as soon as the Americans drove the Germans out.

6 May 1945 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Vicinity of Tachov, Czechoslovakia

0245 2 prisoners captured by CP guard EVAC. Changed password. 1400 CP and trains plus 1st platoon started for new location.

1815 closed new location, Lestkou, Czech. 1900 received G-2 report # 35 received G-3 report #31.

6 May 1945 – Czech Republic

At 8 a.m. on May 6, 1945, tanks from the U.S. 2nd and 97th Infantry Divisions and the 16th Armored Division entered the streets of Plzen in what was then Czechoslovakia and were greeted as liberators by its grateful residents.

6 May 1945 History Background

On 6 May 45 the 2nd Battalion remained in the vicinity of ST SEDLISTE, as Division reserve, and the 1st Battalion also in Division reserve departed for a located new assembly area in the vicinity of CERNOSIN, at which point Regiment forward CP was located.

The attacked of the 3rd Battalion jumped off at 0600 6 May 45, and progress was slow due to numerous road blocks and blown bridges which were encountered en route, The advance continued against no resistance and the leading elements reached the final objective at 2020.

The remainder of the Battalion closed in at 2130. The enemy continued to surrender in large numbers, our troops taking 2185 prisoners in this action.

This attack resulted in the capture of a, 16 car hospital train with medical personnel, in the vicinity of NIZKA; capture of 13th Germany army Corps headquarters at PERNAREC, Czechoslovakia, commanded by Lt. Gen. Weisenberger; and numerous small units in the vicinity of NECTINY. Also captured in NECTINY was Colonel Karl Friehl, General staff Corps, 13 th German army corps. The 1st and 3rd Btry's of the 44th Arty Rcn Bn were captured at SKUPEC.

6 May 1945 97th Infantry Division - issued by Brigadier General M. B. Halsey, commanding the 97th Infantry Division

Deep in the heart of Czechoslovakia, the fighting men of Brig. Gen. M. B Halsey's 97th Infantry Division grimly slashed ahead to Pilsen against sporadic Nazi resistance. Exploding 88s, chattering German machine guns and whining sniper bullets offered proof enough, that the war wasn't over, even if the end Were in sight. While America prematurely celebrated Germany's unconditional surrender, members of the Trident Division fully were aware of Field Marshal Von. Kesselring declaration that his Seventh Army never would surrender and that the SS coordinator for the Czechoslovakian area repeatedly emphasized the Nazi defenders would fight, to the bitter end, that the German-controlled radio in Prague still called upon all Nazis to resist Allied forces by every available means.

At this very moment, the 97th was the point of a wedge, a wedge relentlessly hammering Kesselring's defending forces. On its left flank was the famed 1st Infantry Division, on its right, the veteran 2nd Division.

7 May 1945- The 97th Division received the cease-fire order on 7 May

7 May 1945 97th infantry Division Command Posts

Town: Konstantinovy Lazne

Region: Bohemia

Country: Czech

7 May 1945 - James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

97th had advanced to Konstantinovy, Czechoslovakia, when it received the cease-fire order on 7 May. Part of the division was in Teplá where the German 2nd Panzer Division had surrendered. The troops used the monastery there as a POW camp for the Germans. 97th Infantry Division was credited with firing the last official shot in the European Theatre of Operations during World War II. This shot was fired by PFC Domenic Mozzetta of Company B, 387th Infantry Regiment, 97th Division, fired at a German sniper near Klenovice, Czechoslovakia shortly before midnight, May 7, 1945.

7 May 1945 - Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

Note: Kauseeloupey about 8 miles east of Pilsen.

At this time we were living on a second floor of a small house with an outside stair. Just before V - E Day, as two of us were coming down the outside stairs, we saw a man at the bottom who was literally skin and bones – a living skeleton covered with skin – he could not have weighed more than 75 lbs. When he saw us he dropped to his knees in front of us – and with his finger wrote 25,000 in the sand. Then he took his finger and ran it across his neck – as to cut his throat. Then he wrote 5,000 babies and did the same thing. He then pointed north. We called the officer who took the man in charge – and realized later that he had been in a concentration camp and was the victim of the Holocaust.

(Note: Terezin Concentration Camp north of Prague, Czech Republic - Russian forces liberated Terezin on May 8, 1945.)

7 May 1945 Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Received orders to hold position, establish road blocks, and set up Military Government.

7 May 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

1800 386th Infantry Kozolupy, Czech. Surrendering of many small units in zone. PW's captured: 1500. Sabotage in entire zone. White reports NO PW's at 1050, but has evacuated 2800 and 15 vehicles within past 24 hours.

White reports they have no personnel in Bn that speaks Russian with any degree of fluency. White reports airplane motors, approximately 35-50, 150 truckloads of parts and material for airplanes plus one firefighting trailer and four motors and generators on trailers for use of fighting equipment, rubber hoses of all sizes plus flexible hosing, shipping boxes and numerous boxes of plane repair equipment between 1500 – 2000 drums of airplane gas, oil in 5 & 55 Gallon drums (Approximately 5,000), 1000 containers of paint from 1-10 gallon size. Grease and paint in tubes and cans. Black cloth, water proofing cloth, flexible glass, leather hides and other material approximately 10 2 ½ loads.

0816 – “HALT IN PLACE”

2100 George reports all O.K. WIA: Roland E. Swanson (EVAC), Alvin L. Nichols (EVAC), WM McCutchen, Returned to duty.

97th division rear at Tachov, Czech from 05-07 May 1945

UPS 386th Tachov, Czech, loaded trucks, moved in AM from Wunseidel to Castle in Tachov until 15 May 1945.

7 May 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Left the first platoon, with attachments from the second and fourth, to guard 800 prisoners in a former German youth camp in Nichein. The rest of the company entrucked to **Preitenstein, occupied the castle belonging to the Earl of Mesdorf**, and then moved to Ratschs, Where the third platoon joined the second, fourth and Co HQ. Billeted. Received "Cease firing" orders.

7 May 1945 - 386th Infantry Regiment, Company L

Stationed at Konstantinovy Lazne, in the Region of Bohemia, Czechoslovakia

7 MAY 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

Up at 6 A.M. and ready to move out when the order came to cease all forward movement. Germany had surrendered! Rode back to Marienbad and into luxurious hotels.

7 May 1945 - ANDREW C, JR. NELSON 303rd FA Bn, Battery C

"Maybe some of those Germans are decent but most of them put on a good act. They pat you on the back with one hand and you know they were ready to stab you in the back with the other — if they had a chance. I'll tell you what I mean. We were taking some German soldiers back as prisoners of war and the German women were crying and waving to them. We came back on the same road later without the prisoners and the same women were waving and smiling at us."

7 May 1945 Jim Faulkner 387th Infantry Regiment, Company B

As a squad leader fighting in Klenovice, Czechoslovakia, Faulkner that night organized a rescue attempt that led to the last shot fired in the European Theater of Operations in World War II. "I'm humbled by it," Faulkner said. "(The memorial) signifies the effort put into combat — those men on the ground who faced the enemy with rifles and bayonets. "The actual M-1 Garand rifle that fired the final shot sits in stone on top of the monument. At Faulkner's suggestion, the monument includes the inscription " . . . and they laid down their arms and peace was in the land. "Faulkner says the story of that last shot is significant because it was part of a rescue attempt and not an effort to kill an enemy soldier. In a letter to his mother dated Dec. 10, 1945, from Ikaho, Japan, while Faulkner was still serving in the Army, he wrote about the incident. He said he and his comrades discovered that his outfit, Co. B, 387th Infantry Regiment, fired the final shot of the war. The series of events began to unfold when T/Sgt. Steve Lumbert was wounded in a short battle with a Waffen SS outfit. One of the German soldiers fired at Lumbert as he was climbing over a large tree. At that time, a soldier named Babb, who carried the squad's Browning automatic rifle, fired at a noise to the right of Lumbert."It had just turned dark; there were pretty heavy casualties. We had 30 men to their 200," Faulkner said. After members of the company broke off contact in the firefight, they realized Lumbert had been left behind. Faulkner then organized a squad to retrieve Lumbert. While rescuing Lumbert, Babb kept the Germans' heads down with intense fire from the BAR. While three of the squad went to get Lumbert, Dominic Mozzetta fired one last shot at the Germans as the squad pulled out. It wasn't until three weeks after the incident that Faulkner learned from the division intelligence officer that Mozzetta's shot

was the last shot fired in World War II in Europe. "It was a successful effort to rescue one of ours, not to take one of theirs," he said.

7 May 1945 - ALFRED W. DACUNTO,, Cpl., 389th Field Artillery, Battery B, New Haven:

"What got me was the ten and twelve year old kids in the German Army. It's a hell of a thing to have to fight kids like that."

7 May 1945 -Malcom H. Bruner 922 FA Battalion, Battery B

ON May 7th 1945, we moved to PERNANEC (Pernharz), Czechoslovakia, where we were on VE Day.

7 May 1945 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Lestkou, Czechoslovakia –

0430 commander general and 2nd platoon moved to Zhorec

0500 commander general and 2nd platoon moved to Zhorec to Loucky, Czech and led attach of 2nd BN 303rd infantry via Utery to Benzverou. No resistance encountered.

0930 troop commander, Sgt. Raschel (Kaschel) & T/5 Gonzales capture. Lt Gen Weinberger, Cofs of Gen Beck of the 16th Corps.

0945 received message from division – all offensive action has ceased. Change passwords.

1015 received message from 2nd platoon that they were just outside Luckov and had freed 50 Russians.

1030 1st platoon moved with 3rd BN 387th infantry

1310 received message from division a plane type unknown carrying a representative of German High Camp will arrive at airport four and ½ miles south of Pilsen at airport approximately 1530.

1400 arrived another message regarding plane. DO NOT REPEAT DO NOT FIRE ON THIS PLANE. 1600 troop trains and troop closed Cesteton, Czech.

1800 CP visited by liaisons, received G-2 report # 86, received G-3 report #32. Troop captured a total of 150 prisoners that were evacuated.

7 May 1945 Albert S Traub 97th Signal Company

Chief Warrant Officer Albert S. Traub, 97th Signal Company, for meritorious service in military operations against an armed enemy of the United States during the period of 8 February 1945 to 7 May 1945, in Germany and Czechoslovakia. Entered military service from Illinois.

7 May 1945 97th Infantry Division - issued by the Orientation Branch, Information and Education Division, Hq., USFET... Brigadier General M. B. Halsey, commanding the 97th Infantry Division

At 0816, May 7, the order flashed: "Halt in place!"

But even as men of the Trident Division waited for the official announcement of the surrender to come from Washington, London and Moscow, a lone German fighter plane swooped down to strafe the CP of the 3rd Bn., 303rd Regt. The 97th had learned the hard

way that Nazis die-hard. It was with grim satisfaction that this new division also learned that Germans die.

7 May 1945 History Background for 387th Infantry Regiment

The 387th Infantry moved to the vicinity of CIHANA, Czechoslovakia, on 7 May 45 to tactical quartering areas in accordance with verbal orders from division, the main effort in this area consisted of the control and handling of prisoners and displaced persons.

With the surrender of Germany on 8 May 45 the 387th Infantry had fully completed its combat mission against Germany.

7 May 1945 - The 97th Infantry Division during World War II

On May 7 all American units were directed to halt offensive operations pending announcement that the war in Europe was officially ended. Although there were violations, both sides observed a general cease-fire. On the same day Lieutenant General Karl Weisenberger, commander of German XIII Corps, formally surrendered at the headquarters of the 97th Infantry Division after preliminary arrangements had been made by Colonel William D. Long, commander of the 387th Infantry Regiment. General Weisenberger had learned from his intelligence sources that General Hasbrouck spoke German, and asked to meet with him. In a brief conversation, the enemy commander complimented General Hasbrouck on the discipline and other professional qualities of his troops.

Soldiers of the 97th Infantry Division were involved in some of the last hostile actions to take place in the European Theater of Operations. For example, Private First Class Domenic Mozzetta of Company B, 387th Infantry Regiment, fired at a German sniper in the woods near Klenovic Czechoslovakia shortly before midnight on May 7, 1945. Another incident took place on V-E Day. As the men of the Trident Division waited for the official announcement that the war in Europe was over, a lone German fighter plane swooped down and strafed the command post of the 3rd Battalion, 303rd Infantry Regiment. The defense fire against this plane was among the last official combat action in the European conflict.

Prisoners of War on 7 May 1945

Francis X Connors 7-May-45 Germany

7-10 May 1945 History Background

The 387th Infantry remained in the vicinity of CIHANA until 10 May 45 when the Regt. was relieved by elements of the 16th Armed Division. 69th Armed Inf. Bn relieved the 1st Battalion of the 387thg infantry, 26th Tank Bn relieved the 3rd Bn; and the 397th Armed FA Bn relieved 2 nd Bn. The relief was completed by 1445 on 10 may 45. The Battalions, as relieved, moved by motor shuttle to an assembly area in the vicinity of ST SEDLISTE, Czechoslovakia

8 May 1945 - Chas. C. Francis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Daily New Report - Co. "M" 386th Inf.

The company was still billeted in homes in the town of Mies, Czechoslovakia. The strength of the company remained the same – 155 EM and 7 Officers. There was no training scheduled prepared. The troops continued the process and evacuation of Germany Prisoners of war. The company instituted a motorized patrol on the roads leading into Mies. The morale of the men was high. A movie was shown in the town for the benefit of the troops. ***** Chas. C. Francis **** Company Reporter

8 May 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Screened woods, captured prisoners and returned to billet.

8 May 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

ETO war ends

0700 Pay day

1730 prepare to be relieved by units of 1th armored division tonight.

8 May 1945 – Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Continued with Military Government and police of area. Received warning order that Battalion was to move to new area.

8 May 1945 Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

"On this day in 1945, I and about 100 others in my unit were in Southern Germany 'advancing' (or just walking) further into Germany. It was an elevated area, and we could see for miles all around. The sun was shining brightly and it was a very nice day. Must have been about 10 AM. Four American Sherman tanks came rumbling down the road behind us. The lead tank stopped, and the man in the turret said, "Who's in charge?". Our Captain Wright stepped forward and said, "I'm Capt. Wright". The tanker said, "I just been told on the radio that the GD war is over, and I have 90 rounds of ammunition left. Do you have any targets?" Capt. Wright said, "No, we've not seen a German all morning." The tanks reversed direction and went back. Captain Wright said, "Everybody take a 10 minute break". After that, we did the same, and set up camp in suitable area. Later that day, the word got to Pres. Truman, and he said something like "Thank God, it's over. Let's call May 8 'VE Day'".

8 May 1945 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Cesteton, Czechoslovakia & Bezourzice Czechoslovakia

0800 troop commander made trip to division headquarters.

0930 troop alerted to another move. Changed password.

1330 troop left Cesteton, Czech for new location.

1500 troop closed Bezourzice, Czech. 1600 CP visited to troop liaison.

1600 received operation instruction #21, received G-2 message #39, received G-3 message #33

8 May 1945 - The 97th Infantry Division during World War II

On Victory in Europe (V-E) Day, May 8, contact was made with a Russian patrol several miles north of Pilsen near the town of Zlutice.

8 May 1945 -Malcom H. Bruner 922 FA Battalion, Battery B

On May 9th we moved to Perejor (Purchau), Czechoslovakia and passed through Mies, Czechoslovakia on our way. While at Perejor we got out howitzers in good shape. Swimming in a nearby lake was one form of recreation. We moved through BARREUTH, Germany to SCHAMMELSDORD, Germany from PEREJOR.

9 May 1945 Alfred B Graham 365th FA Bn

Lieutenant Colonel Alfred E. Graham, 365th Field Artillery Battalion for meritorious service in military operations against an armed enemy of the United States during the period of 1 April 1945 to 9 May 1945, in Germany and Czechoslovakia. Entered military service from Oklahoma.

9 May 1945 XII Corps History by Lt COL George Byer –After Action Report

“A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GERMAN HIGH COMMAND SIGNED THE UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER OF ALL GERMAN LAND, SEA AND AIR FORCES IN EUROPE TO THE ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY AIR FORCE AND SIMULTANEOUSLY TO THE SOVIET HIGH COMMAND AT 0140 HOURS CENTRAL EUROPEAN TIME, 7 MAY UNDER WHICH ALL FORCES WILL CEASE ACTIVE OPERATIONS AT 0001 B HOURS 9 MAY.

EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY ALL OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS BY ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY AIR FORCE WILL CEASE AND TROOPS WILL REMAIN IN PRESENT POSITIONS. MOVES INVOLVED IN OCCUPATIONAL DUTIES WILL CONTINUE. DUE TO DIFFICULTIES OF COMMUNICATION THERE MAY BE SOME DELAY IN SIMILAR ORDERS REACHING ENEMY TROOPS SO FULL DEFENSIVE PRECAUTIONS WILL BE TAKEN...”

9 May 1945 - Chas. C. Francis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Daily New Report - Co. "M" 386th Inf.

The company remained in the battalion housing area in the town of Mies, Czechoslovakia. The strength of the company remained the same – 155 EM and 7 Officers. The company continued the processing of German prisoners of war and patrolling the town of Mies. The morale of the troops was very high. Liqueur rations were issued to the enlisted men in the company for the first time. Signature *****
Chas. C. Francis ***** Company Reporter

9 May 1945 - Everett C. Silvia 386th Infantry Regiment, Company ?

Captain Everett C. Silvia, was in military operations against an armed enemy of the United States during the period of 1 April 1945 to 9 May 1945, in Germany and Czechoslovakia.

9 May 1945 Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

Plans on the way to be relieved by the 16th Armored Division. Continuing with Military Government.

Note: War was officially announced to be over as of 0001 8 May 1945.

9 May 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

White C.P. to Rozvadoz, Czech. 97th Division rear at Konstantinovy Lazne, Czech (757 miles from C.P. Lucky Strike) at Ruthest eastward advance, from 07-09 May 1945

9 May 1945 William W Grier 386th Infantry Regiment, HQTRS Company

Major William W. Grier, Headquarters 386th Infantry Regiment, for meritorious service in military operations against an armed enemy of the United States during the period of 1 April 1945 to 9 May 1945, in Germany and Czechoslovakia. Entered military service from New Jersey.

9 May 1945 - Tom Morgan 387th Infantry Regiment, Company I

Occasionally heard that the war was ended in the ETO.

9 May 1945 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Bezourzice & Tachov, Czechoslovakia

0730 Advance party left for new location Tachov, Czechoslovakia to find billets for complete troop

0830 received G-2 report #38. Received Operation Instruction #22.

0900 Troop left for new location

1330 troop closed Tachov, Czechoslovakia 1900 received G-3 Instruction #34, received operation memo #11

10 May 1945, -Brent J Morrison 2nd LT. 386th Assistant Adjutant – Regimental History

On 10 May 1945, the Regiment moved from Kosolupy, Czechoslovakia, to Waidhaus, Germany

10 May 1945 - Chas. C. Francis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Daily New Report - Co. "M" 386th Inf.

The company was still billeted in homes in the town of Mies, Czechoslovakia. The strength of the company remained the same -155 EM and 7 Officers. The troops continued the motorized patrol of the area surrounding the town of Mies. The morale of the troops was excellent. Church services were held for both the Catholics and Protestants. ***** Chas. C. Francis ***** Company Reporter

10 May 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

1000 attacked toward Pilsen.

1345 All companies relieved by 1345. Now on move to new location near Waidhaus.
1900 Short arm inspection to be conducted 11 May 1945. 386th UPS moved to Frankenreuth. Point system for discharges announced.

Pictured: Waidhaus (RBergstrom Collection)



9 May 1945 - Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

We were in Pilsen, where we heard that the war had ended. It seemed strange that night to see lights again after all the darkness.

9 May 1945 Joseph W Redding 303rd Field Artillery Bn

Lieutenant Colonel Joseph W. Redding, 303d Field Artillery Battalion for meritorious service in military operations against an armed enemy of the United States during the period of 1 April 1945 to 9 May 1945, in Germany and Czechoslovakia. Entered military service from Indiana.

10 May 1945 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Tachov, Czechoslovakia – changed password. Church services were held for Protestants in troop area by Chaplain Springfellow. Catholic mass was held in chapel in town for the Catholics of the troop. Troop spent most the day in care and cleaning equipment.

10 MAY 1945 William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

We left Marienbad for Liebreinstein, Germany, where we lived in farm houses.

1945 Murray Garrett 303rd Infantry Regiment

Murray recalls, "I think the most I was scared during the whole time I was in Germany was one night when I was on guard duty while we were in this little town." A Lieutenant Byrd came out to check on the guards and walked with him for some time, for he could tell the young soldier was nervous.

Two days later they moved across the Rhine and came under fire for the first time. Although resistance was said to be light, it felt heavy to these first-timers. Murray said one of his vivid memories was diving into a water-filled ditch as they came under an artillery attack. They continued advancing and entered Czechoslovakia. At this point, the Germans began surrendering in large numbers to the Americans to avoid being captured by the Russians.

One day, while advancing toward a German roadblock, a sergeant in Murray's company was killed. Murray recalls that the sergeant was the best; a fine man. The very next day the war ended. The 97th camped in a large field for a few days before returning to Le Havre.

10 May 1945 Transmitted herewith Regimental history of the 386th Infantry Regiment for the year 1945

On May 10 1945, the Regiment moved from Koaolupy (Kauseloupey?), Czechoslovakia, to Waidhaus, Germany

11 May 1945 - Chas. C. Francis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Daily New Report - Co. "M" 386th Inf.

The company left the old C.P. at Mies, Czechoslovakia, at 0700 by truck and organic transportation. They arrived at the new C.P. at Hostka, Germany at 0800. The distance covered was 30 miles. The strength of the company remained the same – 155 EM and 7 Officers. A routine training schedule was followed. One Platoon had a road block to guard. The morale of the troops is excellent. There was a large amount of mail on this day ***** Chas. C. Francis ***** Company Reporter

11 May 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

0930 George gets short arm inspection.

1630 Church services: Mass, 1700: general 1900: Jewish 2000.

"Two down and one to go" shown to Bn by Special Services.

11 May 1945 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Tachov, Czechoslovakia – troop spent time in showdown of T/E equipment's (such as weapons, first aid kits in vehicles etc.), changed password.

1430 troop received typhoid and typhus shots.

1000 troop turned in all allied invasion marks for conversion. Troop liaison sect and two men on DS with division headquarters returned to troop.

11 May 1945 The US 97th Division, part of US 5th Corps of the US 3rd Army, occupies Pilsen in Czechoslovakia. The US 12th Corps advances toward Prague but the army is ordered to halt the advance and allow Soviets to occupy the rest of the country as has been arranged.

12 May 1945 HQTRS RECORDS – AFTER ACTION REPORTS

On 20 April 1945, Company Troops (CT) 386th was ordered to move from its positions in the REMSHEID – SOLIGEN- WUPPERTHAL area, upon relief by the 121st Infantry, to occupy positions in the vicinity of ARZBERG generally along the Czech border north to the vicinity of 1982.

Initially the entire frontage was to be occupied by the 2nd Battalion releasing elements of the 2nd Recon Squadron. By 1800, 23 April 1945, the relief was completed, 3rd Battalion was detached to Corps as Corps Reserve, 1st Battalion remained in its assembly area.

Contact was established by Line O's with 303rd Infantry on the left and 387th Infantry on the right. One company 782 TK (Tank) Battalion, one Company 444 AAA Battalion and one Company plus one platoon 820 TD Battalion were attached, and Line O's reported.

2nd Battalion pushed forward patrols to establish enemy positions and was given a mission of establishing a line of departure forward of the line then held for an attack to the high ground north of Cheb, Czechoslovakia. In order to do this, elements of the Battalion occupied the towns of HALGEBAU (212815), EICHELBERG (205770), LIBSTEIN (211795), and the Westside of SCHIRNDING (211741).

The order to initiate an attack at 0600, 25 April 1945, had been received at 2200, 23 April 1945. The formation for the attack was decided by the width of the Regimental front and the G-2 report on the anticipated enemy opposition. The frontage being approximately 11 kilometers and the G-2 Estimate indicating light opposition, it was decided also to pass the 1st Battalion through the lines of the north sector of the 2nd Battalion which were the positions held by Company F and part of Company E. The Regimental attachments were broken down so that one platoon of medium tanks and two platoons of TD's were attached to each Battalion and attached Platoon of Engineers given to 2nd Battalion whose area mines and road blocks were anticipated. The balance of the Tank Company was held for maintenance due to the poor condition of their equipment which was caused by protracted road march from the vicinity of ROUEN, France to its present position.

The attack was initiated against considerable small arms and automatic weapons fire but moved steadily forward. During this operation in both Battalions the theory of Reconnaissance by fire was practiced by both Battalion Commanders, and highly satisfactory results were obtained. Instead of trying to push Infantry against concealed sniper and MG positions, TD's, Artillery, Tanks, and Cannon gave direct and indirect support and eliminated much of the opposition. The Infantry (Company A) operating in the zone of the 1st Battalion with the objective of FRANT LAZNE, moved forward riding tanks and TD's. Company C moved on foot behind Company A mopping up the rear.

Company B moved on foot and took the town of HAZLOV (240829), and consolidated along HWY No. 90.

Cos "E" and "Z" in the zone of the 2nd Battalion, using the same method of advance, rapidly broke down opposition in the vicinity of MARKHAUSEN (240768) and PIRK (250758), and reached its objective – the high ground north of Cheb, before dark, Company F, which had passed through by the 1st Battalion early in the morning, followed in the zone of the 2nd Battalion as Battalion reserve – not to be committed except on Regimental order. By dark the night of the 25th all assigned positions on the Division objective were held, contact had been established and maintained with the 303rd Infantry on the left and with the 387th Infantry on the right. This contact point was however considerable to the west of Cheb and contact was lost during the following morning.

On the morning of the 26 April 1945 orders were received to shift to the north and relieve elements of the 303rd Infantry in the vicinity of SELB (1484) and AS (17907), when elements of the 387th relieve company troops (CT) 386th. Relief was to be effective on 27 April 1945. The 387th apparently was delayed in taking its objective, the airport northeast of Cheb and the town of Cheb, and contact had been lost along our forward line although it was still maintained in the rear. In order to properly establish contact and prevent infiltration behind our lines on the south which was being caused by the forward movement of the L flank, of the 387th on its attack on the Cheb position. 2nd Battalion Commander ordered his right company (Company G) to push patrols to the south and try to establish contact. This was done during the afternoon of the 26th patrols going into the metropolitan area without encountering any personnel of the 387th company troops (CT). Late in the afternoon however contact was established with the 387th succeeded in breaking into the town, from the south and contacted our troops who had encountered no resistance in their movement into town from the north. Due to Division order, company troops (CT) 386 was unable to occupy the town of Cheb from the north. Thus only strong recon patrols for the purpose of making contact with the 387th were sent into town. When Division was notified that contact had been made, patrols were ordered to withdraw and positions along the assigned company troops (CT) objective were consolidated and rear elements of the company troops (CT) were moved to a new position at AS and SEIB.

In the afternoon of the 27 April 1945, the Regiment was relieved by company troops (CT) 387 and the entire company troops (CT) shifted north to its new positions carrying out the assigned mission of active patrolling in zone and the breaking up of any enemy resistance in the area, and the combing of the area for bypassed troops.

Orders were issued at 0600 on the 28 April 1945 for the movement to the south to begin. At 1400 upon relief by the 16th Infantry the mission of the company troops (CT) 386 was to relieve the 2nd Cavalry Squad in the vicinity of PIEYSTEIN (370269) Sheet U7, RF 1/100,000-Germany). The 2nd Cavalry Squad was relieved as of 1000 hours 29th of April 1945 and company troops (CT) 386 occupied positions having made contact with company troops (CT) 387 on its right and by means of the 97th Recon Troops with the 303rd Infantry on the left.

Tracked vehicles of the company troops (CT) closed in the early afternoon of the 29 April 1945 and the original attachments continued. It should be noted at this point that the positions occupied were not entirely favorable due to the dense woods and the sharply rolling terrain. The Cavalry had occupied positions somewhat more favorable forward of the assigned line. It was therefore determined by company troop (CT) commander to occupy the forward positions of the Cavalry rather than the assigned line, and the 1st and 2nd Battalions were ordered to move forward without deployment from their movement to the new position.

Due to the fact that the company troops (CT) arrived at night and it was considered sound to relieve the Cavalry positions during the night the 1st Battalion who had held up on their assigned line, having arrived late than the 2nd Battalion simply occupied assembly positions during the night, and, as noted above at 1000 in the morning of the 29 April 1945 completed the relief of the Cavalry.

During the 29th and 30th recon Patrols were pushed forward in the Regiment zone to determine the enemy positions and, at 0730 the morning of the 1st limited objective attack which had been coordinated by the Company Troop (CT) Commanders, Company 386th, and Company 387, was initiated to secure more favorable ground for a general assault the following day. The attack necessitated by the fact that the unit on the right (2nd BN) found itself on low ground and the unit on the left (1st BN) found itself behind a dense woods. Purpose of the attack therefore, was to secure the forward edge of the wood line running generally south from 5040 to 5631. Division objective having not yet been assigned by Corps, Company 386th found itself in the position of being practically on its assigned objective for the general attack, of the second of May by the time it had concluded its limited objective attack on the 1st. Chief opposition encountered during this limited attack was from automatic weapons and small arms fire in dense woods. All roads running east and west thru the woods and many lateral roads had been road blocked by falling trees and in one or two cases by mines.

PAGE 3 is missing:

***** To the ridge line # of the Piana-Stribro road, (Unreadable) on the high ground to positions overlooking Stribro from the rear. Due to last minute arrangements cause by written order received from Corps thru Division, the attack was delayed until 1030 when the 2nd BN, Company "E" on the left, Company "G" on the right astride Hwy 14, followed by Company "G" moved against BOR (642355) and the first Battalion attacked eastward in the direction of Damnoy (640441). Initially the attack of both Battalions was made on a broad front, BOR having been thoroughly covered by artillery preparations prior to the advance with call fire being delivered all along the line with the attached artillery of the 922d FA in general support. The attack moved slowly at first due to this form of tactics. However, when BOR was taken about 1300, the Company Troop Commander directed that a spearhead attack be made directly down Hwy 14 by the 2nd BN Company "F" at once mounted on tanks and against minor opposition of automatic weapons and small arms preceded towards STRIBRO. Company G, the Rese?? Was mounted on TD's and followed Company F. Company E which had been delayed in the northern part of the boundary by persistent sniping and small arms fire from the woods, finally cleared the area and fell into column just west of HOLOSTREVVY (675375). By

1000 STRIBRO had been reached and invested by the leading company and the high ground west of STRIBRO was occupied by G and F companies. The 1st Battalion proceeded rapidly until they reached the river line of the MZE (MSE) River in their zone. In this area the banks of the river line are extremely steep and wooded, and the level ground provided poor footing for the armor. The 1st Battalion therefore had not proceeded much further than the eastern side of the Mze River when night fell. The right Battalion consolidated in the vicinity of STRIBRO and prepared to continue the attack at 0600 in the morning of the 5th.

12 May 1945 - Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

V-E day came on May 12 while we were in Kauseloupey, Czechoslovakia. While we did a little celebration, there wasn't much change in our routine until, we got orders to pack up and get ready to move out.

12 May 1945 - Chas. C. Francis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Daily New Report - Co. "M" 386th Inf.

The company remained in the battalion billeting area at Hostka, Germany. The strength remained the same – 155 EM and 7 Officers. The training schedule was routine. The care and cleaning of equipment was stressed. The moral of the troops was excellent. The following EM were appointed PFC from PVT.

Affee, Joseph

Mitchell, Tyler C.

Piekutowski, Boleslous

Pulley, James R.

** ***** Chas. C. Francis ***** Company Reporter

12 May 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

0800 Typhus Shots

1000 George gets 9 Replacements

1600 Ordered into field, (Dillon reports George threw grenades into streams for fish!)

1730 White C.P. into field ¾ Miles south of Fosodov.

12 May 1945 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Tachov, Czechoslovakia

0800 troop started complete show-down of all T/E equipment for C/S (also T/E 21) Also troop is maint's all vehicles and cleaning all equipment. Troop visited by Col. Kilpatrick G-2, changed password. Troop spent afternoon washing clothing and cleaning equipment.

1830 troop held ball game in area by kitchen. Moral was excellent. Sgt Shezman (spelling?) returned to troop.

13 May 1945 - Chas. C. Francis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Daily New Report - Co. "M" 386th Inf.

The company moved from the town of Hostka, Germany, to a battalion bivouac area in the vicinity of St. Kalharina, Germany. The hard ground and pup tents were a distinct change from the luxuries of homes. The strength of the company remained the same – 155 EM and 7 Officers. During the day a routines training schedule was followed stressing the care and cleaning of the individual equipment. This day was Mother's Day. Church services were held for both the Catholics and Protestants. The Morale of the troops was excellent. A movie, "Two Down and One to GO," was shown to the troops. After seeing this movie, most of us decided that we were automatically "thirty year men."
***** Chas. C. Francis ***** Company Reporter

13 May 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G
Usual Patrols

13 May 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Tachov, Czechoslovakia –all trailers were turned into 797th Ord. (New military) troop started shower schedules. 30 men could take showers today. 25 men go at a time to the showers located at Ord Co.

1030 All members of the troop wishing to go to church services were able to go, church services were held in chapel in town.

1100 Received G-2 information Bulletin #1, changed password. Members of troop left for picture show at ENG area.

2300 men return from show. 1 Officer and 1 EM left CP on billeting party.

Pictured: Tachov, Czechoslovakia - The McGillicany Boys at Tachov with Rowland Bergstrom





13 May 1945 – History Background

Now there was time for a brief pause to reflect. The military record of the 97th Division was inspiring. Many Medals had been awarded for brilliant performances, but there also had been posthumous awards.

V-E Day was observed at religious services. Throughout the division. Gen. Halsey issued the following statement.

Victory in Europe has been attained and the cloud of Nazi oppression has been lifted forever. It is with a very real sense of pride and joy, and deepest sincerity, that I, as commander of the 97th Trident Division, congratulate you, the men of this organization, for your loyalty, courage, initiative and determination in combat. Your accomplishments and your high standards are a credit to yourselves and to your organization.

Though the combat history of this division has been relatively short, the part we played in bringing about the downfall of German forces on all fronts has been of utmost importance. You, as members of the division, can look back for many years and say: The Trident was on the march when the bell rang.

Even as we rejoice in victory, however, there is sadness in our hearts, for the road through the Ruhr Pocket and into Czechoslovakia is marked by crosses bearing the names of our comrades whom valiantly and unselfishly gave their lives that the cause of

freedom might endure and flourish.

We thank the merciful Almighty God for the victory He has given us in Europe. Let us remember Him. On Sunday, May 13, 1945, let us join the millions of thankful people the world over in worship.

In our hearts we pray that God will remain with us in the tasks that lie ahead. For the division as a unit and for each and every one of us as individuals. What lies ahead for the wearers of the Trident, I cannot say, but the Trident Division will be at the right place, at the right time, and with a military that justifies the pride and loyalty of all its members.

May 1945 – Lieutenant General U.S. Army Commanding – Bradley
Headquarters – Twelfth Army Group – Europe

Pictured: Rowland Bergstrom in center taken on VE day at Tachov (RBergstrom Collection)



Pictured: School Building in Solingen or Tachoo, Germany. We called it our castle for 2 days.
(RBergstrom Collection)



14 May 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G
Usual Patrols

14 May 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Tachov, Czechoslovakia – changed password. 1300 troop turned in all ammunition to ammo section.

14 May 1945, Mon. - Chas. C. Francis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

The company was still stationed at the battalion area near S. Kalharina, Germany. The company's strength remained at 155 EM and 7 officers. A routine training schedule was followed in the morning. During the afternoon a battalion review was staged. The 97th Division Band provided the martial music for the occasion. Pfc. Loy O Collins, Platoon driver, was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for heroic achievement against an armed enemy.

The morale of the company was very high. The troops found that the "Terra Firms" was not quite as soft as a feather bed. Sgt. Charles Kirian, a squad leader in the mortar platoon, was promoted to the grade of S/SGT. ***** Chas. C. Francis ****
Company Reporter

14 May 1945 – Robie Macauley Counter-Intelligence Corps (CIC)

Location: Czechoslovakia – Dear Chuck, I have been getting your letters now and then and have been very interested in your voyages through Mexico City to NY and home. Mother wrote me that you didn't spend much time at home and I had a letter from Mickey after you had seen her in NY. Getting back in that way really seems like a delightful prospect, even after our short time over here. I hope you won't actually go to Greenland, although there might be some good things to see. Mickey said that Don Bowers had been in NY after you were there, I believe... As for myself. I have been very busy and seen the whole wind-up of this thing over here. We were in the Ruhr for quite a while cleaning up the pocket in industrial region there. I was in Aix-la-Chapelle, Soligen and Dusseldorf at various times and saw some pretty interesting weeks along the East bank of the Rhine. Then we moved East and wound up in this region – I was in Czechoslovakia when V - E Day came. I have seen a great mixture of interesting, cruel, and beautiful things here. One of the most interesting was an ancient 12th century Schides, a tremendous pile of half-ruined walls and towers high up on a huge rocky drag. It was a Grim or Scott story-book castle and in one part there is a well-reserved Roman chimney. Among the cruel things there was the indescribable concentration camp I worked on for a while. You can believe me that the stories you read in the magazines at home are not exaggerated, but only the sight of these places makes them as really true and gruesome as they are. Some of the beautiful things are the little towns and green landscapes of Bavaria and this part of Czechoslovakia. It's a little strange and puzzling that such a green and pleasant land can breed such a hard race of killers and torturers as some of them are. The final break-up of the Third Reich was rather unbelievable, marked by great streams of prisoners crowding the roads, coming in their own vehicles to surrender, all the big and little Nazis scuttling for safety, and the released French and Polish PW's getting their revenge wherever they could. On V-E day we picked up a Colonel trudging along the road with his pack on his back, going to surrender. (We let the Captains and the Lieutenants walk in). Two of our fellows captured a whole artillery battery complete with guns, and they were armed only with one German Pistol.. There will be a lot of things to tell you when I see you next. As far as our future goes, I don't know anything. The newspaper today say that most of the ETO forces will be shifted to the Pacific. As much as I would like to stay here, I'd like to see that things finished up and the world clean-up begun. We'll have to come to Europe together sometime – there are so many things to see and driving through with an invading army is not the most leisurely or advantages way to see them. Write soon and tell me about everything that has happened since you wrote last and how Greenland's icy mountains look. Yrs, Robie

15 May 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Prepare to move tomorrow. 97th Division rear at Tachov, Czech from 09-15 May 1945

15 May 1945, Mon. - Chas. C. Francis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

The company was still stationed at the battalion bivouac area near St. Kalharina, Germany. The company strength remained the same – 155 EM and 7 Officers. A routine training schedule was followed throughout the day. A five mile hike was taken in the afternoon.

The Morale of the troops was high. Pfc. Eugene Martin was promoted to T/5. He is the company articifer. T/5 John Quigly, a motor gunner, was redesignated a corporal. There was a large amount of incoming mail.. ***** Chas. C. Francis **** Company Reporter

1945 - James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

We bivouacked in a valley outside of town and started fraternizing with the Russians. Barrels of Pilsener beer were opened, yams were roasted in a large bonfire, and everyone celebrated. The Russian women carried the supplies and did the cooking. Everyone exchanged gifts and danced around the fire. After several hours, we were separated and started resting and relaxing. May 7 was the last day of fighting and by May 20, we had emptied all the beer caves in the sides of the hills and started leaving Germany. All of our war souvenirs - pistols, knives, medals and other momentous were packed and shipped home.

I hunted for G Company to find Charles Gaberosek. His sergeant told me he had been killed by a sniper about a month before and his personal items had been shipped to his home. I had his address and wrote a long letter to his parents but never heard anything from them.

15 May 1945 – Last night in Czechoslovakia – CO M was present (verbal story from Dick Lawson and Rowland Bergstrom)

It was a wild night. The last night in Czechoslovakia, a group of Russians and the 386th (many companies) got together at Krapp's Brewery (in a castle) in the basement there were a lot of beer kegs sitting there. Some took a barrel to an apartment upstairs from where they were staying and others partied in the bar with the Russians. A gun went off and it went thru someone's helmet but did no pierce the skull. The bullet hit a barrel of beer and flooded the basement. The party migrated from the bar to the nearby apartments where they were staying and they had the best time. The last night in Czechoslovakia was memorable. Rowland Bergstrom told story about American troops meeting up with Russian troops in Czechoslovakia. They met at a brewery that Rowland called "Krapps Brewery". Rowland said that the basement was full of huge vats of beer. The party was wild. Somebody fired off a gun and hit another soldier in the head, but the bullet went through the helmet and passed between the space between the guy's helmet and his skull. He was okay. Then somebody either opened the taps on the beer vats or shot holes in them (I don't remember which) and flooded the place with beer. That was the end of the party!

Pictured: Last night in Czechoslovakia (RBergstrom Collection)



Pictured: Last night in Czechoslovakia (RBergstrom Collection)



Pictured: Last night in Czechoslovakia (RBergstrom Collection)



Pictured: Last night in Czechoslovakia (RBergstrom Collection)



Pictured: Last night in Czechoslovakia (RBergstrom Collection)



Pictured: Czechoslovakia - Krapps Brewery (RBergstrom Collection)



Pictured: After scanning in the building name, then end of the name reads KRAPP – (RBergstrom Collection)



15 May 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Tachov, Czechoslovakia – troop preparing vehicles for move.

0845 the bulleting party returned to C.P., changed password. 1000 Lt Rock moved to new area in 322 Med Ambulance.

15 May 1945- The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

The Division remained in postwar Czechoslovakia for a few days, and then was ordered back to Germany. On May 15 the Division command post was established in an old castle at Memmelsdorf in the vicinity of Bamberg. The soldiers of the Division learned that they would soon be ordered back to the United States, given thirty-day furloughs, and then sent to the Pacific to participate in the invasion of the Japanese home islands. In late May the men of the Trident Division traveled by truck convoy to Camp Old Gold located near Yerville, France.

1945 Homer Wilson 387th Infantry Regiment, Company D

We traveled by convoy to Camp Old Gold, and then boarded the ship that would take us home. We were exhausted and dizzy with excitement. As we sailed into New York harbor, I thought how beautiful the Statue of Liberty looked. No longer kids, we'd all lived a lifetime in those months together, and we'd formed close bonds that would never be broken.

Along with everyone else in the 97th Infantry Division, I wanted to go home. I wanted to see my family, especially my girlfriend, Ruby. We were given a 30-day furlough, and our orders were to report to Ft.

Bragg, NC. But the war was not over. While we were on furlough, President Truman gave orders to drop that terrible bomb on Nagasaki. Everything changed for the 97th Division after that.

15 May 1945 -Malcom H. Bruner 922 FA Battalion, Battery B

We made the move on May 15th. Two days after our arrival at SCHAMMELSDORF we were ordered out of the houses and into the field where had rain nearly every day, inspections once a week and a regular basic training drill schedule. It was here we received the news that the 97th Division would be redeployed to the Pacific through the United States. We left our position in the field near SCHAMMELSDORF and headed for Camp Old Gold on May 28th. We arrived at Camp Old Gold on June 2nd.

16 May 1945 - Chas. C. Francis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Daily New Report - Co. "M" 386th Inf.

The company left the bivouac area near St. Kalharina, Germany at 0745 by truck and other organic transportation. Although the roads were dusty, the convoy moved rapidly. The company arrived at the new battalion bivouac area near Strassgiech, Germany at 1400. The new area is exposed to all types of weather, and the troops are quite crowded. The strength of the company at the present is 155 EM and 7 Officers. The morale of the troops is as high as can be expected. A stream suitable for bathing raised the morale considerably. An organized program of recreation has been made for the benefit of the troops. ***** Chas. C. Francis ***** Company Reporter

16 May 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

1220 Battalion arrived Kottensdorg, Germany White C.P. also.

1600 Moved C.P. into field from house to Schesslitz, Germany near Bamberg. Combat infantry badges awarded. 386th UPS based at Schesslitz, also and moved into field.

Pictured: Schesslitz, Germany - Eating chow in the field at Schesslitz, Germany Rowland Bergstrom far right and others unidentified at this time



16 May 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Tachov, Czechoslovakia – troop spend morning washing and maintaining vehicles.

1000 received new password via M/G and changed password.

1330 troop commander went to I.P. to check time from C.P. to I.P. Troop spending afternoon in preparing move to new location.

17 May 1945, -Brent J Morrison 2nd LT. 386th Assistant Adjutant – Regimental History

The Regiment moved from Waidhaus, Germany 17 May 1945 to Schesslitz, Germany.

17 May 1945 - Chas. C. Francis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Daily New Report - Co. "M" 386th Inf.

The company is still stationed at the battalion bivouac area near Strassgiech, Germany.

The strength of the company remains the same – 155 EM and 7 Officers. A routine training schedule was followed during the day. LT. Wier gave an excellent orientation on “The Japanese Control in the Far East.” LT. D. H. Rock has resumed duties as the battalion S-4. Lt Rock formerly was a mortar platoon Leader. As usual the morale of the troops is high. Last night, a movie was held for the entertainment of the troops. Showers are available to all the men late this afternoon. Co. “M’s” championship baseball team added another victory to its string. This afternoon they defeated “L” Co. 5-1.

***** Chas. C. Francis **** Company Reporter

17 May 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Battalion Showers all afternoon. 386th UPS works in old beer hall in Schesslitz but live in field half miles south of town.

17 May 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Lovebend, Germany –
0912 troop left in motor march for new area
1430 troop closed new area Lovebend, Germany and pitched tents and setup bivouac.

17 MAY 1945 - William J Blacker, 303rd infantry Regiment, Company A

We moved in a truck convoy to Bamberg, Germany, to a bivouac area in the woods.
Two days later we moved into the field. Next move is the *STATES!!!*

Pictured: Bamberg, Germany – Picture taking, Karl Laskowsky and E.W. Jones
(RRapesky Collection)



Pictured: Bamberg, Germany – Barber at work. Moore and the Barber is Pope.
(RRapesky Collection)



Pictured: Bamberg Germany – Band played from the back of the truck. (RRapesky Collection)



Pictured: Bamberg, Germany – Red Cross Truck (RRapesky Collection)



Pictured: Bamberg, Germany – Volleyball game – waiting – what's next? (RRapesky Collection)



17 May 1945 – Transmitted herewith Regimental history of the 386th Infantry Regiment for the year 1945

The regiment moved from Waidhaus, Germany 17 May 1945 to Schesslitz, Germany.

The Regiment moved from Schesslitz, Germany to Camp old Gold, France by motor and rail during the period 30 May 1945 to 4 June 1945.

18 May 1945 - Chas. C. Francis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Daily New Report - Co. "M" 386th Inf.

The company is still in the battalion bivouac area near Strassgiech, Germany. The strength of the company remains the same – 155 EM (Excluding the three medics) and 7 Officers. A routing training schedule was followed during the day. Emphasis is placed on current events. The morale of the troops is excellent. Last evening religious services were held for both Protestants and Catholics. This afternoon the troops spent “a day at the beach.” Also, an American Red Cross Club mobile visited the area. The American girls were a sight for sore eyes. S/SGT Earl Holland, a mortar squad leader, was admitted to the Thermite Clearing Hospital. He is getting along as well as can be expected.

***** Chas. C. Francis ***** Company Reporter

18 May 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

1800 Hike and swim

2200 had movie by S.S. Officer

In place

18 May 1945 -97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Lovebend, Germany –

0830 Captain Swainbank went to division per G-2 order (verbal) Captain Swainbank returned to camp and alerted 3rd platoon 1000 3rd platoon moved out on mission per verbal order G-2

1430 Troop area was visited by division commander Halsey. Changed password.

2100 troop had moving picture in troop area; ENG BN came to troop area to see show.

1225 3rd platoon returned from mission.

19 May 1945 - Chas. C. Francis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Daily New Report - Co. "M" 386th Inf.

The company remained in the same battalion bivouac area near Schesslitz, Germany. The troops were partially “washed out” this afternoon by severe rain storm. The strength of the company remains the same -155 EM and 7 Officers. The training schedule was routine - -stressing current events and fraternization policy. The moral of the troops is excellent. A Red Cross Club Mobile provided entertainment for the “G.I.’s” last evening.

Duffel bags arrived this afternoon. PFC Cliff Breckan, a gunner in machine gun platoon, caught up with the company after two months hospitalization. ***** Chas. C. Francis ***** Company Reporter

Order from General Omar Bradley on Fraternization:

SPECIAL ORDERS FOR GERMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS:

1. To remember always that Germany through conquered is still a dangerous enemy nation.
 - a. It is known that an underground organization for the continuation of the Nazi program for world domination is already in existence. This group will take advantage of every relaxation of vigilance on our part to carry on undercover war against us.
 - b. The occupational forces are not on a good-will mission.
2. Never to trust Germans, collectively, or individually.
 - a. For most of the past century, Germany has sought to attain world domination by conquest. This has been the third major attempt in the memory of men still living. To many Germans, this defeat will only be an interlude – a time to prepare for the next war.
 - b. Except for such losses of life and property suffered by them, the Germans have no regrets for the havoc they have wrought on the world.
 - c. The German has been taught that the national goal of domination must be attained regardless of the depths of treachery, murder and destruction necessary. He has been taught to sacrifice everything – ideas, honor, and even his wife and children for the State. Defeat will not erase that idea.
3. To defeat German efforts to poison my thoughts or influence my attitude.
 - a. The Nazis have found that the most powerful propaganda weapon is distortion of the truth. They have made a skillful use of it and will re-double their efforts in the event of an occupation in order to influence the thinking of the occupational forces. There will probably be deliberate, studied and continuous efforts to influence our sympathies and to minimize the consequences of defeat.
 - b. You may expect all manner of approach – conversations to be overheard, underground publications to be found; there will be appeals to generosity and fair play; to pity for victims of devastation; to racial and cultural similarities; and to sympathy for an allegedly oppressed people.
 - c. There will be attempts of sowing discord among Allied nations; at undermining Allied determination to enforce the surrender; at inducing a reduction in occupational forces; at lowering morale and efficiency of the occupying forces; at proving that Nazism was never wanted by the “gentle and cultured” German people.
4. To avoid acts of violence, except when required by military necessity.
 - a. For you are an American soldier, not a Nazi.
5. To conduct myself at all times so as to command the respect of the German people for myself, for the United States, and for the Allied Cause.
 - a. The Germans hold all things military in deep respect. That respect must be maintained at all times or the Allied Cause is lost and the first steps are taken toward World War III. Each soldier must watch every action of himself and his

- comrades. The German will be watching constantly, even though you may not see him. Let him see a good American Soldier.
- b. Drunkenness will not be tolerated. Penalties will be severe.
6. Never to associate with Germans.
- a. We must bring home to the Germans that their support of Nazi leaders, their tolerance of racial hatreds and persecutions, and their unquestioning acceptance of the wanton aggressions on other nations, have earned for them the contempt and distrust of the civilized world. We must never forget that the German people support the Nazi Principles.
 - b. Contacts with Germans will be made only on official business. Immediate compliance with all official orders and instructions and surrender terms will be demanded of them and will be firmly enforced.
 - c. American Soldiers must not associate with Germans. Specifically, it is not permissible to shake hands with them, to visit their homes, to exchange gifts, with them, to engage in games or sports with them, to attend their dances or social events, or to accompany them on the street or elsewhere. Particularly avoid all discussion or arguments with them. Give the Germans no chance to trick you into relaxing your guard.
7. To be fair but firm with Germans.
- a. Experience has shown that Germans regard kindness as weakness. Every soldier must prove by his actions that the Americans are strong. This will be accomplished if every soldier treats the Germans with firmness and stern courtesy at all times.
 - b. Firmness must be tempered with a strict justice. Americans do not resort to Nazi gangster methods in dealing with any people. Remember, your fair but firm treatment of the German people will command the proper respect due a member of a conquering nation.

I need not speak of your past accomplishments, other than to say you have reflected great credit upon yourself and your command.

We are now fighting on German Soil, and we are in contact not only with the soldiers of our enemy but also civilians of Germany. As conquerors, we must now consider our relations with the people of Germany.

It is imperative that you do not allow yourself to become friendly with Germans, but at the same time you must not persecute them. American soldiers can and have beaten German soldiers in the field of battle. It is equally important that you complete the victory over Nazi ideas.

To guide you I have issued these special "battle" orders. They may appear to lead along a narrow path, but they are NECESSARY. You personally must prove to the German people that their acceptance of Nazi leadership is responsible for their defeat, and that it has earned for them the distrust of the rest of the world.

Lieutenant General US ARMY COMMAINDING - Bradley

19 May 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Lovebend, Germany – troop spent the morning maintain vehicles. 1200 changed password. Division dance band played for troop. 1600 received situation overlay from G-3

Pictured: Band Played for the troops (RBergstrom Collection)



20 May 1945 - Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

Shortly thereafter, we got orders to pack up and get ready to go home. Our first stop was in southeastern Germany, around a large field in the Bavarian mountains near Bamberg.

Word came down that we were to have a division review. We were told to dress in 'Class A' uniforms – for us that meant khaki shirts and pants, and as much spit and polish as we could muster. While we had carried these uniforms across most of Europe, we hadn't worn them more than once or twice – like when we went into Paris, or on special leave.

On a bright sunny day, the whole division – all 15,000 of us – assembled in a large pen area which became our parade ground. The band played 'To the Colors' and the American Flag were raised. Then the band played the 'Star Spangled Banner'.

The Adjutant sound roll call and the command went down the ranks to 'Report'. Starting with each of the companies, you could hear the Commanding Officers' reports – "All present and accounted for, Sir". This was repeated from company, to battalion, to regiment, and then to the Adjutant. When the report to the Commanding General was

completed, the order came down to "Pass in Review". The band started off with a stirring Sousa March, and we preceded, battalion at a time, past the reviewing stand. Here we were in the middle of Germany, with the war over – our job done. The Review was a moving experience – the kind that brings tears to your eyes, and a chill up and down your spine.

For more photos of this event see the following link –

<http://realwarphotosgalleries.ifp3.com/2/df555/42af4be/?a=1&navlist=42af4bd,42af4c0#/gallery/97th-inf-div/a4192/>

20 May 1945 - Chas. C. Francis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Daily New Report - Co. "M" 386th Inf.

The company remained at the same battalion bivouac area near Schesslitz, Germany. The strength of the company is the same – 155 EM and 7 Officers. This morning an impressive Regimental Review was held on makeshift parade grounds. PFC. Earl Samstag, a mortar gunner, was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for Heroic achievement against an armed enemy of the United States. The morale of the troops is excellent. The Special Service troops presented a fine musical program in the battalion area last evening. A movie was also shown. In an intra-platoon baseball game, the 2nd platoon trounced the 1st platoon, 11-9. PFC. Harry D. Pence, Cook's helper, is the father of a boy born on the 10 May 1945. ***** Chas. C. Francis **** Company Reporter

20 May 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Division Review. Medals awarded.

20 May 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Lovebend, Germany –

1055 received G-2 info bulletin #3 changed password.

1300 troop had church services at troop area held by Chaplain Springfellow

1330 Red Cross Club Mobile visited troop

20 May, –James A Judkins 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company ?

Taps Sounded for Local Boy Killed in Germany – WITH THE 97TH INFANTRY DIVISION, GERMANY, (Delayed) – The notes of taps echoing across a German field where 3000 infantrymen stood at attention sounded a requiem for members of the 97th Infantry Division's 303rd Regiment who died in the Ruhr and Czechoslovakia. The troops had formed on the grassy field to honor their fallen comrades with a memorial service and review. Among those thus honored was McMinnville's Staff Sergeant, James A. (Red) Judkins, who was killed in action on April 12 in Germany. It was a gray overcast morning, and the regimental colors with their World War I, battle streamers fluttered lazily in the light breeze. Following the short benediction by the regimental chaplain, the regimental commander spoke briefly on the deeds of their missing companions whose last resting place is the soil of Europe. A squad of riflemen raised

their weapons into the air and field three farewell volleys. The regimental adjutant called the roll of the fallen, company by company. There were men from many states and every creed fighting for a single cause. A misty rain began to fall as the troops marched from the field. S/SGT Judkins, a son of Mrs. Jessie Higginbotham Judkins, entered the military service in February 1943, and was attached for training to the 303rd Infantry regiment of the 97th Infantry division soon after it was reactivated. He was with the division while it trained at Camp Swift, Texas, The Louisiana Maneuver area, Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., Camp San Luis Obispo and Camp Cooke, California prior to going overseas early in 1945.

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21 May 1945 - Chas. C. Francis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Daily New Report - Co. "M" 386th Inf.

Company "M" is still station at the battalion bivouac area near Schesslitz, Germany. The company's strength remains the same – 155 EM and 7 Officers. The training schedule today was routine. Current events were stressed particularly. This afternoon the troops enjoyed showers. An ordinance inspection followed. The morale of the men is very high. Las night Chaplain Sherwood held Protestant services in the battalion area. Catholic

services were held in Schesslitz. S/SFT has returned to the company after being hospitalized for several days. 2nd LT. James W. Burke and 2nd LT Glen H. Lock have both been promoted to the rank of 1st LT. effective 16 May 1945. ***** Chas. C. Francis ***** Company Reporter

21 May 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

White Bn showered in afternoon

21 May 1945 – Mon – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Lovebend, Germany –

0850 received Operation memo #15, changed password.

1315 received new SO I PTO 20 May

22 May 1945 - Chas. C. Francis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Daily New Report - Co. "M" 386th Inf.

The company is still stationed in the battalion bivouac area near Schesslitz, Germany.

The strength of the company remains the same as yesterday -- 155 EM and 7 Officers.

The training is schedule for today was routine. In the afternoon, **the troops made a short hike to an ancient cathedral.** A conducted tour of the church followed. Those who had cameras were permitted to take pictures. The morale of the men is very high. PFC Walter Block, a driver who was recently injured, is recovering satisfactorily. A program of recreation, including such sports as volleyball baseball and boxing is planned. Signature ***** Chas. C. Francis ***** Company Reporter

22 May 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Lovebend, Germany –

0800 troop went on 2 hr. hike, received new password, changed password

1645 Red Cross Club Mobile visited troop area

22 May 1945 – Tues - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

1400 White Bn. Had USO show

23 May 1945 - Chas. C. Francis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Daily New Report - Co. "M" 386th Inf.

The company is still stationed camped in the battalion bivouac area near the German town of Schesslitz. The Strength of the company remains the same – 155 EM and 7

Officers. A routine training schedule was followed during the day. Current events were

stressed particularly the 97th division insignia is being stenciled on all steel helmets once again. The morale of the troops is excellent. An unconfirmed report via radio stated that

the 97th Division will be sailing for the U.S. sometime in June. Although the report was unconfirmed, it raised the morale of the troops one hundred per cent. A mediocre U.S.O. show was staged in the battalion area last night for the entertainment of the crew.

***** Chas. C. Francis ***** Company Reporter

23 May 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

White Bn had movie

1600 Bn to put division Insignia back on clothing and helmets

23 May 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Lovebend, Germany – 0800 Troop started on road reconnaissance problem
1100 received new password 1200 changed password 1300 S/SGT Furnas was 1st man
transferred to another org per the point system. 2130 received call from G-1 section that
S/Sgt. Creel & Sgt. Marshall are at division headquarters awaiting return to troop. 1945
troop completed reconnaissance problem 2210 Sgt. Creel and Marshall return to troop.

24 May 1945 - Chas. C. Francis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Daily New Report * CO "M" ** 386th INF

The company is still stationed in the battalion bivouac area near the town of Schesslitz, Germany. The company's strength has dropped to 154 EM and 7 Officers. Today's training schedule was routine. Special emphasis was placed on our non-fraternization policy. The morale of the troops is high. In a hard fought boxing match last evening, SGT Dick Lawson, CO "M" heavyweight, gained a draw with a former amateur boxer from Anti-Tank Co. Ron Good CO. "M" baseball team again proved that they were champions by defeating 3rd BN HQ Co. 5-1. SGT Leo Burkhart has been transferred to the 4th division. Signature ***** Chas. C. Francis ***** Company Reporter
(Note: Dick called his opponent "Junior Good" and advised that a fight on a later date, junior won.)



1945 – Nathan Galloway 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

A special tribute to William H (Bill) Little. The best softball pitcher the army ever produced.

24 May 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

In place

24 May 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Lovebend, Germany – Received G-2 Intel memo #4. Troop Commander put in SP TRS infirmary – bad cold.

1200 Changed password

1900 At troop area. Troop beat Signal Co in baseball game.

2100 III Corps showed picture here.

25 May 1945 - Chas. C. Francis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Daily New Report * CO "M" ** 386th INF **

The company is still stationed in the battalion bivouac area near the town of Schesslitz, Germany. Continual rains have made the area a virtual “mud hole.” The strength of the company remains the same as yesterday – 154 EM and 7 Officers. Today’s training schedule called for an inspection of all quartermaster equipment. The morale of the troops is excellent. Last evening, the movie “The Keys to the Kingdom” was shown for the benefit of the men. Three “85 + men” were transferred from “M” co. today. These men were

CPL Earl D. Scott

PFC Lester M. Joyce

PFC Nick B. Porter

***** Chas. C. Francis ***** Company Reporter

25 May 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Lovebend, Germany – 1200 changed password 1230 Troop went to Division Headquarters to lecture on malaria fever. 1300 S/SGT Piper transferred to 4th infantry because of 90 points.

26 May 1945 - Chas. C. Francis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Daily New Report * CO "M" ** 386th INF **

The company is still stationed in the battalion bivouac area near the town of Schesslitz, Germany. Continual rains have made the area a virtual “mud hole.” The strength of the company has dropped again to 151 EM and 7 Officers. This morning a Regimental Review was held on make-shift parade grounds about two miles from the area. The 97th Division Band provided the martial music for the occasion. Col. Lansing was the reviewing officer. Presentation of awards were made by the commanding officer. The morale of the troops is excellent. Although it was quite cool yesterday, many men in the company enjoyed swimming. Co. “M’s” baseball team once again proved that they were the battalion champions by defeating “K” Co., 5-0.

***** Chas. C. Francis ***** Company Reporter

26 May 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Lovebend, Germany – 1900 troop had short arm inspection held by Captain Tiecre D.C. 1100 Troop commander returned from SP TRS infirmary, changed password 1230 troop left area for division headquarters to attend classes held by medical officer. Pfc. Jackson was posthumous awarded Bronze Star per General Orders #30 HQ 97th Inf Div.

27 May 1945 - Chas. C. Francis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Daily New Report * CO "M" ** 386th INF **

The company remained in the battalion bivouac area near the town of Schesslitz, Germany. The strength of the company remained the same as yesterday – 151 EM and 7 Officers. No training schedule was prepared as it was Sunday. Chaplain Sherwood held memorial services for all Protestant troops in the area this morning. The morale of the troops is very high. An amusing movie, “Bathing Beauty” starring Red Skeltons and Esther Williams, was shown to the troops last night. Co. “M’s” baseball team claimed the battalion championship last night by defeating the reputed battalion champs from CO. “I” 2-0. CPL Bill Little was the winning Hurler. ***** Chas. C. Francis *****

Company Reporter

27 May 1945- Sun – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Lovebend, Germany –

0900 Troop commander went to division headquarters by order of G-U on movement plans.

1400 Submitted report on names of officers and EM to go on advanced party to Camp Old Gold, France.

1200 Troop commander returned from division. Changed password. 2100 Troop had show in troop area.

27 May, -- Admiral William F. Halsey Jr., Commander Third Fleet, relieves Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, Commander Fifth Fleet, of operational control at Okinawa.

28 May 1945 - Chas. C. Francis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Daily New Report * CO "M" ** 386th INF **

The company remained in the battalion bivouac area near the town of Schesslitz, Germany. The strength of the company remained the same as yesterday – 151 EM and 7 Officers. Today's training schedule was routine. A fifteen mile march was taken by the troops this morning. The morale of the troops is exceedingly high due to the influx of encouraging rumors. Special Service presented a fine variety show last evening in the battalion area. A band composed of members of the 303rd and 387th furnished the music for the occasion. Chaplain Sherwood conducted an evening vesper service also.

***** Chas. C. Francis ***** Company Reporter

Pictured: Schesslitz, Germany - band composed of members of the 303rd and 387th (RBergstrom Collection)



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(RBergstrom Collection)



Pictured: Schesslitz, Germany - band composed of members of the 303rd and 387th
(RBergstrom Collection)



28 Mar 1945 – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)
 We were trucked for 5 days to Camp Old Gold near Le Havre waiting transport home.

28 May 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G
– Move to Camp Old Gold

Began motor move to Camp Old Gold. 97th division rear in field at Memmelsdorf from 15- 31 May 1945.

28 May 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Lovebend, Germany – 0800 Lt Palmer left with advanced party of 3 EM 1200 changed password 1130 Lt Jennings and A/C & H/T drivers * assist drivers. Left for new location.

29 May 1945 - Chas. C. Francis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Daily New Report * CO "M" ** 386th INF **

The company remained in the battalion bivouac area near the town of Schesslitz, Germany. The strength of the company has increased since yesterday. It now stands at 151 EM and 8 Officers. The training schedule for today was routine. Preparations are being made for the movement to Camp Old Gold. The morale of the troops is excellent. A new officer, 2nd LT. W.H. Farmer formerly assigned to the 5th division has joined Co. "M." LT. L.H. Mattes, who was injured in the Ruhr Pocket, has returned to the U.S. for further hospitalization. ***** Chas. C. Francis ***** Company Reporter

29 May 1945 - Tues– 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Place: Convoy to Camp Old Gold, France – 0500 left lovebend on road march to Camp Old Gold, France. Some of the towns INGER passed thru on road march were Bamberg, Schweinfurt, Ashaffen, Burg, Oppenheim, Worrstadt. 1800 Convoy closed army bivouac area at Kaiserslautern and refueled vehicles and spent the night. A total of 214 miles were covered for day.

May 1945 - James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

A long train of box cars, called 40 and 8's, was assembled and we were loaded 20-30 men in each car with lots of straw bedding. The train moved slowly through bombed out cities - Frankfurt, Nuremberg, Cologne - and through countryside devastated. We would pile out and pick cherries, clean out a green onion field, build little fires to heat coffee and chase after the train. Frankfurt was in ruins with this beautiful cathedral, practically untouched, in the middle of the city.

The Division was ordered to Marseille, France, to be shipped through the Mediterranean to the Pacific Theatre. Instead, the trains were diverted to Rouen and Le Harve, France; and Pres. Truman ordered the troops home for 30 days, according to rumors. We arrived at Camp Old Gold on June 16 and sailed into New York Harbor June 25. It was a thrilling sight to see the Statue of Liberty! My ship was diverted to Boston for some ungodly reason. The homecoming celebration was short-lived, for we were loaded on trains with only chair cars and started the long journey to El Paso. We met trains of German prisoners in sleeper cars. We were black with soot, tired, and mad without a decent haircut in six months. The barber shops in Ft. Bliss were mobbed.

30 May 1945,– Brent J Morrison 2nd LT. 386th Assistant Adjutant – Regimental History

The regiment moved from Schesslitz, Germany, to Camp Old Gold, France by motor and rail during the period 30 May 1945 to 4 June 1945.

30 May 1945 - Chas. C. Francis 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M

Daily New Report * CO "M" ** 386th INF **

The company is still stationed in the battalion bivouac area near the town of Schesslitz, Germany. The strength of the company has again changed -. There are now 150 EM and 8 Officers present for duty. There was not training schedule made up for today. There was a general police-up in the area. The motor convoy crossed the I.P. at 0433. The morale of the troops is excellent. PFC Walter Block, who was recently injured while serving with the 12th corps, has returned to the States for further hospitalization.

***** Chas. C. Francis ***** Company Reporter

30 May 1945- Wed – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Convoy to Camp Old Gold, France – 0830 convoy crossed IP to continue road march to Camp Old Gold, France. Convoy crossed Rhine River and on into France and closed Metz France at 1800 to bivouac for the night. 1800 Troop was given passes into town at Metz until 2300 – total mileage for day by convoy was 90 miles.

31 May 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

All units EN route to Camp Old Gold (Via Bamberg, Kaiserlautern, Metz, Mars Latour, Reims.)

31 May 1945 – Thur – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Place: Convoy to Camp Old Gold, France – 0805 Left Bivouac area to continue road march to Camp Old Gold, France. 1830 Closed Bivouac area to spend the night at Soissons, France. Total mileage covered for day is 157 miles.

June

1 Jun 1945 – Fri - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Passed thru Soissons to Camp Old Gold (699 Miles from eastern front to Camp Old Gold)

1 Jun 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Place: Camp Old Gold, France –
0920 Left Bivouac area Soissons France to continue road march to Old Gold, France.
1745 Closed Camp Old Gold to complete road march. 133 miles covered on last day of convoy. 1830 63 Officers & EM attached from ordnance and QM Company for rations only. Troop was reformed upon arrival at Camp Old Gold where advance party and combat vehicles drivers met convoy.

2 Jun 1945 – Sat – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Camp Old Gold, France – Troop spend the morning improving the area.
1800 troop issues combat Jackets.
1400 Major Yate visited CP and ordered one officer and 1 ¼ ton driver to drive to Soissons, France and meet APO (which is on the move) and bring them straight thru to Camp Old Gold. 1500 Lt Palmer and Pfc. Blood left to meet APO trucks.

3 Jun 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Camp Old Gold, France – troop spent the morning with free time for all members and attended church, washed clothing etc.
1700 LT Palmer and Pfc. Blood returned to troop 1800 OM & Ordnance (spelling?) personal released for attachment to troop for meals since their own organization have arrived at Camp Old Gold.

3 Jun 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Arrived at Camp Old Gold, France June 3.

4 Jun 1945 – Mon – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Camp Old Gold, France –
0830 Tec/4 Zajac and Tec/5 Gossard prepared to go on advanced party for troop
1100 Troop was paid May Pay
1400 T/4 Zajac and T/5 Gossard left on advanced party.
1430 Lt Walther read the A/W to troop

5 Jun 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Camp Old Gold, France –

0700 troop had dog tag check

0800 Troop C.O. read and explained the 28th AW to troop

1400 troop turned in all used equipment and helmets

2300 two EM and one officer were notified that they could go on pass to Paris. LT Jennings, T/4 Amaral and Cpl. Cossman to go on pass.

Pictured: Captain James Conley playing baseball in France. (RRapesky Collection)



5 Jun 1945 - -- Typhoon off Okinawa damages battleships.

Picture: Graveyard in France (RBergstrom Collection)



10 Jun 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Camp Old Gold, France –

0400 LR Lewis, M/SGT Richardson, LT Yenny, T/5 Cronan returned from pass to Paris.
1030 General Hasley, Division CE visited troop area and talked to CO for about 10 minutes.

1230 Completed packing up all Francs and Marks from troop to be converted into U.S. Currency.

11 Jun 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Camp Old Gold, France – Troop spend the morning with last minute re-adjustments of equipment etc. for trip. Troop received ship # and name and spend the afternoon filling out customer forms.

12 Jun 1945, Tues. – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

On June 12, while we were waiting to load on transports to take us back to the United States, we got a 12 hour pass to Paris. We did some sightseeing – saw the Arche De Triumph, Notre Dame Cathedral, the Champs D’Elessey and a few other notable sights.

Picture Paris (RBergstrom Collection)



Picture provided by Edward H Theiss 386th Infantry Regiment, HQTRS Company 3rd Bn in Paris



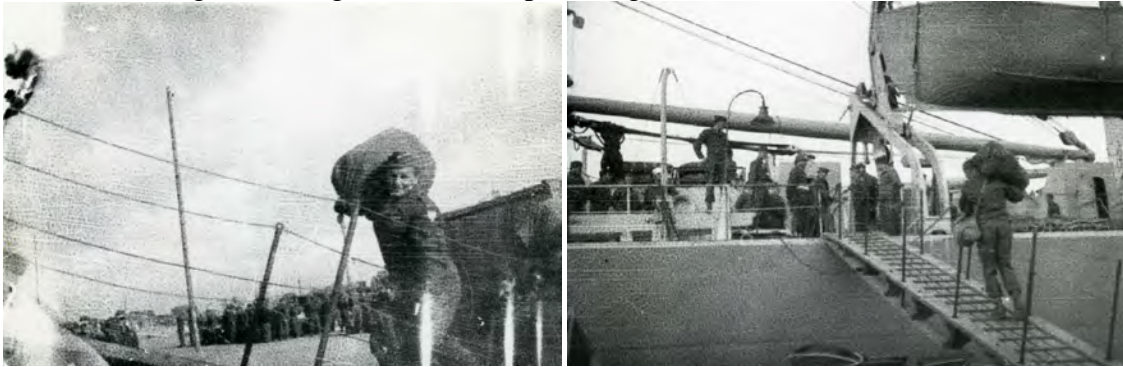
12 Jun 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Camp Old Gold, France –

0730 All baggage to go in the hole of the ship was taken from troop area.

0930 all baggage was returned to troop (reason) because all EM will carry duffel bags on board ship and they will not be stored in the hole.

Picture: Carrying duffel bags on board ship (RBergstrom Collection).



1620 General Hasley, aided by Major Fanning, in a formal formation held in troop area awarded the following officers and EM the bronze star, Captain Swainbank, 1st Lt. Walther, Tec/5 Noyes, Pvt. Silver. The CG also commended the troop for operations against the enemy in Germany and Czechoslovakia. Troop received notice that the boarding date to load ship was changed from 14 June to 15 of June.

1900 Cpl. Cancellia received commendation from the C.G. as to his work during operations by driving the Gen M-20.

13 Jun 1945, Tues. – Paul R Allen 386th Infantry Regiment, Hqts. Company (Also Company C)

General Eisenhower had issued orders that they could overload the transports by letting some GI's sleep on deck, to speed up the process. We were lucky enough to get bunks below deck. It was a much better voyage home – in June, than crossing in January.

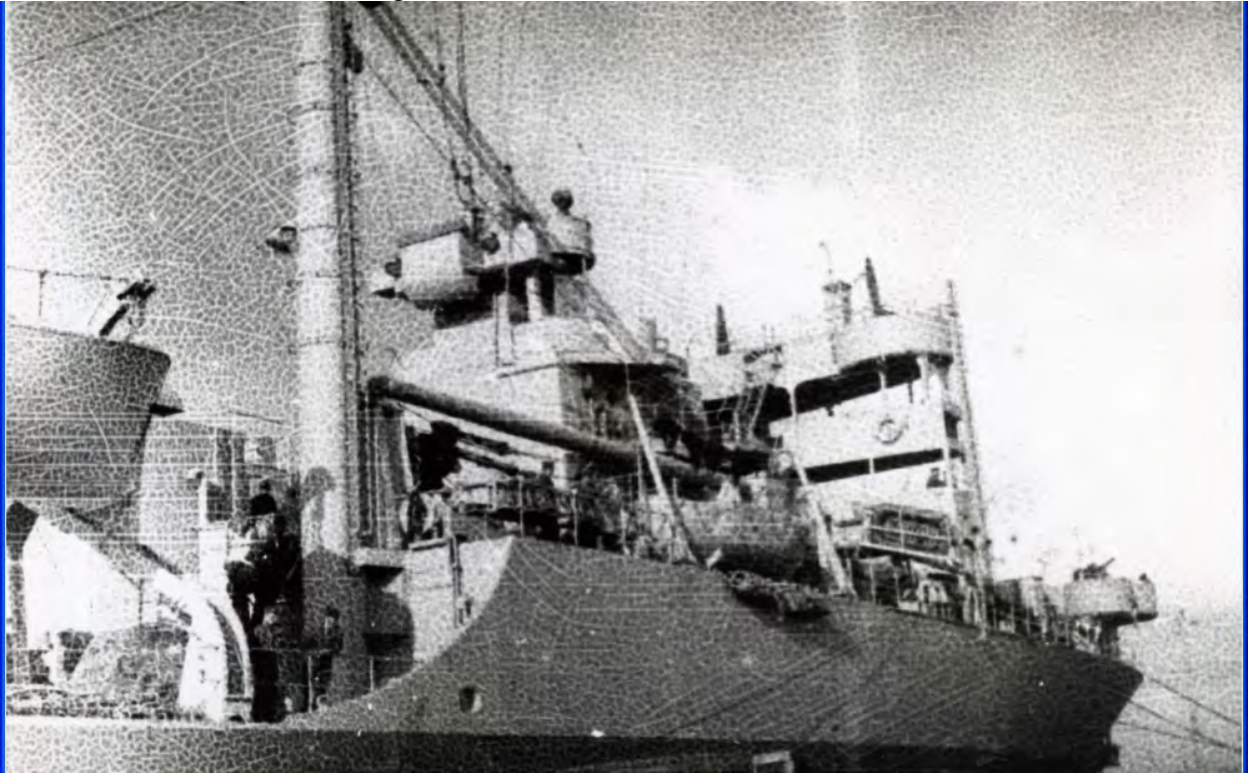
13 June 1945 - St. Louis Review from June 13, 1945 which states that several men from the 386th infantry, 97th division went with the division chaplain Capt. George Phillips (from Watertown, NY) to see German Stigmatic Theresa Neuman.

Picture: Marine Panther (RBergstrom Collection)



On June 13, we boarded the US Merchant Marine ship the MARINE PANTHER, and headed for Boston Harbor. We disembarked at Fort Miles Standish outside Boston and boarded trains for Fort Dix. We were granted 31 day leave.

Picture: Marine Panther (RBergstrom Colleciton)



I do not recall too many details of the month leave, except that Bev was in the Army and was on duty and we could not be together during my leave time.

I know that mother and dad had been saving and scrounging ration stamps for gasoline and meats, etc. Apart from that, mother bought a watermelon a day for the entire thirty days I was home – it obviously was one of my favorites.

On August 1, we left Fort Dix by sleep for Fort Bragg, to rejoin the Division and to see what new assignments lay ahead.

13 Jun 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Camp Old Gold, France – Troop spent the day readying all members for boat trip with the EM getting showers etc.

14 Jun 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Camp Old Gold, France – 0800 troop turned in all blankets and checked over all camp property to turn. 1430 troop had physical inspection (short arm). 1800 troop received American money in return for French, francs and German Marks.



15 Jun 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Camp Old Gold, France and Marine Angel – troop left area for Le Havre to mount ship for return voyage to U.S.

Jun 1945- Sat- The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

In the middle of June, the 97th shipped out of Le Havre on the *Brazil* and several other troopships. In the latter part of June, the Trident Division arrived in New York, received a grand welcome home from the fireboats and the civilian populace, and proceeded by train to Camp Shanks, near Nyack, New York. The soldiers then received thirty-day furloughs.

1945 – Murray Garrett 303rd Infantry Regiment

Murray's division was one of the first to return stateside and was "double loaded" on an ocean liner for the trip home. Once again, Murray's week at sea was spent mostly standing in line for chow. "It sure was good and thrilling to see the Statue of Liberty come into sight!" he declared. His meal in New Jersey that evening was the first good meal he'd had in 6 months.

He used the 30-day furlough he received after he arrived at Fort Bragg to go home. It was during this trip that he met his first wife. On his return to Fort Bragg after another short leave, he learned that a tremendous bomb had been dropped on Japan. As his division left Fort Bragg they heard about the second bomb and the surrender of Japan.

Another bumpy ride on another troop train deposited Murray in Tacoma, WA, where he boarded yet another ship. Conditions on that troop ship were even more crowded, and the

cold weather confined the men below decks most of the time. However, conditions deteriorated even more when the ship crossed the equator, for the intense cold was replaced by a nearly unbearable heat.

Eventually the ship reached the Leyte Gulf in the Philippines. It remained there for one day before proceeding on, its passengers never once allowed to set foot on shore. Landing in Yokohama, Japan, they underwent a week of constant rain in a large tent camp located between Yokohama and Tokyo. Murray was impressed with the apparent lack of animosity toward the Americans by the Japanese, even after all the devastation.

16 Jun 1945 – 97th Division left for Le Havre, 16 June 1945, for redeployment to the Pacific

16 Jun 1945 - James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn
The division left for Le Havre, 16 June 1945, for redeployment to the Pacific

16 Jun 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G
Le Havre in Convoy (2nd Bn on ship #10312-G) 2nd Bn on troopship “Marine Panther”, 97th HQ on “Brazil”

16 Jun 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Marine Angel, Atlantic Ocean – The Majority of the army personnel aboard became sea sick with the water on the rough side but moral was excellent.

16 Jun 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Marine Angel – 0715 troop arrived Le Havre and dismounted from trucks to await boarding orders. 0800 Red Cross Unit served hot coffee and donuts to all troops boarding ship. 0900 troop boarded the Marine Angel for return trip to U.S. 1400 Marine Angel left LeHarve and headed into the open sea.

17 Jun 1945, – Brent J Morrison 2nd LT. 386th Assistant Adjutant – Regimental History
On 17 June 1945, the 386th Infantry sailed from Le Havre, France, arriving in Boston, Mass., on 25 June 1945 and moved by rail to Camp Myles Standish, Mass. Personnel of the Regiment began reforming at Fort Bragg, N.C. after completion of a month’s TDY for rest and recuperating.

17 Jun 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Marine Angel, Atlantic Ocean – Majority of men in troop awoke feeling much better and stomachs that were a lot steadier than the day before

17 Jun 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D
Left France June 17 on the 'U.S.S. Brazil'.

Jun 1945 - Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

The division was shipped back to the States in June 1945 and landed in Boston, Massachusetts. After a 30-day furlough, we were to report to Ft. Bragg, North Carolina.

Jun 1945 -James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

After cleaning up, and with my 30 day furlough, I started for the bus station. I bumped into Jim "PeeWee" O'Neal who was driving to Colorado Springs. We drove all night, through Santa Fe, Taos, into Springer by daylight. My folks didn't have any warning that I was back in the states. Daddy was coming out of the house on the back porch to milk the cows when we drove up. He started hollering and crying and woke everyone up and we had a big reunion there on the porch.

I spent one week in Denver with Trudy Page. We had been writing to each other for three years. And she was now a student at Michigan Univ. We promised to wait for each other until the war was over, she was my first love, my first romance, but time and distance was too great and we drifted apart before I was discharged. I never learned what happened to Gertrude Page.

Jun 1945 –William C Martin JR 389th FA Bn

Bill's unit returned to the United States and the men were given 30 days furlough with the understanding that they would reassemble and participate in the invasion of Japan. The men reported to Ft. Bragg, North Carolina for additional training. They then boarded a train for a seven-day trip to Ft. Lawton near Seattle where the 97th was assembling. However almost every man in Bill's battalion – the 389th – came down with amoebic dysentery and the 97th left without them. The 389th was broken up and given stateside duty.

17 Jun 1945 – Transmitted herewith Regimental history of the 386th Infantry Regiment for the year 1945

On 17 June 1945, the 386th Infantry sailed from Le Harve, France arriving at Boston, Massachusetts on 25 June 1945 and moved by rail to Camp Kyles, Standish, Massachusetts. Personnel of the Regiment began firing at Fort Bragg, N.C. after completion of a month's TDY for rest and recuperating.

23 Jun -- Written by Unknown- 303rd Infantry

The 97th (Trident) Infantry Division, the second of the combat units Enroute from the European Theater of Operations to the Pacific, arrived in the United States for redeployment furloughs late in June, 1945.

Preceded by a small group of division headquarters personnel, the three major contingents of the Division, with 14,184 officers and men on their rosters, crossed the ocean on the transports Marine Angel, Brazil, and Marine Panther.

The Marine Angel, with 1,463 members of the division aboard arrived at New York on June 23, 1945, and proceeded up the Hudson River to Piermont, New York. Men were debarked from the Angel to small craft, went ashore, and proceeded by truck to Camp Shanks, for processing preparatory to entraining for the Fort Devens, Massachusetts,

reception center, in the case of New England men, with others going to twenty- one like centers throughout the United States.

18 - 23 Jun 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Marine Angel, Atlantic Ocean – Marine Angel arrived in New York port and picked up pilot. The troop transferred to ferry from Marine Angel. The troop debarked at Piemount Pier and met trucks and moved out to camp Shanks. The troop arrived at Camp Shanks and were assigned quarters and were fed.

24 Jun 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Camp Shanks, New York – troop spend the day preparing to leave on furloughs

24 Jun – – Written by Unknown- 303rd Infantry

The second contingent arrived in New York on Sunday, June 24, and included 6,520 men and officers, aboard the Brazil. Docking at Pier 84, North River, the men went by ferry and rail to Camp Shanks for processing and the trip to Devens.

The third group, comprising the 386th Infantry, came into the Port of Boston, aboard the Panther, on June 24. The regiment with 3,199 men on its rosters proceeded by truck to Camp Myles Standish, near Taunton, Massachusetts, and arrived at Devens, Tuesday morning.

24 Jun 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Arrived at New York June 24, 1945. Went to Camp Shanks.

25 Jun 1945 – Iowa - Ames Daily Tribune – Monday: Front Page

INFANTRY VETERANS ARRIVE

Boston – some 3,000 Infantry Veterans of the European war have docked at Boston. The men, who arrived on the boat “Marine Panther”, are members of the 386th Infantry Regiment which is part of the 97th Division. Other units of the 97th have docked at New York.

25 Jun 1945 – Milwaukee Journal – Monday

MORE RUHR VETERANS ARRIVE IN NEW YORK.

Boston, Mass. – The entire 386th Infantry regiment of the 97th Division – 3,199 strong – heroes of the bitter battle that helped close the Ruhr pocket, arrived Monday at the army base aboard the transport Marine Panther. (More than 6,500 other soldiers of the 97th arrived in New York City Sunday on the transport Brazil.

More Ruhr Veterans Arrive in New York

Boston, Mass.,—(AP)—The entire 386th infantry regiment of the 97th division—3,199 strong—heroes of the bitter battle that helped close the Ruhr pocket, arrived Monday at the army base aboard the transport Marine Panther. (More than 6,500 other soldiers of the 97th arrived in New York City Sunday on the transport Brazil.)

25 Jun 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

White Bn Arrive at Boston, Poe, CP Myles Standish, Along with 3,199 Men of 386th Infantry.

25 Jun 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Camp Shanks, New York – Troop split up in groups and left at various times throughout the day for 30 day recuperation furloughs to various camps though out the U.S.

25 Jun 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Left Shanks June 25.

26 Jun 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Arrived at Fort Bragg, N.C. June 26.

27 Jun 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Got 32 days furlough June 27.

27 Jun 1945 – Special Orders Number 178 from Army Service Forces, Second Service Command, Reception Station NO 2, 1262d SCU Personnell Center, Fort Dix, New Jersey. Following EM unless otherwise specified attached this RW WP therefrom pt designated in connection with recuperation. Upon arrival thereat EM are granted thirty Days for recuperation upon exp of which they will resume compl with this order and ret to this sta rptg 29 Jul 1945 for further movt in groups to the Assemble Sta of their unit..... by order of LT COL Chesterson (Distibution: Ft Bragg, NC)

Summary of European Tour of Duty – Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

97th Infantry Division:

Lost 188 Men KIA

721 WIA

26 died of Wounds

*Captured 2,000 Square miles of territory
48,796 prisoners of war*

Company "G" (George) 2nd Bn (Teamster White) lost 10 Men KIA, lost 13 men WIA (Three of whom returned to duty same day wounded), ended war with 7 men MIA (Schorling & Browns's squad), had 16 men sick, non-battle of whom 7 had to be evacuated, others returned to duty same day as reported sick and received 31 men as replacements (two of whom are KIA and one of whom was in the MIA squad)

28 Jun 1945 - Thu. – Written by Unknown- 303rd Infantry

Delayed by hurricane winds for several days, the transport Marine Raven carrying 3,002 men of the 97th Division including the 387th Infantry Regiment did not reach the port of New York until the night of June 28.

The men on the Brazil and the Angel received the standard welcome prepared by the New York Port of Embarkation Army Service Forces. They were serenaded by WAC bands aboard small boats which cruised alongside of the transports as they steamed up the bay, harbor and river at New York, and escorted by harbor craft carrying the press and photographers.

Other ships in the harbor and harbor craft sounded their whistles as men crowded the decks and lined the rails to get the first good look of their homeland. At the Pier 86, Red Cross personnel were on hand to distribute coffee, lemonade and crullers. Similar welcome home ceremonies occurred at Boston Harbor for the Panther.

High spots at Camps Shanks and Myles Standish was the "homecoming meal", featured by steaks, ice cream and all the fresh milk the men wanted, all of which was greatly appreciated after five months of overseas rations — and the opportunity to phone the good news to the home folks.

Then the long, and frequently tedious, processing there and at Devens, and finally two or three days after debarkation, leave orders, the last long miles from Devens to Connecticut, and — home.

At the conclusion of the furlough periods the division is to be reassembled at Fort Bragg, N. C, for retraining and eventual embarkation from a West Coast Port for the Pacific Theater of Operations.

July

5 July, Thu. -- General of the Army Douglas MacArthur announces the liberation of the Philippines.

7 July, - -- President Truman, Secretary of State James F. Byrnes, and Fleet Admiral William D. Leahy embark in heavy cruiser Augusta (CA-31) for Antwerp, Belgium, on the first leg of their trip that will ultimately take them to Potsdam.

13 July, – Italy declares war on Japan.

16 July, Mon. – First atomic bomb test is held at Alamogordo, New Mexico.

17 July, – Potsdam (TERMINAL) Conference begins. Attended by President Truman, British Prime Minister Churchill and Soviet Premier Stalin, this will be the last wartime meeting of the heads of state of those respective powers.

27 July, – Potsdam Declaration calling for unconditional surrender is delivered to the Japanese government. The Japanese, however, ignore the ultimatum, prompting President Truman to approve plans to drop atomic weapons on Japan.

28 Jul 1945 - Saturday - Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

On July 25, around 8 a.m., we heard an unusual number of sirens from the street outside our hotel on 34th Street. I went down to the street and found the reason. A B-52 bomber on its way from Boston was attempting to land at Newark Airport. The visibility was poor, and the plane crashed into the upper floors of the Empire State Building. All the people on the plane were killed, as were several in the building. (Note: Thomas is on furlough with his wife on a trip in New York at this time) (Note document states 25 Jul 1945 but the plane crash was 28 Jul 1945 – see picture below)



Caney Crew: Aircraft, "PRIVY DONNA" 131658 RU-A
 554th B.S., 386th B.G. Back row L to R: R.L. Stevenson (C/P)
 A.L. Caney (P); J.B. Watzlavick (B/N). Center: L to R
 J. Hough (R/G); D.E. Coffman (E/G); C. Bates (A/G).
 Front: L to R Nathan Singer (Armorer); F.E. Toomey (Line
 Chief); Oakley Kidwell (Assistant Crew Chief).

A. Caney Collection.

Note: July 28, 1945—Pilot Lt. Col. William F. Smith from the
 457th B. G. had taken off from Bedford Airport in Massachusetts
 with a B-25 Mitchell Bomber—destination, Newark Airport. On
 board with him were two military hitch hikers, one of whom was
 Lieutenant Robert L. Stevenson a pilot from the 386th B.G. The
 bomber emerged from a cloud at approximately 900 feet among
 the New York City skyscrapers—the plane crashed into the 79th
 floor of the Empire State Building, killing all three occupants!

29 Jul 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D
 Came back to Fort Bragg July 29.....

30 Jul 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G - Regrouping and Retraining for Japanese Tour
 "Company 15" accumulated after rest and recreation furloughs.

30 Jul 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: FT Bragg, North Carolina – 2 Officer's arrived at FT Bragg, North Carolina on first train of division troops to return from furlough

31 Jul 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Entertained through Emporia, Virginia and arrived at Fort Bragg, North Carolina for retraining

31 Jul 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: FT Bragg, North Carolina – 1 Officer and 47 EM returned from furlough and reported to FT Bragg

31 Jul 1945 – Welcome Is Extended 97th – Unknown writer

A delegation of Fayetteville citizens led by Mayor J. Scott McFadyen and Congressman J. Bayard Clark called on Brigadier General Milton B. Halsey, commanding general of the 97th Infantry Division Tuesday morning to extend to officers and men of the 97th a welcome to Fayetteville and this section of North Carolina. General Halsey received the visitors at his headquarters. He conducted them on a tour of the Division Area and to the rifle ranges, where men of the 97th already are engaged in specialized training. While on the range each of the visitors fired the M-1 rifle. Later the group had lunch with General Halsey and members of his staff at the division staff mess in the area. Making up the delegation were Mayor McFadyen, Congressman Clark, Oscar P. Breece, president of the Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce; William Shaw, Fayetteville and Fort Bragg postmaster; Charles R Wilson, publisher of the Fayetteville Observer, and A. E. Dixon, secretary of the Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce. Brigadier General John T. Kennedy, post commander, was unable to accompany the visitors to the Division area. Among members of General Halsey's staff with whom the visitor's talked Brigadier General Frank H Partridge, assistant division commander and Brigadier General Sherman V Hasbrouck, division artillery command. The 97th, second full combat division to return to this country from the battlefield of Europe, is reassembling at Fort Bragg. A majority of the officers and men have arrived, and many have visited Fayetteville in recent days.

31 July, – Destroyers of Destroyer Squadron 25, conducting anti-shipping sweep in Suguru Gulf, bombard railroad yards and industrial area of Shimuzu, Japan.

August

1 Aug 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: FT Bragg, North Carolina – 1 Officer and 5 EM reported to FT Bragg to duty from furlough

2 Aug 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: FT Bragg, North Carolina – 13 EM reported to troop from furlough

2 August, Thu. – Potsdam (TERMINAL) Conference attended by President Truman, British Prime Minister Clement Attlee (who had replaced Churchill as prime minister in the July general elections in Britain), and Russian Premier Stalin, ends.

3 Aug 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: FT Bragg, North Carolina – 1 Officer and 15 EM reported duty to troop at Ft Bragg from furlough

4 Aug 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: FT Bragg, North Carolina -1 Officer and 19 EM returned to troop from furlough. Captain Swainbank took over troop on return. 19 new EM joined the troop from FT Riley

5 Aug 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Place: FT Bragg, North Carolina – Sunday troop had the day off

6 August, Mon. -- USAAF B-29 "Enola Gay" (509th Composite Group) drops atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Honshu; USN Commander William S. Parsons is the weaponeer on this mission.

1945 Invasion of Japan Plans –

The WWII Untold Story - Deep in the recesses of the National Archives in Washington, D.C., hidden for nearly four decades lay thousands of pages of yellowing and dusty documents stamped "Top Secret". These documents, now declassified, are the plans for Operation Downfall, the invasion of Japan during World War II. Only a few Americans in 1945 were aware of the elaborate plans that had been prepared for the Allied Invasion of the Japanese home islands. Even fewer today are aware of the defenses the Japanese had prepared to counter the invasion had it been launched.

http://www.ussnewjersey.org/new_page_2.htm

6 Aug 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Unknown to U.S. Atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and on 9 Aug 1945 Atomic Bomb dropped on Nagasaki.

6 Aug 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: FT Bragg, North Carolina – 6 EM returned from furlough

7 Aug 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: FT Bragg, North Carolina – 1 Officer and 4 EM returned from furlough

8 Aug 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: FT Bragg, North Carolina – 2 EM reported to troop upon return from furlough. Pfc. Harper reported to troop after furlough. He was wounded in Europe and had been dropped.

9 Aug 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: FT Bragg, North Carolina – Two EM returned from furlough to duty with troop

10 Aug 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: FT Bragg, North – 14 men reported from furlough to troop. 7 EM left troop for REPL BN 804 Ft Bragg, North Carolina.

11 - 12 Aug 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: FT Bragg, North Carolina – Routine weekend duties for troop over weekend with men going on passes at noon Saturday. Troop billeted 10 men for head ARTY Sunday

13 Aug 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: FT Bragg, North Carolina – 1400 the men billeted by TR for Field ARTY went to Field ARTY area – 1500 LT Jennings returned from furlough to duty. Troop issued new clothing.

13 Aug 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

VJ Day

13 Aug 1945 – 97th Division Men Like Fort Bragg and Vicinity, Comments Disclose – Writer Unknown

It's true, that whenever a division moves... its news. But to the men in that unit the important issues are those which pertain to their daily activities... on and off duty. While men of the 97th Division haven't been in the Fort Bragg area a sufficient length of time to have surveyed the surrounding vicinity in the best military manner, they have formed some definite opinions. The following observations are not a complete cross section of the entire division... But they might well be. Pfc. Daniel Roman of Company E, 387th Infantry, whose home is in Connecticut, had this to say "Fort Bragg and Fayetteville are better than most of the camps and camp towns I've seen, but personally having just returned from 30 days at home – all I want to do is go back." From Richmond, VA Pfc. Alexander, another 97th Division soldier said: "I've been to town only once; that was to attend services at the First Baptist church. I liked it very much and intend to go again. "Tec 5 John McCollom HQ 1st BN 386th Infantry whose home state is Georgia, commented: "There are quite a few good looking gals in town – but the ones I saw were convoyed by three or more GI's. Next time I'll volunteer for the advanced party." Sgt. Hugh Adkins of Mt. Vernon, NY who is in HQ Btry 365th Field artillery Bn declared: "I'm gonna enjoy this while I can." A Tar Heel, William H. Lester of Spring Hope, N. C. now in HQ Btry, 365th F. A. BN was brief; "This is great! Ninety miles to home!"

14 Aug 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: FT Bragg, North Carolina –

1300 Troop was read 28th A/W

1330 Troop received shots at dispensary

1914 received official notification that the war was over – Pfc Blair admitted to station hospital

0805 Pfc. Gordin returned to troop. Was dropped from troop in Czech when he was placed in hospital.

14 August, – Japan accepts the provisions of the Potsdam Declaration and agrees to surrender ("VJ Day"). General of the Army Douglas MacArthur is named Supreme Allied Commander to receive the enemy's capitulation and conduct the occupation of his homeland.

15 Aug 1945- The 97th Infantry Division during World War II

The officers and enlisted men of the 97th Infantry Division reassembled at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, during the first few days of August. At Fort Bragg, soldiers prepared baggage and equipment for travel to Fort Lawton, Washington. They received orientation for duty in the Pacific and a very limited amount of training. On August 6 an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan. Three days later, Nagasaki became the target of the second atomic bomb. Within a few days, Japan surrendered. For the soldiers of the Trident Division, Victory over Japan (V-J) Day, August 15, was an occasion for great rejoicing. If the soldiers of the 97th had to go to Japan, it was better to go as an occupation force. On August 19 units began to leave Fort Bragg for the west coast. It took almost a week for the troop trains to cross the country. In late August and early September, units of the 97th Infantry Division left Fort Lawton, boarded ships to Seattle, and sailed for Japan.

15 Aug 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: FT Bragg, North Carolina – Train to FT Lawton Washington. Troop entrained for movement to POE, Seattle, Washington to detrain in Seattle Washington and moved to FT Lawton by trucks.

17 Aug 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Left Fort Bragg Aug. 17.

19 August 1945, – Brent J Morrison 2nd LT. 386th Assistant Adjutant – Regimental History

On 19 August 1945 the Regiment began departing by rail for Fort Lawton, Washington, and closed on 25 August 1945.

19 Aug 1945 - Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

At Ft. Bragg, shortly after the first atom bomb was dropped on Japan, we were alerted. We boarded trains and left for Ft. Lewis near Seattle, Washington. The division or what was left of it since quite a few had not returned from furlough, sailed from Seattle on a troop transport.

1945 Homer Wilson 387th Infantry Regiment, Company D

The Secretary of War ordered our division to prepare for the invasion of the Japanese homeland. We were to sail to Japan to make an amphibious landing. Once more, we boarded a troop train that took us to Ft. Lewis, WA. Crossing the Pacific Ocean in a troop carrier ship, at one point we had to detour about 100 miles to avoid a typhoon. The news came that the second atomic bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima. Japan surrendered just before we arrived, but our unit was ordered to stay there as part of the occupation force. We set up camp inside a huge Japanese aircraft hangar.

I had not seen my brother Hobert since the early days of the war, at least three years. I knew he'd been serving in the South Pacific theatre of operations and believed that he was in the Philippines. I wrote him a letter from Kumagawa, Japan, asking him to let me know how he was doing. A few days later after lunch, I walked outside. I could hardly believe my eyes—Hobert was standing there, right in front of me!

He'd been stationed in Tokyo and had located me through the military hotline after receiving my letter.

My sergeant told me to take the afternoon off, and Hobert and I had a wonderful reunion that day. We were able to visit each other often during that time in Japan.

Along with occupation forces, I was in Japan for most of the next year. The country had been nearly destroyed, but there was a spirit about the Japanese people that could not be killed. As bad as it was everywhere over there, they would rebound. My division was reassigned and I reported to the Quartermaster. My job was to drive a two-and-a-half ton truck and make runs to Tokyo to deliver rations. In the spring of 1946, the Army told me to go home, so I went back to Kentucky for a month to visit my family. In June of that year, I married the loveliest woman on earth and we enjoyed the next 61 years of life together.

In 1993, Ruby and I traveled to Montana to reconnect with my Company D Army buddies and their wives. What a wonderful reunion we all had. We've gotten together several times since then, and the numbers keep shrinking. But the bonds that connect us are stronger than any other connections in my life.

19 Aug 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

97th Infantry Division left Fort Bragg for Fort Lawton Seattle, Washington via troop trains on various routes.

19 Aug 1945 – Transmitted herewith Regimental history of the 386th Infantry Regiment for the year 1945

On 19 August 1945 the Regiment began departing by rail for Fort Lawton, Washington and closed on 25 August 1945 and sailed 28 August 1945 for Cebu, Philippines Islands.

23 Aug 1945 – Newsman Held on Troop Train – ST Paul – unknown writer

Commenting editorially today on the arrest of two of its staff members by officers of a troop train passing through here Wednesday night, the St Paul Pioneer Press declared "a commendable wartime record of deference to civil rights, including those of the press, can be marred speedily by such ill-informed and irresponsible conduct." The two newsman – Jack Weinberg, a reporter, and Dave Dornberg a camera man – were interviewing and picturing members of the 97th division when officers aboard the train ordered them held for military police. Weinberg said the soldiers were volubly protesting their transfer to the Pacific area after having fought five and one-half months in Germany. Dornberg had been taking photos of the sign-bedecked cars in which the men road. The newsman said as they sought to leave the station with their interviews and pictures a group of commissioned officers from the train surrounded them, including one

identified as Captain DeSidero who told them “these men (the troops) are under special secret orders and any pictures will have to be approved by Army authorities. The officers placed them in custody of the military police at the station the newsman said. J. R. Wiggins, editor and Fred Heaberlin, managing editor of the Pioneer Press called Lieut. Col. Charles J. West, Security and Intelligence Office here for the Army’s Seventh Service Command. West ordered immediate release of the prisoners, along with their interviews and pictures.

23 Aug 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: FT Lawton, Washington – Troop had T/S 21 showdown and turned in excess equipment and drew gas mask – received new address.

23 Aug 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Arrived at Fort Lewis, Wash. Aug. 23.

24 Aug 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: FT Lawton, Washington - Troop went to the range to fire carbines.

25 Aug 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Place: FT Lawton, Washington – Troop drew clothing and equipment and had gas mask drill in gas chamber

26 Aug 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Troops arrived at Fort Lawton

26 Aug 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop awaited orders to move

27 Aug 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop alerted to move on the 28th of August

27 August 1945, – Brent J Morrison 2nd LT. 386th Assistant Adjutant – Regimental History

The Regiment embarked on the USS General John Pope at Seattle, Washington, and closed on 27 August 1945, and sailed 28 August 1945 for Cebu, Philippine Islands.

28 Aug 1945 -James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

The 30 days passed too fast and I reported back to Ft. Bliss and was shipped immediately to Fort Bragg, NC. Where the division assembled. The troop train arrived at Seattle and the band played "Sentimental Journey" as the 97th Division sailed out of harbor on August 28.

28 Aug 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Location: FT Lawton to U.S.S. Polk - Convoy left Fort Lawton for Cebu, Philippines on Navy transport, double-loaded (12 hours daily below decks, 12 hours daily on decks)

28 Aug 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: FT Lawton to U.S.S. General Pope –
0915 Troop left FT Lawton to board ship
1030 Troop boarded ship and awaited sailing
1530 Ship moved out into harbor – ship left harbor some time during the day

28 Aug 1945 – Transmitted herewith Regimental history of the 386th Infantry Regiment for the year 1945

From Cebu, The remittal continued to Yokchama, Japan, via Leyte, Philippine Island arriving 25 September 1945.

Sep 1945 -James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

The ship stopped at Ulihe Island and Cebu, Philippines. It was steamy hot and we were tired of ships. We used GI lye soap to wash our clothes or tied a rope on them and let them drag behind in the wake of the ship. The sea was like glass. I found an open manhole in the lower deck where the jeeps were stored and the air blowing from a duct. I got a light bulb and book and spent many hours sitting in the jeep. I was lucky I was never missed. We learned the Japanese high command had surrendered to General MacArthur on the battleship Missouri, but not knowing what the soldiers and people would react, we were issued ammunition and made combat ready.

I learned later that Jewell was stationed at Manila when I was in the Philippines.

29 Aug 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: U.S.S. General Pope - Routine ship drill and actions aboard ship

30 Aug 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: U.S.S. General Pope - Routine action aboard ship

30 Aug 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Left States Aug. 30, 1945 on the 'U.S.S. Etolin'.

NESHOBA DEPARTS TODAY FOR YOKOHAMA, JAPAN

The USS Neshoba gets under way today on the final leg of its roundabout voyage from Seattle to Japan.

The special sea and anchor detail for the departure from Apra Harbor, Guam, is scheduled for 1030, with departure set for 1100.

Rumors that 400 highpoint GIs were going to board the APA for this part of the trip were denied by responsible officers. The rumor was that these men were to be bound for the United States via Yokohama.

The trip to Japan will take from four to five days.

The battleship Pennsylvania, drydocked here, was refloated yesterday and was reported to have sailed for Pearl Harbor, with only two of her four screws in operation.

31 Aug 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: U.S.S. General Pope - Routine action aboard ship

September

1 Sep, -Two civilian internment camps are located in Tokyo area; internees are evacuated in hospital ship Benevolence (AH-13).

1 Sep 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: U.S.S. General Pope - Routine action aboard ship

2 Sep 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: U.S.S. General Pope - Routine action aboard ship

2 Sep 1945- The 97th Infantry Division during World War II

On September 2, while some units were preparing to leave for Seattle, Japanese formally surrendered on the battleship Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

3 Sep 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: U.S.S. General Pope - Routine action aboard ship

04 Sep 1945 - -Rowland Bergstrom 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M (Also HQTRS)

Location: U.S.S. General Pope

Our nautical course after leaving the port of Seattle, Washington, steered at approximately a 40 degree angle, steadily losing several degree latitude each day; starting at 48 degrees from Seattle's temperate climate to the tropical heat 8 degree's N Latitude, the closeness of the equatorial radiance was very much in evidence. Our passage brought us very close to Midway in the Hawaiian chain shortly after which we crossed the International Date Line, thus gaining a day on the calendar.

4 Sep 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Location: U.S.S. Polk - We crossed International Date Line. Suddenly 04 Sep became 6 Sept 1945. Two meals a day. Atabrine tablets daily. Our ship in convoy was USS General Polk.

6 Sep 1945 - The letters in this section were shared by John Hays from Pikeville, KY. They were part of a scrapbook that he bought on Ebay. These are letters from Sergeant William

Kelly to his mother written while he was on the Neshoba enroute from Seattle to Yokohama (and a couple of days before he sailed).

Dear Mom;

Well I'll go back on my word again and write a letter. We are still here. Censorship is off and I have been given the green light to shoot the works.

We were to board the "Neshoba" at a Seattle pier on Sunday and sail the same day. We didn't. The ship had some repairs to make so we got off on Monday and returned to Fort Lawton. Then we were to board again on Wednesday.

However, a War Dept circular came out on Monday which call for screening out the high point men and upper age men. This looked very suspicious as the circular was to be released after we had sailed which made it look like the release was intended just after we sailed. It smells very definitely of a "shanghai" job.

Fearing public reaction, the W.D. told us to go ahead and screen out the eligible men. This was done and now we have lost quite a few men.

However, our group was the last one to sail. The rest of the division is on the high seas. Paul Lundstrom is among them. The question is will the eligible men from the advance be screened out overseas or left in the division. If the latter happens, there will be a whole lot of agitation.

Well, anyway our orders to sail on Wednesday were canceled and changed to Thursday. Then the news came out on Wednesday that this was canceled and we would remove all our stuff from the ship on Thursday. Then the orders were again changed. Our stuff would remain on board but we would not sail on Thursday. That is the story.

In other words, all is confusion. We don't believe the Ward Dept knows what it is doing. We do know that it is plenty scared of Congress and public opinion.

Now as the situation stands we might ship tomorrow, the next day or perhaps not for two weeks. And there is the possibility we might not ship at all.

I am acting as first sergeant of the company. If we ship overseas I certainly will be promoted to Tech Sgt and the chances are good that I will be the permanent 1st Sgt.. That is the highest rank in the non-com ranks I can attain. I would run the company.

The next age drop should get me out of the 97th Div. Wouldn't necessarily get me out of the army but it would keep me in this country if we haven't shipped. However, I don't know if that would be good or bad. As long as I stay in the army, I might as well see the world.

I haven't been getting any mail. None of us have. We are supposed to be on the high seas and our mail is going directly to Frisco and then overseas.

If we had sailed when we were supposed to, we were scheduled to stop in Hawaii for a few days. Now I don't know. If we sail from Seattle, our Postmaster will still be in Frisco.

Seattle is a very pretty city. It certainly is a city of hills but faces on a beautiful waterfront. The weather is generally very pleasant.

You might see the 97th written up in the papers. Don't believe all that you read. I read a lot already that isn't true. Nobody knows the score on anything, the W.D. least of all.

If we stay here much longer, I think our mail will be diverted to us. That is all the dope for now. If we don't shove too fast, I'll write a letter the day we sail. That is all for now.

Love to all

Billy

(over)

Latest is that we completely unload the ship tomorrow (Friday). Rumor has it that we will sail next Tuesday.

6 Sep 1945 – Only Three U.S. Division Will Be Sent to Pacific – Writer unknown

Washington, Sept 6 (UP) – The War Department has decided to send to the Pacific only three of six combat division alerted to go. Acting upon the recommendation of Gen Douglas MacArthur, the department cancelled redeployment orders for the 2nd, 8th and 95th Infantry Divisions. The 86th and 97th Infantry Divisions and the 13th Airborne Division still will be redeployed.

6 Sep 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: U.S.S. General Pope - Troop crossed International Date Line at 2400 of the 4th and skipped the 5th of the month

7 Sep 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Location: U.S.S. Polk - Men with over 45 points (including most of 97th division) would no longer leave the states

7 Sep 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: U.S.S. General Pope - Troop ship routine business

7 Sep 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Arrived in Hawaii Sept. 7.

Sep 1945 - Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

We sailed in a convoy for about five days, but since the war was over, left the convoy and headed for Cebu in the Philippines.

8 Sep 1945 - The letters in this section were shared by John Hays from Pikeville, KY. These are letters from Sergeant William Kelly to his mother written while he was on the Neshoba enroute from Seattle to Yokohama.

8 Sep 1945

Dear Mom:

Well, here is the latest news. We are again alerted for shipment. We are scheduled to again board ship. This we do on Monday and I presume we will sail either Monday night or Tuesday morning.

Right at this time I can't say whether it is the Neshoba which we boarded the first time or not. I rather think it is but I haven't seen the dope on the ship yet. Who knows? We may get aboard again and then be told to unload. However, I think that if we get aboard again that we will sail this time.

Anyway, I hope that a decision has finally been reached. It gets monotonous around here not knowing just what is going to happen next.

We took a ride in a government vehicle tonight around the post. There is one road that leads down to the bay and one skirts the ridge above the bay. It is very pretty right at sunset and very plainly in the distance we see the snow-capped Mt. Ranier. The mountain is about 100 miles from Ft. Lawton but tonight it looked like it couldn't have been more than a couple of miles away.

Also adjacent to the post here is Lake Washington. We went over there. There are a series of locks at one end of the lake through which many boats pass all day long. It is very interesting and the surrounding scenery is very, very nice.

How is Dorothy coming in regards to a job? I hope that she gets one that is to her choosing. I still haven't gotten any mail for two weeks. It evidently is still going to Frisco and then out to our overseas destination. It will catch up to me eventually.

That is all for tonight. I'll get one more letter off tomorrow night which will be the last one for some time.

Love to all,

Billy

9 Sep 1945 - The letters in this section were shared by John Hays from Pikeville, KY. They were part of a scrapbook that he bought on Ebay. These are letters from Sergeant William Kelly to his mother written while he was on the Neshoba enroute from Seattle to Yokohama (and a couple of days before he sailed).

9 September 1945

Dear Mom;

Well, some mail finally came through today. I got two letters from you all. The last one told me of your trip to Chicago.

In regards my bonds, I don't think you will get any for some time. I don't think I will get any while I was in the states. They will be resumed overseas. I'll get the pay instead for the time I was in the states.

As regards shipping, I hate to say this will be my last letter for some time. We have had so many false alerts. However we are scheduled to go aboard the "Neshoba" tomorrow (Tuesday) and will probably sail Tuesday night for Japan or the Philippines.

Whether I will get to write soon is problematical. If we stop in Hawaii, I may have the chance. If we do, we probably won't be there longer than 24 hours and if so, probably won't be allowed ashore. If so, I'll get a letter off. If not, you will have to wait until we reach our destination.

If Clarence Brewer is going overseas with his family, he is lucky. Going overseas now doesn't mean a thing. No danger, no nothing. I suppose Howard will have a lot of bragging to do about it.

I got Martha's card today. Thank her for me. I am so tremendously busy right now that I just can't write but this one letter.

Well, I will wind up now. Again, I say this will be my last letter. I hesitate saying it in view of the other false alarms.

Anyway, all is well and everything is going okay. Expect the next letter when you get it.

Love to all

Billy

10 Sep 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D
Left Hawaii Sept. 10.

10 Sep 1945 - Neshoba was assigned to carry occupation troops to the Japanese home islands. Departing 10 September with a detachment of 97th Infantry Division personnel aboard, she steamed into Tokyo Bay in early October. Then assigned to TG 16.12, the "Magic Carpet," she was employed in shuttling veterans home until March, 1946. The following month she reported to Com 19th Fleet for inactivation. Decommissioned at Stockton, 4 December, she remained a unit of the Pacific Reserve Fleet until 4 September 1958 when she was transferred to the custody of the Maritime Administration and struck from the Navy List, 1 October 1958. Since that time, into 1970, Neshoba has been laid up at Suisun Bay as a unit of the National Defense Reserve Fleet.

11 Sep, – Operation MAGIC CARPET begins.

11 Sep 1945 - -Rowland Bergstrom 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M (Also HQTRS)

Location: U.S.S. General Pope

We then proceeded eastwardly passing the tropic of cancer imaginary line, thence between Wake Island and the Marshalls, onward to the Carolines, Guam to our north where we anchored off the small island of Ulithi for refueling the 11th of September, after 14 days at sea.

For hours prior to our anchorage we passed through a strait bordered on both side with scores of tiny, barren islands of rock and sand with an occasional isle revealing tropical foliage. It was on such outposts we discovered small contingents of army and navy personnel who maintained naval repair, operated airfields and radio stations and provided refueling and supply depots. It was here we received our first glimpse of beautiful coral reefs that formed the connecting link between the chains of islands, for which the Pacific is so famous.

Although noticeable dissension was evidence among the troops relative to our hasty departure from the states before the promised disclosure of the revised discharge point plan was made public by the War Department, the moral of the troops remained high. Receiving the news over the ship's radio eight days after embarking, revealing the new critical score, however, and brought voice resignation when it was learned that 45 pointers with Foreign Service to their credit were eligible for retention in the states for it affected several hundred on board.

During daylight hours the decks were crammed with GI's bathing in the sun. Very effective too, were these hours of exposure for most of the men emerged with a healthy coat of tan. Repeated warnings failed to convince some men of the extreme penetration of the sun's rays, however, and suffered the torture of being virtually burnt to a Crips. Needless to say, more care was taken after this revelation became a reality.

11 Sep 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Location: U.S.S. Polk - Passed Ulithi in Caroline Islands, First land we had seen since leaving Fort Lawton.

11 Sep 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: U.S.S. General Pope - Ship arrived at Ulithi Islands in the Carolinas for refueling and taking off mail

12 Sep 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: U.S.S. General Pope - Ship left Ulithi Harbor at 1730 on way to the Island of Cebu

13 Sep 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: U.S.S. General Pope - Routine troop ship duties.

14 Sep 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Location: U.S.S. Polk - Pulled into Cebu, Cebu, P.I. Although full convoy did not reach there until 16 Sept 1945. No quarters were available at Cebu.

14 Sep 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: U.S.S. General Pope - Ship arrived at the Islands of CEBU at 1410 and dropped anchor at 1710

15 Sep 1945 - -Rowland Bergstrom 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M (Also HQTRS)

Location: U.S.S. General Pope

This account was started the 15th day of September, one day after having anchored off the Island of Cebu, a centrally located strip of mountainous land in the Philippine group, 500 miles, south of Manila.

Natives met us in their crude Kayak boats as we slowly made out way into the bay. Some of the natives were anxious to trade their wares of vicious looking knives, handmade sandals, sea shells, etc. Others carried freshly picked bananas and pineapple for bartering purposes. Cigarettes seemed our most valued medium of exchange. Most of the boats were long and extremely narrow in beam, necessitating an outrigger to hold steady the craft. In appearance, they reminded one of crude canoes. After a closer inspection we noted that woven bamboo was chiefly used as a covering. There were also larger boats, but less numerous than those just mentioned. Most of them were equipped with sails and appeared to be overgrown boats of the original type. Occasionally could be seen twin hulls supported by braces and carrying the customary outrigger; expertly manned they slipped through the water noiselessly.

Most of the visitors were men and young boys occasionally accompanied by a young girl who was dressed in gay clothing of varied colors. They were handsome and muscular, dark copper of color; the whiteness and perfection of their teeth astonished one. They were friendly but seemed a little shy or self-conscious. Some of them could speak English fairly well. Those who were less proficient were able to make themselves

understood by the universal sign language we have all learned to master in some degree. The children especially amused us as they dove for coins we tossed overboard; they are exceptionally alert and excellent divers, seldom return to the surface without their treasure. Many of them were stark naked but apparently unaware of their immodesty.

From our point of vantage could be seen shadowing the low plateau bordering the sea shore and extending possibly two miles inland, fantastically high and rugged mountains, covered with tropical vegetation to their very tops. To the left of our port side lie the city of Cebu, named after the island; having a pre-war population of 155,000 inhabitants, the city ranks second in size –Manila, the capitol, being the largest. Gazing through binoculars we could see standing the stone and steel structural remains of what once had been modern building or more enterprising industrialist. Dotting the shore line were hundreds of humble looking native shacks covered with thatched roofs. To our aft lay a small island barely rising from the water which served as a station for radio communication and signal towers. The island was inhabited chiefly by navy personnel and amphibious forces who were billeted in huts and tents supported on wooded foundation of framework, raising the structures from the ground. Off its shores were anchored scores of motor launches and larger amphibious boats that were undoubtedly used in landing operations a few months previous when warfare was raging both on land and in the sea for many of them were badly scarred.

Later that afternoon we were to learn that arrival was unexpected, so consequently we remained on board awaiting further new regarding our movement orders. The morning of the third day found us up and about bright and early for we had been informed excursions to the mainland had been arranged. Due to unsettled weather, however, the trip was postponed for the majority of the troops, after crew had managed to transfer 1400 men to landing craft. The sea was so rough that the huge barges moored to the ships had broken loose. It was late that night before the troops were able to board the vessel again; however, they greatly enjoyed the prolonged shore leave. The following morning the transportation commander announced that the remainder of the troops would be privileged to go ashore.

It was evident upon arrival that the city had suffered innumerable bombings; much destruction was wrought throughout a large portion of the main thoroughfare. It could be imagined, however, that this metropolis had been a peaceful, thriving city that enjoyed much culture and civilization. Business establishments had been housed in quite modern buildings of bright Spanish architecture. A large garage partially destroyed, bore the sign "Ford". Down the street 12-inch lettering bearing the name "Proctor and Gamble Trading Post" graced the wall of a huge corner building.

Units of our army were busily occupied constructing huge warehouses, the framework of which consisted of sturdy bamboo beams, to shelter thousands of tons of surplus supplies, equipment and ammunition. Included among the various items of importance to a modern army were crated trucks and jeeps that had apparently never been unpacked, weapons of all types, canvas housing facilities, food, miles of communication wire reeled on immense spools, all neatly arranged in debris cleared areas ready for storage or other disposition. In operations could be seen army manned American Caterpillars, bulldozers, two and one half and five-ton trucks. One begins to realize the vast monetary expenditure necessary to keep an army in operation. Many crews supplemented by

scores of Philippine laborers, were busy clearing away the rubble and salvaging brick and lumber.

Occupied chiefly by engineer and amphibious battalions, the presence of the 106th and 77th infantry divisions was also noted. Primarily a resting area for the 77th, it was disclosed after a period of recuperations, they were to leave for an island in Japan. Much bitter fighting was endured by this division in slightly over 100 days of combat over the Pacific. Their last major military operations were staged on the island of Okinawa. According to fellows, who were questioned, the average points of those still present ranged in the sixties, higher point men having already been screened. Anxious to be on their homeward journey, these men eagerly awaited their voyage to Japan for it was rumored further screenings would be made of eligible individuals.

Seldom could a native man or boy be seen who wasn't clothed in some article of GI clothing. Life seemed quite bearable for the troops who were permanently stationed in the city. They occupied shelters built approximately three and one-half feet off the ground. Wooden floors joined and extended by about 36 inches of woven bamboo gave the barracks a substantial appearance for combating the elements. The roofs were covered with heavy, weather-resistant canvas. The duty of the soldiers was not of a strenuous nature, their chief complaint being the lack of fresh water and their fare of concentrated canned rations.

Accosted by a native woman who was possibly in her thirties (it's difficult to determine the age of a native) we were shown a basket of fresh bananas and pineapple which she interested in disposing of for remuneration that seemed quite ample to us. Pleasant in appearance, she was clothed in a dress of rayon, wearing sandals on her feet. She spoke English fairly well. We discovered only men were interested in bartering for Cigarettes; "money" was her reply, for she desired to purchase rice. Accepting our money in lieu of the Peso, she had no difficulty in determining its value. It was quite apparent Americans had occupied this territory for some while for they are free spenders and tend to cause an inflationary market. We were told 12 bananas sold for 1 Peso (50 Cents in our money) and one pineapple brought the same amount. At any rate it proved a treat to enjoy fresh fruit.

Occasional Japanese vehicles and other equipment were seen along the roadside. Numerous signs were scrolled on walls in Japanese symbols, about the only remaining reminder of Japanese occupations, aside from the scar of scorched earth left in their wake. Many of the troops were royally entertained at the American Red Cross Canteen; it included the fortification of their bellies with food and soft drinks.

Among the souvenirs the native has to see were "Mother of Pearl" earrings and other mountings suitable for rings and stick pins. They sold for as high as 30 Pesos (\$15.00). Many of the fellows were fortunate in obtaining Japanese invasion money. Resembling the Peso in color and design, the currency bore the inscription "the Royal Bank of the Japanese".

A number of the fellows ventured from the main thoroughfare in search of tropical fruit trees; they were especially impressed by their first sight of cocoa nuts and bananas. Education institutions were numerous. Most of them closed for repair, the city boasted a college for girls, a university, many grammar schools and junior colleges. The

touch of western civilization was very evident wherever one went. American culture and economics has meant much in the making the Philippines a progressive commonwealth. Looking back over our 19 days at sea, one marvels at the proficiency of the Navy in manning a troop ship packed with several thousand passengers, safely through thousands of nautical miles without incident. To us of course, the trip seemed like an endless journey, our nerves were constantly on edge; nevertheless we had arrived thus far suffering no apparent physical ills save a general weariness caused by the closeness of our everyday existence.

Most uncomfortable proved the sleeping quarters of the enlisted personnel. Much has been written regarding life aboard a troop transport but to actually realize the unpleasant discomforts the troops are called upon to bear, it's necessary to experience the voyage as a fellow passenger. Reconverted storage holds, running deep into the ship serve as sleeping compartments. A stuffy atmosphere is always present in the overcrowded accommodations. Although ventilating systems are piped throughout, they are inadequate to properly perform their intended task. Exceedingly uncomfortable became the nights as we made our way towards the tropics. The air became stifling in the holds; five minutes after retiring in our canvas covered cots which rise in tiers of four high, our bides would perspire profusely. Upon awakening after a restless night of tossing and turning, one's temperament was far from pleasant.

At 6 A.M. every morning a mad dash was made to the washrooms which were built to accommodate a small portion of personnel at one time. One sweated out the line to await his turn. Only certain periods of the day was hard water available, this waiting and 10 minutes at the bowl furiously splashing water and hastily going through the process of shaving, for fear of trying the patience of those persons through the process of shaving, for fear of trying the patience to those persons standing in line. One learns the meaning of the word "tolerance" in a literal fashion before time has been sufficient to acclimate himself to this type of livelihood. However, the routine soon becomes a matter of course. Shortly after a new day is under way the desire to fortify oneself, caused by the constant knowing in the pit of any empty stomach, is a paramount issue for 15 hours have elapsed since nourishment was administered. Having the console oneself with two meals a day requires a normal being considerable human suffrage for the sea air give a person an enormous appetite. Occasionally the morning meal included baked beans, so traditional in our naval history; a precedent unlikely to be broken but still just a difficult to digest. Food is far from elaborate but it must be remembered the difficulty that is encountered feeding several thousand troops in a ship's mess.

An attempt is made to entertain the passengers by special service personnel. Recorded music and radio programs were everyday features over the public address system. At night, weather permitting, movies were shown on deck. After the evening meal, mess hall was quickly converted to a movie hall and compartments take turns in attending these feature. A ship's library is maintained for the pleasure of the troops aboard; reading becomes a great pastime in wiling away the long hours of leisure time. Each morning a mimeographed edition entitled "The Pacific Express" is published, keeping the troops informed of outside activities in the world. The news service is obtained over the ships radio.

A little information regarding the sea-worthy vessel we have so far spent nearly three weeks abroad; named the USS General John Pope, this ship, a sister ship of three, is the pride of the US Navy; of enormous proportions, it is one of the faster type of our troop armada. A two-stacker this ship sports a promenade deck an officer's lounge and dining room of luxurious appointments an spaciousness staterooms for naval officers and ship's crew are elaborate and modernly furnished with adjoining wash and shower rooms of tile. Due to heavily strained fresh water supplied, salt water only is available for those desiring to shower. Conveniently located aid stations are housed throughout the ship, well equipped with medication located for all emergency purposes. A modern hospital fully staffed, capable for meeting the severest cases of ills, is located off the promenade desk. Patients are accorded every comfort a permanent installation can afford.

Completely fireproof, this vessel is built chiefly of steel. One cannot imagine the available cubic space for storage and refrigeration a ship of this type provides. Picture in your mind if you can, the huge quantities of food stuffs required to feed upwards to 7500 passengers and several thousand more in event double loading is in effect, for a period of six to eight weeks with provision for emergency rations in additions. To its confines, facilities actually amount to a floating modern city which is self-sufficient in every respect.

Manned to the hilt with protective weapons ranging from machine guns to immense cannons, the fire power on this vessel was revealed at a practice drill during our voyage. Ordered to our compartments prior to the sounding of the emergency alarm, we were stunned at the roar of the reports emanating from the defensive armament. The ship literally shook from the simultaneous firing.

Exceedingly calm in direct contrast to our recent voyage in the Atlantic, we found our Pacific journey smooth-travelling, upsetting our equilibrium at no time. Little did we realize three months ago, when our division pulled up stakes in Germany and Czechoslovakia after having participating in the closing phases of the European conflict, that we should be travelling to the opposite side of the world.

15 Sep 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: U.S.S. General Pope - Troop alerted to debark but did not.. so spent the day on the ship

15 Sep 1945 - Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

We did not disembark there (Cebu) except for a four-hour period on shore to get some fresh air and exercise. After three days we sailed for Japan.

15 Sep 1945 - The letters in this section were shared by John Hays from Pikeville, KY. They were part of a scrapbook that he bought on Ebay. These are letters from Sergeant William Kelly to his mother written while he was on the Neshoba enroute from Seattle to Yokohama (and a couple of days before he sailed).

15 Sep 1945

Dear Mom:

I am writing this letter aboard ship. We are about 48 hours out of Pearl Harbor. We are due to dock there on Monday about 1 p.m..

So far the trip has been most uneventful. The seas are quite calm and very blue. The pacific seems to be much more calm than the Atlantic.

We finally sailed last Monday at 5 p.m.. There was a little excitement at the start. As the ship moved out into Puget Sound from Seattle, one of the navy men dived overboard. He didn't want to make the trip and took this opportunity to make a getaway. However, one of the ship's small boats pulled him out of the water and he was brought back aboard the "Neshoba." ** (see note below)

This ship is much smaller than the other two we rode on. We don't have quite the conveniences that we had on the others. We don't have staterooms. Thus, we have tiered bunks but no mattresses. However I was farsighted. I brought along a mattress from Ft. Lawton and on board got a cord and fixed myself up with a reading light. So, everything is all right.

The weather is beginning to get quite warm and will get warmer each day. At this particular moment, we are scheduled to stop in Pearl Harbor for several days.

Our destination from Pearl Harbor is Tacoblan, Leyte. From there it is rumored that we will go to Honshu. How true the latter is I don't know.

The weather has been very nice. The nights usually turn out to be quite pretty. The cloud formations are quite novel and the moonlight on the water all tend to make the scenery quite different.

This is Sunday. I've decided to closes this letter before we get to Pearly and get it in the mail. There is a possibility that we might not get ashore in Pearl but if we do I will scribble a line from there.

However, if we don't get ashore this will be the last letter that I will write for a couple of weeks. It is estimated to be 14 days journey from Pearl.

I am enclosing a sheet from the ship's paper. That is about all the news for now.

Love to all,

Billy

=====

** This is mentioned in the decklogs, but it appears that he may have fallen overboard as there appears to be no punishment. Captain's mast was held 2 days later and there is no mention of him. The date of the "man overboard" was September 10, 1945 and the Sailor was S1c James A. Henson.

Here is the response from one of the men who was on board:

As I recall the incident, the man was extremely home sick and in-as-much as the war was over and we were leaving for Japan, he jumped overboard. I think the skipper took pity on him and didn't court martial him. Some of our boats were still in the water and they fished him out and he promptly passed out. I don't recall the temperature at the time, but I think it must have been cold. Theodore Hoyt Cate

16 Sep 1945 - James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

Arriving at Cebu, Philippine Islands, 16 September, and then sailed to Japan for occupation duty,

16 Sep 1945 – 97th to the Pacific, arriving at Cebu, Philippine Islands, 16 September

Sunday, September 16, 1945 At Sea

S H O B I E

SHIP'S MASCOT DE LUXE -- TRUE STORY OF THE LITTLE
TERRIER THAT WENT AWOL TO SMELL THE TREES (ETC) OF
THE HAWAIIAN ISLAND OF OAHU:

The dog which USS Neshoba sailors call by the name Shobie is no ordinary mascot. He's a dog de luxe, complete with credt.

Shobie boasts a service record, just like the boys in blue. On second thought he's not so boastful, even if it does give him a rate as temporary Chief Bos'un's Mate -- because it seems, the little brown and white terrier has some AWOL time behind him.

It was back there at Hawaii, when he wanted, well--to go ashore and smell the trees and stuff.

Anyhow, it took him three days to get back and when the boat--pardon, salts, it is a "ship"--got under way, Shobie found himself in the doghouse. In fact, a summary court martial ordered him restricted to the ship for God knows how long--and, gee! lookit all the free swimming space all around the ship.

One other time, too, he--well, the report turned in tells the story better:

"Excreted in captain's passageway also borrowed commodore's bedroom slippers for reasons unknown." Executive officer punished him with a chewing, good and proper, administered only as a commander can.

The well-decorated little pooch is well-trained for combat. (After all, he has the Asiatic-Pacific with a battle star for Okinawa, the American theater, the Philippine liberation-no good conduct, alas). Yep, at the first sound of gunfire he heads for his GQ station--below in the bilges!

Shobie has a mother, back in his home town of San Francisco (Writer's Note: My home town, too!) She goes by the name of Ima Little Careless.

Oh, sure! That's Shobie's last name, too, and his service number is 001-00-00 which is an easy one to remember. Shobie can never seem to remember it, though.

His service record (he's USNR) reads that he was "shanghaied," which is nothing unusual thanks to a modern institution called Selective Service.

Oh, yes, he cost five bucks for the CPO who got him out of the San Francisco (NOT 'Frisco) pound, and--geeziz, the chiefs tell us now that he has moved above into that mysterious domain with the sign on the hatch--"Officer Country."

Picture – Bob Rowland's Collection - 386th Infantry Regiment MP Platoon



16 Sep 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: U.S.S. General Pope - Troop left ship on a LCT for a tour of the town of Cebu. Returned to ship at 1145 and water was too rough to transfer to ship so returned to shore. Troop returned to ship aboard LCT at 1630 and boarded ship by Jacobs's ladders thrown over the side of the ship. Still awaiting orders as to what to do. Morale is low.

Sunday, September 16, 1945 AT SEA

NESHOPA DUE TO ARRIVE AT PEARL HARBOR ON MONDAY IF
SHIP CONTINUES AT SAME SPEED; NO ANNOUNCEMENT
CONCERNING 97TH PASSES!

Our position as of 8PM last night: 28 31'N, 152 20'W

The Neshoba was 570 miles from Pearl Harbor at 8 p.m. yesterday, with indications that the APA would enter the harbor of the famed naval base at 8 a.m. Monday.

There was no word as to whether troops of the 97th Division aboard would be granted "shore liberty."

The approach of this vessel to the Hawaiian Island of Oahu will be from the north west, Ensign Barr, ship navigator declared last night to THE TRIBUNE.

The first part of the island which will be sighted by troops aboard will be a mountain range, with the highest mountain, Mt. Kaala, towering 4,025 feet above sea level, he said.

The ship will round Kaena Point, heading for Pearl Harbor, and once around a second point--Barber's Pt., famed Diamond Head will be seen. This landmark is an old volcano crater

As the ship draws near the entrance to the Jap-hit base, a pinkish-colored hotel--the Royal Hawaiian--can be seen off starboard. It is located on Waikiki.

The mountain range is the Koolau Range, with its highest mountain, Kouahuani Peak, rising to 3,150 feet.

The entrance to the anchorage will be through a channel wide enough for only one ship and but 40 feet deep.

At this point, the bottom can be seen clearly. On the right of the entrance is Hickam Field. On Ford Island inside Pearl Harbor is the Naval Air Station.

The City of Honolulu,. Capital of the territory of Hawaii is located 8 miles east of Pearl Harbor.

Arrival by 8 a.m. Monday is based on the ship continuing at its present speed, Mr. Barr said.

Probable anchorage for the Neshoba will be the East Lock at the north end of the harbor, he said.

Pearl Harbor, hit by the Japanese sneak attack of December 7, 1941 over the Koolau range, has the largest dry dock in the world.

17 Sep 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Location: U.S.S. Polk - General Herman F Kramer took over as division commander and General Hasley was assigned to Macarthur's staff in Tokyo.

17 Sep 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: U.S.S. General Pope - Ship sitting in Harbor at Cebu awaiting orders to move.

17 Sep 1945 - The 97th Infantry Division during World War II

Before assuming command of the 97th on September 17, 1945, General Kramer had commanded the 66th Infantry Division and served as the military governor of Coblenz, Germany. General Kramer was fortunate to have Brigadier General Frank H. Partridge as the assistant division commander. General Partridge, an officer with extensive military experience, was the only individual to serve in this position during the training, combat, and occupation periods. Because of his experience, leadership ability, and very likable personality, Partridge was an asset to Craig, Halsey, and Kramer. Because he had been with the Division since the days at Camp Swift, Partridge was a valuable source of information and provided a sense of continuity to the command.

18 Sep 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Location: U.S.S. Polk - Departed from Cebu after absconding all P.I. Bananas from troops who had traded cigarettes and candy bars with natives for fresh fruit. Destination – unknown.

18 Sep 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: U.S.S. General Pope - 0800 Pulled anchor and moved out of harbor. Moral picked up after ship got under way.

19 Sep 1945 - -Rowland Bergstrom 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M (Also HQTRS)

Location: U.S.S. General Pope

Prevailing winds caused the temperature to cool considerably on the eve of our departure from the Islands of Cebu. Morning found us again in sight of land as we entered San Pedro Bay at Tacloban, in northern Leyte, capital of the province, where we were joined by other transports carrying troops for the 97th infantry division. From here we were to convoy on to Japan. The bay was humming with activity that morning, much shipping began congregated in the harbor. Overhead the drone of powerful motors brought our attention to the air filled with huge PBY Flying boats, army transports and pursuit ships. It was difficult to imagine that only a short time ago this harbor was the scene of fierce naval fighting. Speaking to a soldier who was standing next to me at the rail as we again set sail; I learned the cause of the grim lines evident in his facial expression. “Just last October, he said, my brother was one of two hundred fellow sailors who lost his life when the aircraft carrier to which he was assigned became the victim of a Japanese air attack and ate a suicidal crash which caused the ship to sink.”

Our convoy consisted of three troop transports and several cruiser escorts. Not until late the next morning did we lose sight of land. Dozens of signal towers and search lights dotted the coasts of the various islands, constantly keeping the ship's navigator oriented on nautical information.

As we were leaving the harbor, and amusing incident occurred. A sailor had evidentially taken up a hobby in the ship's workshop for rising in the sky at the bow of the ship was a kite of huge proportions, gently kept at and even keel by a long dangling tail of knotted

dungaree's. Excitement ran high when suddenly there emanated a loud, demanding voice from the ships amplified shouting "Secure that kit immediately; it's interfering with our signal!" a loud Roar arose from the spectators in protest. The kite, however, disappearing momentarily, rose again as if another direct defiance, only to disappear permanently in another moment.

Towards morning the northwesterly trade winds blew with great fury and before long we entered into a rough sea of white caps and swells which cause the ship to toss and roll for the first time in 21 days. Our convoy, through travelling considerably slower than when the ship was unescorted was making steady progress. We eagerly looked forward to entering the temperate climate zone of Japan, which lies much in the same latitude as the United States.

Throughout the remainder of the voyage from Leyte, the sea remained quite rough and the sun's rays beat furiously rather than subside as we had anticipated. Flying fish were occasionally seen sailing through the air as if they were birds of feather then disappeared beneath the surface of the water. By now everyone was speculating as to our future destiny in Japan; rumors ran high but most of them unfounded.

19 Sep 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Location: U.S.S. Polk - Learned that 97th division, which had been attached to the southern islands area command at Leyte, was relieved that attachment effective 16 Sep 1945.

19 Sep 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: U.S.S. General Pope - Ship dropped anchor at 0815 in harbor at Leyte to await rest of division troops before going on. 1530 ship pulled anchor and left port

19 Sep 1945 - The letters in this section were shared by John Hays from Pikeville, KY. They were part of a scrapbook that he bought on Ebay. These are letters from Sergeant William Kelly to his mother written while he was on the Neshoba enroute from Seattle to Yokohama (and a couple of days before he sailed).

19 Sep 1945

Dear Mom:

Well this is a hurry up letter. I went ashore in Honolulu yesterday, found Paul, and had a very enjoyable time.

I was looking to go ashore today but don't think that will be possible. I think we are sailing late this afternoon.

We were scheduled for Leyte and then it was changed direct to Yokohama. Now I understand it is changed back to Tacoblan, Leyte.

Paul was aboard this morning and just left. Hawaii is quite beautiful. I went swimming at Waikiki Beach yesterday and it was fine. The island, of course, has had a lot of publicity. It is nice but not too wonderful.

The Royal Hawaiian Hotel is really very beautiful. I should like to spend a week or so here but I think that would be long enough.

This letter is written in a hurry as I want to get it off the ship before we sail. Now after we leave here, it may be 2 or 3 weeks before I even get a chance to write again. All is well and I feel fine. So long for now.

Love to all

Billy

20 Sep 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: U.S.S. General Pope - Usual duties aboard troop ship

20 Sep 1945 - The letters in this section were shared by John Hays from Pikeville, KY. They were part of a scrapbook that he bought on Ebay. These are letters from Sergeant William Kelly to his mother written while he was on the Neshoba enroute from Seattle to Yokohama.

20 Sep 1945

Dear Mom:

Well we never know what we are going to do anyway. We didn't sail yesterday but I really think we will today.

I got into Honolulu again yesterday. I contacted Paul and we wandered around quite a bit. I bought some post cards and mailed them out.

We went around to a native wood workers place and looked for souvenirs. My time was very, very limited. However, I did get one article. Not much but it is a souvenir.

I didn't have time to get it ready for mailing. Paul is going to mail it for me to you. You probably won't get it for quite a while.

Now I am aboard ship. It seems as if we don't know where we are going. One minute it seems to be Leyte and next minute it seems we are going direct to Yokohama by way of Guam. Really won't know until we get there.

Anyhow, it will be a fairly long trip either way. I really don't the army knows what it wants to do with us. While I can't say we are on a pleasure cruise I can say that it is a "sight seeing" trip. I think we are just killing time until discharge day.

I need 620 film badly. I can't seem to get any. Call Maggie and ask her to get Lou to get me some. Lou can get them. I should like to get as much of this film as I can as quickly as possible because I don't want to miss any opportunities to take pictures. Tell Maggie that my time was so limited that I didn't get a chance to write her from Hawaii but will get a letter off at the first opportunity. Everything is okay.

Love to all,

Billy

21 Sep 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Location: U.S.S. Polk - Advanced Echelon of the 97th Division arrived at Yokohama

21 Sep 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: U.S.S. General Pope - Usual duties aboard troop ship

22 Sep 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: U.S.S. General Pope - Usual duties aboard troop ship

22 Sep 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Arrived at Saipan Sept. 22.

1945 – Murray Garrett 303rd Infantry Regiment

Reassignment to the Quartermaster Corps gave Murray and some friends an opportunity to volunteer for gate guardhouse duty: a prime detail, for the gate was located next the guardhouse - an actual house with cots. They worked 4 hours on with 12 hours off. Murray says, "We never had it so good." The guardhouse was near the bakery, and whenever they were off duty, they would get a loaf of warm bread, mush it down, slather it with butter, and eat the whole thing. "I gained about 15 pounds in just a few weeks," he admits. These living conditions encouraged less discipline, and when one of his pals appeared at the gate unshaven and with a cigarette, they all were placed on company punishment. That led to a transfer request that resulted in his being assigned to the Ordinance Company's motor pool. Murray knew nothing about being a mechanic, and he dreaded his interview with the company commander. As luck would have it, Murray learned that the commander was a Clemson man. After identifying himself as a fellow Tiger, Murray was honest about his abilities, whereupon he was assigned to the parts area; a good assignment for it was indoor work during the winter.

23 Sep 1945 - James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

Arriving at Yokohama on 23 September 1945.

23 Sep 1945 - Rowland Bergstrom 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M (Also HQTRS)

Location: U.S.S. General Pope

During the evening of September 23rd the ship ran into a squall which continued raging thru the night. Morning, however, found the sky clear with the sun shining brightly. Most noticeable was the sudden change of temperature. It was apparent we had gotten out of the tropical zone into a more temperate climate. Sometime earlier in the morning we had entered Tokyo bay and received our first glimpse of Japan. For several hours our ship steadily made its way through the deep bay waters. On either side rose mountainous summits, rising out of the sea with sudden abruptness. Most fascinating was Mt Fujiyama which majestically dominated the horizon, rising in a pyramidal shape, abruptly ending in a wide, flat peak.

Sep 1945 - Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

We sailed for Japan. On the way, we ran into a typhoon. No one left their bunks for two days, not even for chow. The ship arrived in Tokyo Bay around September 15, and we were disembarked at Yokohama. (Note: Document states Sep 15 but suspect the date provided is not correct – timeline places this occurrence about 23 Sep 1945)

23 Sep 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: U.S.S. General Pope - Usual duties aboard troop ship

23 Sep 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Left Saipan Sept. 23.

23 Sep 1945 – 97th sailed to Japan for occupation duty, arriving at Yokohama 23 September 1945.

ARMY CUTS POINTS TO STAY IN STATES

September 24 & 25, 1945

**36 POINTS ON V-J DAY REQUIRED TO PREVENT SHIPMENT
FROM STATES _**

By the Associated Press

WASHINGTON-- THE WAR DEPT. SUNDAY LOWERED THE
SCREENING SCORES FOR SHIPMENT OF OFFICERS AND
ENLISTED MEN OVERSEAS, SAYING IT MADE ANOTHER 300,000
INELIGIBLE FOR SUCH DUTY.

THE NEW SCORES DO NOT APPLY TO REGULAR ARMY

PERSONNEL AND TO VOLUNTEERS FOR OVERSEAS DUTY.

ENLISTED MEN WILL NOT BE SENT OVERSEAS IF THEIR POINT SCORE WAS 36 POINTS as of September 2 or they are 37 years of age, or if their age is 34 and they have one year or more of service.

For officers it is 48 points, or 45 points - 40 years of age for medical officers.

Members of the Women's Army Corps will no longer be sent overseas.

More than 400 men originally scheduled to sail aboard the Neshoba were taken from the shipment because they had 45 points.

24 Sep 1945 - -Rowland Bergstrom 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M (Also HQTRS)

Location: U.S.S. General Pope

Early in the afternoon we reached the entrance of the vast, natural harbor. It was a magnificent sight. Lighting at anchor were hundreds of our naval vessels of all types. The air was filled with amphibious planes that were trolling back and forth. Occasionally could be seen small, crude sailboats rigged with rectangular sails, manned by Japanese. As we neared the port, a Jap civilian boarded our ship and piloted the vessel safely into a channel separating the piers, one of which was selected for our debarkation. To our starboard side lay at anchor two hospital ships of huge proportions painted in white bearing the "Angel of Mercy" markings.

We were amused to find the harbor intact, comparable to Boston and New York, the piers were equipped to handle thousands of tons of shipping. Across the skyline could be seen modern buildings of brick, raising several stories into the sky. In the distance to our right, close to the water's edge were shipbuilding yards and a heavily industrialized area apparently undamaged.

What might have been disaster, but turned out to be an amusing incident, occurred the morning of our debarkation. Sentries had been stationed at the foot of the gangplank for the purpose of guarding equipment that had recently been uploaded. The hour was early, light just breaking on the horizon. Unbeknown to one of the soldiers, the pier had no guard rail. This condition went unnoticed until suddenly the fellow backed off the ledge, plugging into the cold water from an eight foot drop. After gathering his wits, he realized his predicament and began to swim back to the pier only find himself confronted by a concrete wall much too high for possible escape or rescue from his companions. Help came from the ship's deck when a Marine sentry tossed a sturdy rope overboard, and with the assistance of several men, hauled the bewildered fellow aboard, none the worse for his embarrassing experience.

Location: U.S.S. General Pope - 0700 Ship proceeding up Tokyo Bay, Mount Fujiyama can be seen off the port side of the ship. 1450 ship pulled into dock at Yokohama and dropped anchor at 1445

Pictured: Japan - Gerald Alfons and Earl Hollands CO M, 386th and Alvin Holland CO ? In Tokoyo (DLawson Collection)



24 Sep 1945 - The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

General Kramer and some elements of the Division arrived at Yokohama on September 24, 1945. The Division command post opened the following day at Miizugahara Airfield, located about 60 miles northwest of Tokyo. The 97th was assigned to XI Corps of the Eighth Army. Disposition of the Division's units for occupation duty began gradually, and by December the 97th had reached its maximum deployment. Units of the Division occupied six prefectures or provinces: Saitama, Gumma, Niigata, Nagano, Fukushima, and Tochigi. The terrain in the prefectures varied from rugged mountains to flat plains. The Trident Division was responsible for an area of more than 21,000 square miles having a population of approximately 12,000,000. This area is roughly equivalent to the land area of West Virginia. The size of the population is about equal to that of Pennsylvania.

Picture provided by Harold Yeglin - 303rd Infantry Regiment taken of 97th Division headquarters building at Miizugahara Airfield near Kumagaya, Japan, in October 1945. Occupation of Japan has just begun. Vehicles and tents abound. Area was later "policed"

and turned into a park-like setting. This view presents a good look at rural nature of countryside just beyond airfield.



During the occupation period, the Division's primary task was the confiscation and disposal of Japanese military weapons and equipment. Substantial quantities of small arms were collected and dumped in the ocean. Military aircraft and ammunition and equipment were destroyed. Special teams collected and inventoried equipment, documents, and other items thought to have military intelligence value. Troops guarded Japanese military installations, airfields, railroad facilities, radio stations, and factories that had not been destroyed during the war. Food, gasoline, and clothing belonging to the Japanese military were turned over to Japanese officials for distribution to civilians. The engineers helped repair roads, bridges, school buildings, and some other public facilities. Division personnel were actively involved in humanitarian projects such as helping to provide medical treatment and food for orphans and other needy people. The 97th also located tons of silver bars and coins. These valuable assets were shipped to the Bank of Japan in Tokyo.

The Japanese people were cooperative and very respectful. During the entire initial phase of organizing the Division's occupational zones there were no incidents of resistance or sabotage. The only troublesome occurrences reported during the early months of the

occupation were a few isolated attempts by individual Japanese to steal food, fuel, or clothing. These cases were dealt with immediately and firmly, and there were no undue complications. Considering the overall circumstances, the relations between the Japanese people in the six prefectures and the occupation force developed remarkably well. Vindictiveness and cruelty were absent. The 97th Infantry Division performed its occupation duties in a highly professional and frequently benevolent manner.

After the Japanese surrender, the United States rapidly demobilized. The occupation of Japan proceeded very smoothly. It became clear that a large occupation force of citizen-soldiers was not needed. There was also political pressure to bring troops home.

25 Sep 1945, – Brent J Morrison 2nd LT. 386th Assistant Adjutant – Regimental History
From Cebu, the Regiment continued to Yokohama, Japan, Via Leyte, Philippine Islands arriving 25 September 1945.

25 Sep 1945 - -Rowland Bergstrom 386th Infantry Regiment, Company M (Also HQTRS)
Location: U.S.S. General Pope

Boarding trains after convoying a short distance through the commercial district of Yokohama, we comfortably seated ourselves in extremely long char cars, shedding our gear and heavy duffle bags. Our first glimpse of the Japanese people was now claiming out undivided attention as we proceeded through the city of Yokohama into the suburban districts. Much devastation was in evidence and confusion seemed widespread. Crowds of people were scurrying in the early morning. They looked strangely odd to us in their midget appearance, their peculiar clothing and the pallor of their skins. The sight of them was mute evidence of an impoverished people who had been at the mercy of imperial war lords. Many were probably returning to their jobs in the city; others less fortunate were possibly recruits for labor battalions formed to remove the rubble from the battered areas.

Yokohama and Tokyo appeared as one. To a foreigner like me, one could not distinguish between the two. Mile after mile were stark naked. Towering above the rubble like giant trees stripped bare of their foliage, were hundreds of smokestacks, the only remaining reminiscence of what had once been the great industrial factories for Japan's war machine. Amid this spectacle, dotting the entire landscape, were houses of thousands of families who had been made homeless. Improvised shacks of rusted iron roofing salvaged from the debris, furnished shelters.

This scene greeted us for miles as we passed through the outskirts of once modern Yokohama and Tokyo. Soon our train brought us into the country, as if for a breath of fresh air. Here our military offensive had spared its slashing, paralyzing might. Beautiful fields of rice paddies nearly full-grown and green vegetables graced the well-kept gardens that were immaculately clean. Oriental farm buildings evidenced the numerous intensified farming operations in this section for they were spaced at frequent intervals. It was evident that the rural population had fared immeasurably better than those of the city. Most of the men were still in ill-fitting military uniforms, perhaps the only clothing

they now possessed. Women for the most part were garbed in a one-piece garment resembling pantaloons. Belted at the waist and gathered at the ankles, the appearance was not repulsive but rather practical looking compared to the uniform of the men. Especially antiquated-looking were the trousers the men wore; fitting like an acrobatic performer's suit, they wore tightly-bound leggings which accentuated their slimness and shortness of stature. Their digitized shoes were constructed of cloth tops with flat rubber soles. The large toe was separated from the other four giving them a peculiar appearance.

We were amazed to find such a large network of railways in operation; many of them were electrically powered. Virtually the only means of transportation, the numerous stations and passenger cars were crowded to capacity. Recent newspaper articles reveal Japan's intention of electrifying the majority of their railroads due to the severe shortage of fuel.

Especially noticeable was the peculiar way in which the women carried their infants. Strapped to their backs with a wide silk sash neatly tied in a bow at the mother's waist, children peacefully slept while their benefactors went about their business.

Often our position from the train windows afforded us a close-up view of country dwellings. The simplicity of home-life was evident. Furniture was scarce. A portion of the floor is raised and mats of woven rice straw are placed on the surface for sleeping purposes. Occasionally could be seen bedding ticks, no doubt introduced to provide softer sleeping accommodation. Wherever one looked he could see person's resting along the roadside seated in a squatting position, their buttocks barely off the ground, an age-old custom created due to the dampness of the ground.

Oriental architecture is a far cry from our classroom memories of its historically famous splendor. Most buildings in the country are unpainted and dilapidated looking in desperate need of repairs. Children are very numerous. It's a common sight to see six or seven tots in a yard not varying over two inches in height, grinning from ear to ear and bowing in polite curtsies as we pass by.

After two hours of riding our train pulled into a small station five miles from Kumagaya, where we detrained and proceeded by convoy two miles to a large airport, our garrison for the next two weeks.

Remaining at the station to take charge of certain equipment left in our trust, several companions and myself had an opportunity to observe local color in the small community. When the time arrived for loading, a short, rather muscular Jap came to our assistance. Offering his service by saying "help, no", he hastily removed his shirt in preparation for duty. "You speak English", remarked one of the fellows, to which the Jap replied, "How do you do, how do you do", in rapid succession. Questioning him further, we learned he had been in the employ of the Tokyo Times where he picked up his limited English vocabulary. As we departed he said, "So sorry, thank you very much", and bowed graciously.

And thus ended our voyage of 28 days aboard a troop transport and the resumption of military service in a new phase of duty, that of the role of occupation forces. We're in a strange, fascinating country, so vastly opposite from our accepted civilization. This is the land of Shintoism and mythology, the land of feudal landowners and lowly peasants, the land where people worship their emperor as a supreme deity, who for hundreds of years,

through heritage has carried the unprecedented distinction of being the center of Japanese political, economic and social rule; the land of rice paddies and mulberry trees, the stench of ancient sewage systems and stinking fish, the land of beautiful shrines and temples the land of jujitsu and hari-kari.

25 Sep 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Location: U.S.S. Polk - USS POLK loaded out unit at Yokohama. We later found that 97th had been scheduled for third wave on Yokohama. After landing, discovered harbor edged with tank traps underwater oil jets, and coverage from mountains surrounding harbor by heavy artillery, hidden inside mountains which were zeroed in on beaches, and would slide out of camouflages caves when our landing took place. Fortunately, these had now been located by earlier arriving marines, de-activated and dis-mantled. 386th and 387th Infantry regiments, together with Divisional Headquarters+ closed in Kumagaya area, after riding troop train from Yokohama, to relieve the 43rd division.

25 Sep 1945 - The letters in this section were shared by John Hays from Pikeville, KY. They were part of a scrapbook that he bought on Ebay. These are letters from Sergeant William Kelly to his mother written while he was on the Neshoba enroute from Seattle to Yokohama (and a couple of days before he sailed).

25 September 1945

Dear Mom:

Well, we crossed the 180th meridian last night. In other words, we went to bed on Sunday night and got up on Tuesday. We lose 24 hours when we cross this meridian.

Since we left Honolulu, the weather has been getting hotter and hotter. It will continue until we reach Guam which should be Sunday. Then, as we turn north to Yokohama the weather should be getting cooler. Yokohama weather should be similar to Terre Haute.

According to the paper, men with 36 points or more won't be shipped overseas. That hits me. I have even 36 points on V-J day but here I am anyway. However I think our stay is destined to be short. I am glad to be over here. I'm getting to see the world, my pay is higher, etc. As long as I have to stay in the army I would just as soon be traveling.

When we come home, I would just as leave continue on around and complete the globe. That isn't very possible.

You can trace our route very easily. Seattle to Honolulu, to Wake Island Guam, then on a straight line to Yokohama.

The little souvenir I am having Paul send you from Honolulu will have to serve as your anniversary present. I hope I am in Japan long enough to purchase some souvenirs for all of you.

Paul Lundstrom sailed from Seattle on an earlier ship than I did. I rather imagine they sailed to Tacoblan, Leyte. Our orders were changed to Yokohama enroute and I wouldn't be surprised but what we will be the first element of the division to arrive in Japan.

That is just about all the news I have for now. I imagine, barring further changes, that we shall land in Yokohama between the 4th and 6th of October.

Love to all

Billy

N.B. I'm hoping to mail this letter at Guam.

25 Sep 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Kumagaya Airfield: Troop debarked and took trucks to train. Entrained at 0810. 1300 Troop detrained and proceeded to Kumagaya Airfield, approx. 50 miles north of Tokyo on Honshu Island.



25 Sep 1945 Jack Ater 387th Infantry Regiment, Company D

Jack Ater, attached to the 97th Infantry Division arrives the Pacific Theater. Marcus Ater, aboard the USS Denver, provides covering support for troops landing at Wakanouri Wan.

26 Sep 1945, – Brent J Morrison 2nd LT. 386th Assistant Adjutant – Regimental History

During the date 26 September 1945, the Regiment moved by rail to Miizugahara Airfield, arriving the same date.

26 Sep 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Location: Kumagaya Airfield: Our unit joined forces with advances parties at Kumagaya. We had travelled 1200 miles from Cebu to Yokahama and several hundred miles northwards through Tokyo, to Kumagaya.

26 Sep 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Kumagaya Airfield: Troop supply taking over from 43 RCN troop. 1300 COR to report to division to go to Tokyo.

26 Sep 1945 - Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

My company (Company F 386th Inf. Reg.) was sent to a Japanese airfield at Kumagawa. Here we stayed for about ten days and then took up station at an old Japanese factory. This factory had made cameras and lenses. Most of my company was on station at various places nearby guarding Japanese arms, supplies, and other equipment. This meant that the meals had to be sent out to them. The nearest town was Hanno on the rail line to Tokyo. I went into Tokyo several times, and on one trip saw General McArthur leaving his headquarters.

26 Sep 1945 – Transmitted herewith Regimental history of the 386th Infantry Regiment for the year 1945

During the date 26 September 1945, the regiment moved by rail to Milzugahara Airfield, arriving on the same date.

27 Sep 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Location: Kumagaya Airfield: 97th Division assumed control of occupational duties in Kumagaya area at 2400

27 Sep 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Kumagaya Airfield: Received G-3 Periodic report #23 (restricted) G-3 requests for 2 armed cars and 3 jeeps, 1 OFF and 17 EM to leave on 28th at 0500 for Maebashi Gumma prefecture in division. Advance recon party prior to division movement to above place.

28 Sep 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Location: Kumagaya Airfield: Elements of the 97th conducted reconnaissance patrols in Kumagaya area, 386th ended up at Mizzugahara airport, setup cantonment on airfield, moved into usable hangars for work areas. We are 4 miles NW of Kumagaya. Future UPS replacements arrived at UPS today. Mine being Tom Reali, a former member of my original 3rd platoon of the company. Patrols of 387th Infantry extended their recon mission into Gumma prefecture.

28 Sep 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Kumagaya Airfield: 2 armored cars and 3 jeeps left on above mission. 1 armored car and 1 jeep returned with mechanical trouble at 0500. Those that went are 1st LT Yenny, T/4 Klemann, CPL Coffman, T/5 Bensen, T/5 Hallair, T/5 Tranelli, Pfc. Garnart, T/5 Frantz, Cpl Haney, Pfc Harper. Received operation instruction #2 G-3 report #38 (s)

28 Sep 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Arrived at Iwa Jima Sept. 28. Left Iwa Jima headed due east to miss typhoon.

28 Sep 1945 - The letters in this section were shared by John Hays from Pikeville, KY. They were part of a scrapbook that he bought on Ebay. These are letters from Sergeant William Kelly to his mother written while he was on the Neshoba enroute from Seattle to Yokohama (and a couple of days before he sailed).

28 Sep 1945

Dear Mom:

Well, we are getting fairly close to Guam. Last night we passed Eniwetok Island, one of the Marshall. Now we are heading due west toward Guam.

It is still very, very hot and I will be glad when we turn north from Guam towards Yokohama.

Quite a few ships passed us last night heading for the states. I think they were units of the 3rd Fleet – battlewagons and flattops.

We received the news by wireless yesterday that some units of the 97th Div landed in Yokohama yesterday. It will be a week at least before we land.

That is about all the news for now. I won't close this letter yet. I may be able to add something to it between here and Guam.

30 September

Well, we are nearing Guam and will be there in a few hours. I'll have to close this letter and get it in the mail. Then, if we don't get ashore, the mail will anyhow.

The weather is still very hot. We may be in Guam 48 hours, maybe 3 days. It is problematical whether we get ashore or not. Yokohama is 4 or 5 days from here.

The ocean is very calm. Just like a big lake and the water is ever so blue.

I am now looking forward to seeing Japan. Should be very interesting.

Everything is going okay. I think I told you that I went swimming at Waikiki Beach in Honolulu and visited the Royale Hawaiian Hotel.

Now once more about the bonds. I don't think you will start getting any more until I have a chance to review them. That, I imagine, won't be until November. However you should be getting the 50.00 allotment regularly. If you aren't, let me know.

Please try to get me as much 620 film as you can. Send it to me the fastest method.

How is Dorothy doing? Has she a new job yet. I hope so.

I don't know when I will be discharged. Conditions seem to change about hourly. However, I suppose it will come to pass in late spring or summer.

Anyhow, everything is going okay. If we get ashore in Guam I'll mail you another letter. If we don't get ashore, my next letter will come from Japan.

I'm certainly getting to see plenty of the world. That is what I've always wanted. I don't think it is possible but when we come back it would be nice go through the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean to England and then fly to New York. However it is but a dream.

Well I'll wind up for now. My next letter will be from Guam or perhaps from Japan.

Love to all

Billy

29 Sep 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Location: Kumagaya Airfield: Elements of the 97th Infantry and elements of the 169th infantry of 43rd division. 386th saw first movie inside air hangar with no roof. "Bright on Strangler" generator behind projector made hearing difficult!

29 Sep 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Arrived back at Iwa Jima Sept. 29.

30 Sep 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Location: Kumagaya Airfield: Guards placed along Gumma-Saitama prefectural boundary to prevent unauthorized traffic between the two prefectures. Division has not received a full pay since May, due to constant moving.

30 Sep 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Left Iwa Jima Sept. 30.

1 Oct 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Conducted recons within Gumma Prefecture while divisional guards at Irumagawa Airfield were relieved by elements of the 5th Air Force. First mail arrived in the evening.

1 Oct 1945 - The letters in this section were shared by John Hays from Pikeville, KY. They were part of a scrapbook that he bought on Ebay. These are letters from Sergeant William Kelly to his mother written while he was on the Neshoba enroute from Seattle to Yokohama (and a couple of days before he sailed).

1 Oct 1945

Dear Mom;

Well, we are still in Guam. However we are still at anchor in the harbor and I doubt whether we get ashore.

However, I may go ashore with the mail boat this afternoon. There isn't much to see on the island. Nothing to do. We probably will sail for Yokohama tomorrow morning.

The harbor is full of all types – freighters, oilers, flat-tops, cruisers, destroyers, subs, battle – wagons, etc.

If we sail tomorrow we should be in Yokohama this coming week end.

Well that is about the news for now. Probably my next letter will come from Yokohama for sure. I'll wind up for now. Remember the 620 film.

Love to all

Billy

3 Oct 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

First fresh meat in months arrived today. Saw another movie. Authorized to wear Asiatic-Pacific Theater Ribbon. New Latrines have been erected, sterilized daily with lime. Two roads put in, one each at front and rear of the company areas. Drainage ditches dug in then came the rain.

3 Oct 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Kumagaya Airfield: Lt Lewis, Sgt. Massey, Pfc. Dietz left division headquarters in one ¼ ton vehicle on order from G-2 to proceed to Nickko, Tochigi prefecture and to locate all imperial properties in that area. Routine and out.

Wednesday, October 3, 1945

**ARMED FORCES RADIO BROADCAST CONFIRMS REPORT OF
TWO 97TH REGIMENTS TAKING OVER IN YOKOHAMA**

Confirmation of reports that the 97th Division has largely replaced 43d Infantry Division troops in Yokohama came yesterday from Armed Forces Radio on Guam.

An announcement from the headquarters of Lt. Gen. R. E. Eichelberger, Eighty Army commander, clarified earlier reports that "there is only one more combat team which must arrive to bring forces up to full strength" by striking the 43d Division from the list of units now occupying Japan's main home island of Honshu.

This would indicate that reports in yesterday's TRIBUNE that two of three combat teams from the 97th are now in Japan.

Wednesday, October 3, 1945 6 A.M.

TRIDENT ENGINEER LOSES APPENDIX IN SWIFT OPERATION

A 322d Bn combat engineer was operated on for appendicitis last night--and he came out of the ordeal with a smile.

T/5 CHARLES THOMPSON of Co. A, who was detailed to work in the ship's laundry, complained last evening of an abdominal pain, and upon examination in the Neshoba sick bay, it was decided that Thompson would undergo an appendectomy.

The operation itself took place in near-record time, with Thompson administered a spinal block injection "freezing" the lower part of his body. He had full mental consciousness throughout the operation.

Although unable to see the actual surgery, Thompson was able to watch attending surgeons at work and talked to attendants throughout the operation.

Thompson entered the operating room at 2220, was given his injection at 2230 and by 2310 the operation was completed.

Operating on the Trident-man were Lt (jg) R. F. Minkus and Lt Comdr E. F. Suchninki, with the following sickbay men aiding:

R. A. "Possum" Harris, PhM1/c; G. L. Spickard, PhM2/c; R. A. Stick, PhM3/c; and H. L. Childers, PhM3/c.

A CALL TO BOXERS AND WRESTLERS --SHIP TO HAVE MATCHES

By Pat D'Angelo

Calling all boxers, fighters and pugs aboard the Neshoba. All you embryoic Conns and Grazianas are asked to register with Lt. Potter or at Troop Commander's office, to participate in the boxing program to be held later.

We have as passengers and ship's crew the compromising members of our armed Forces--Army, Navy, and Marines, who were able to lick the best that the Nazis and Japs had to offer. It was not merely chance that we were victorious. The victories hard won on the battlefields and high seas can be traced directly to the competitive spirit shown by Americans on the

playing fields.

So we expect a generous response to this call for entrants to help put on a slam-bang boxing tournament.

Registrants will be given every facility available to polish up that left hook, and get the timing in on that right cross. Fast bag light gloves, helmets, and skipping ropes will be made accessible to each boxer for training purposes.

Each aspirant to boxing laurels will be given a physical checkup to make sure he is physically sound to mix leather with his opponent. Contestants will be divided into two groups, novice and sub-novice, depending on previous experience in the squared circle and in their respective weight class.

You are urged to contact either Lt. Potter or Lt. Hawley, or leave your name in the Troop Commander's Office. Further details will be given later. Watch this page.

**FURNISH THE BAIT
WISHIN' AND WAITIN'
WON'T CHANGE YOURF FATE;
THE LORD PROVIDES THE FISHIN',
BUT YOU HAVE TO PROVIDE THE BAIT.**

That is the theme of this editorial.

There is a decided lack of interest on the part of troops on board to participate in any program.

They seem to feel that all efforts should be made to keep them entertained.

Yet the majority of them fail to co-operate.

The days are going to be hotter. They will seem much longer as we go along.

This ship still has a long way to go, and if troops are to expect entertainment they are going to have to provide it.

If each soldier is content to stay in the same old rut, that is up to him.

The only way a full program can be expected is by helping it out when

you're asked to. So swallow your pride, forget your modesty, and co-operate.

IF YOU DON'T, WELL.....THE SCHEDULE FOR TODAY.....

0830 - MUSTER. All troops must be present, by order of troop commander, unless actually engaged in work. The playing of cards, etc., is not considered working.

1000 - "Opening Up the Far East -- Capt. Tapson, forward boat deck.

1130 - Recorded music for ship's company, after boat deck

1400 - Recreation hour, games, forward boat deck.

1500 - Rehearsal for show (performers only) --forward deck.

1515 - Recorded music, after boat deck.

1530 - Armed Forces Radio Service program.

1830 - Armed Forces Radio, Frank Morgan, after boat deck.

1845 - Recorded music, after boat deck.

1900 - MOVIE:"A WAC, A WAVE, AND A MARINE."--for ship's company and ship's officers.

2100 - Armed Forces Radio, Frank Morgan, after boat deck.

2130 - Second movie, troop officers, compartments 1 & 2

ATTACK ON NESHOPA DOESN'T MATERIALIZE

An impending aerial ttrack on the Neshoba did not materialize the other evening--because the craft couldn't fly off the movie screen.

Nevertheless, the movie caused some consternation on signal bridge, where alert Comm. Andrew Mack was checking charts with his staff duty officer.

The commodore heard the planes, walked out onto the deck and looked

around in the air.

Suddenly he spotted the screen, returned to flag plot cursing the "damned bombers."

The movie? "Air Force."

Which goes to show, men, that the commodore is really "on the ball."

3 Oct 1945 - The letters in this section were shared by John Hays from Pikeville, KY. They were part of a scrapbook that he bought on Ebay. These are letters from Sergeant William Kelly to his mother written while he was on the Neshoba enroute from Seattle to Yokohama (and a couple of days before he sailed).

3 October 1945

Dear Mom:

Well we are still in the harbor at Guam. However, I do believe that we are pulling out today at 11 a.m. for Yokohama.

I got ashore for awhile yesterday. There isn't a thing on this small island. It is a marvelous military installation.

There is a splendid huge airport and a good network of highways crossing the island. There are some native villages but really nothing in the way of an American city.

The island is rather picturesque. Plenty of tropical foliage. However, I wouldn't want to stay here.

The battleship "Pennsylvania" has been in dry dock here and just yesterday put out to sea. It was hit by a torpedo in the closing days of the war.

It rains on and off every day here. That isn't too pleasant.

Well, I guess that is all for now. I really think my next letter will be from Yokohama. It is about 5 days journey from here but it may be a week or two before I have the opportunity to write.

Love to all

Billy

4 Oct 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

303rd and 365th FA BNS of 97th debarked at Yokohama and closed in Kumagaya area (303rd FA BN had been detained at FT Lawton Post Hospital because someone dropped a bar of G.I. Soap in their rice pudding the night before we left there for Cebu.) Lt Koons re-enlisted in RA on 7 Oct 1945. (Editor Note: 303rd Never was deployed as per

4 Oct 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Arrived at Toyko Bay, Japan Oct. 4.

5 Oct 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Kumagaya Airfield: 1500 Captain Swainbank and recon party returned to troop, mission completed. 1730 Lt Lewis and party returned to troop, mission completed. 1800 Lt Palmer, Sgt. MacLeod, T/5 Frantz, Pfc. Harper, Pfc Wisniewski left troop to proceed to Nagano C to collect Japanese war trophies.

6 Oct 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Location: Kumagaya Airfield: 43rd Division Artillery relieved by 97th Division Artillery in Kumagaya area and departed for Yokohama at 0900

6 Oct 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Location: Kumagaya Airfield: 0400 message received from Lt Palmer, roads in Nagano area impassable. 0700 Captain Swainbank, Lt Walther, Lt. Yenny, Lt Lewis and 58 EM left troop area and proceeded to Nagano, Ueda, Matusnoto, establish check points and find out if flood water had gone down enough to see if roads are possible.

6 Oct 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Got off ship Oct. 6, 1945. Arrived at Komaguiia Airfield Oct. 6. 60 miles northwest of Toyko.

Sunday, October 7, 1945

Our position today: 11,169 miles from New York (via the Panama Canal)

NESHOPA DUE TO ARRIVE IN YOKOHAMA TODAY;
DEBARKING TIME UNKNOWN

The Neshoba, making its first trip into Japanese homeland waters, is due to arrive in Yokohama harbor today after a three-week trip from Seattle.

As late as 3 a.m. today, when this edition of the TRIBUNE went to press, the actual schedule for arrival beyond reaching a designated point outside the harbor was not known.

The arrival at this area, designated "Point Able," was set for 5 a.m., and it was believed that the pilot boat would be picked up at that time.

Debarkation, in suntan uniforms, was scheduled for 97th Division troops anytime after 9 a.m., although it is possible that members of the division may remain aboard until the afternoon, depending upon docking arrangements.

Yokohama is Japan's main seaport. It is a city the approximate size of Baltimore, Md., and is on the same latitude as Norfolk.

6 Oct 1945 - The letters in this section were shared by John Hays from Pikeville, KY. They were part of a scrapbook that he bought on Ebay. These are letters from Sergeant William Kelly to his mother written while he was on the Neshoba enroute from Seattle to Yokohama (and a couple of days before he sailed).

6 October 1945

Dear Mom:

Well, we are approaching our destination. It is now 6:30 p.m. We should enter Tokyo Bay about 5 a.m. and dock in Yokohama around 11 a.m.

When we tie-up in Yokohama it will mean that we have completed a trip of better than 7,000 miles from Seattle.

Since we left Guam, the weather has turned cooler and the seas have been running heavier. It is quite bouncy now but I am glad that it is. It is not quite so monotonous.

The last few nights I have been sleeping right on deck. It is always nice and cool up there and the air is so fresh.

These novel envelopes were mimeographed aboard ship. Make a nice souvenir. I am enclosing a smaller one and also a copy of the ship's paper. Would like for you to keep all of these for my scrap – book.

I don't know whether we will be able to see Mt Fujiyama from Yokohama or not. Anyway, I intend too see it. We are going to be close to Tokyo and other Jap cities. I certainly intend to see all of Japan I can.

I'll close this letter for now but won't seal it. If I get time tomorrow morning, I add a few lines. If I don't get the time, I'll seal it and get it in the mail as soon as possible.

7 Oct 1945

Well, we saw the first piece of Japan this morning about 6 a.m. We are now entering the Bay.

So far, there isn't much to see. Just island rising out of the sea.

We can see quite a few of our warships lying on the horizon.

Well, I could probably wait and add a few more lines. However, I am going to close. Will write you at the first opportunity ashore.

Love to all

Billy

7 Oct 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

1500 Lt. Palmer, Tec/5 Frantz and Pfc. Harper, returned to troop from mission. Sgt. MacLeod, Pfc. Wisniewski remained in Nagano City and joined Captain Swainbank section of the recon party. 1530 Lt. Jennings, T/1 and Mulleno (spelling?) left troop area in a C+R car and proceeded to Join Captain Swainbank at Nagano City.

Oct. 7, 1945

.....WE'RE OFF AT YOKOHAMA!

**GOODBYE, NESHIBA, WE'RE NOW IN YOKOHAMA, AND
WE'RE GETTING OFF TODAY.**

And we've got some thank-yous to pass around to those who helped us put out the TRIBUNE, as well as to those who aided the Traveling Tridentmen in passing time.

Those who helped us on the paper are the ones we'd like to thank first--

CLIFFORD P. 'CLIFF' MACKIN, RM2/c, of the radio shack who wrote what we consider to be some of the best humor writing we've seen--even if we did have to edit it some to allow you to send the paper home.....

BILL KLINGINSMITH, RM3/c. of Radio Three, faithfully prepared our daily budget of news...except for the time when he'd take in a movie, and it would help us get to bed an hour or two later in the morning..

...

CLARENCE PAUL, SC3/c, who cooks those good beans for breakfast, pleases the taste of the gourmets nightly with some of the most delectable dishes we've seen in a long time--arranged through courtesy of Mr. Davis.

R. H. INGLESBY, Lt., USNR, and the supply office and GSK stores, for furnishing the necessary supplies in enough quantity to allow publication of the Tribune.

D. C. DAVIS, Lt. Comdr., USNR, who furnished the utmost of cooperation throughout the voyage.

ENSIGN BARR, USSR, the navigator, who figured out our position each evening, just for the Tribune--or are we kidding ourselves?

ALL THE FELLOWS ON THE SIGNAL BRIDGE DESERVE MENTION, too, but we can't list all the names. These fellows under direction of DEACON, CSM; WILLMIRTH, SM1/c; and HAMLET, SM1/c, made us feel at home and gave up their chairs (until they got to know us better), so we could get out our paper (which, incidentally, didn't win both the Pulitzer and Ayer awards).

WE'D LIKE TO THANK OUR TOP OFFICERS in the 97th, Gen. Partridge and Maj. Gleason, for their liberal policy with regard to the amount of control required over the paper. We're happy to report that never, during the entire voyage, was one piece of news in the Tribune either censored or withdrawn before publication.

THERE ARE OTHERS WE'D LIKE TO THANK, on behalf of everyone: Lt. Hawley, transport services officer; the electricians who prepared lighting for shows and ran movie projectors, all performers and boxers, Lt. Ritter and the men of the first lieutenant's office, and the following officers for their information-education lectures: Capt. Tapson of the 322 Engineers, and Lt. Newbern, Lt. (jg) Thomas, Lt. (jg) Vaghi, and Ensigns Fallon, Welbaum, and LeClaire.

Again, we say THANKS NESHOBANS! See you Stateside!

AND WHERE DO WE TAKE OUR BOWS, LIEUTENANT POTTER?
By Lt. Robert D. Potter 322d Engineer C. Battalion

Inasmuch as this is the final issue of the TRIDENT TRIBUNE, I would like to take this opportunity of commenting upon the job the editors of the TRIBUNE have done in the editing of the paper.

The entire staff of the paper consisted of volunteers--T/5 Jack Eisen of the 97th Division Public Relations office, managing editor; T/5 Pat D'Angelo of the M&S Co. 322d Engineers, news editor and columnist; T/Sgt Jordan Abeshouse, the art editor; and Sgt. Marry Bailey, who aided in the printing and distribution of the paper.

Eisen (a tall, lumbering guy, whom I have threatened with some road work) worked on the San Francisco Chronicle and San Rafael (Cal) Independent before entering the Army in 1943; D'Angelo, a journalism hobbyist has done some work for hometown Philadelphia newspapers;

Abeshouse was a Yale Art student from New Haven; and Bailey worked at Martin Aircraft Corp at Baltimore.

The work of printing and stapling the papers was regularly done by Eisen and D'Angelo, who rarely got to bed before 4 a.m.

From comments I've heard, the paper has "gone over" well aboard ship. It is due to these men's work that this is the case.

Well done, men.

1945 - James W Gilstrap 386th Infantry Regiment, Company A 1st Bn

We left Leyte, Philippines, in landing crafts and arrived in Yokohama harbor five days later, a miserable time for all. Sunken battle ships and war damage was terrible. We were the second unit to land in Japan, following the paratroopers. Trains took us to a large airfield where we were assigned sectors of occupation. Our company was assigned to Chichibu, and Aketo arsenal, Fukaya (9 miles to Kumagaya) and we waited three days for the soldiers and people to come in from the hills. We could see Mt. Fuji on a clear day.

We made ourselves at home at the nitroglycerine arsenal. As the Japanese approached us on the third day, they bowed and dropped to their knees. We could see they were not armed, so we dropped our weapons, took their hand and greeted them. We gathered the soldier weapons and stripped their uniforms of rank and decorations. Some individuals were defiant, but caused no trouble.

The vats of nitro were in various stages of manufacture and we treated it carefully. I was the chief electrician and found an air raid siren that would serve as fire alarm. I hooked it up to 440 volts and waited for a chance to test it. We were resting in our bunks when a slight earthquake occurred. The bunk shook and the curtains swayed. I ran out to check the nitro and saw a Jap home on fire. I threw the switch and the siren was heard at regiment headquarters twenty miles away. It made a lot of excitement for a while.

In our scouting trips in the hills, we found caves and old buildings full of ammunition of all kinds, from large bombs to flares. We would gather groups of Japanese soldiers empty the caves and load the ammo on trucks to be dumped in the ocean. One of our soldiers started pilfering the boxes to gather the silk parachutes from the flares and one exploded. The building started burning and we ran hard and hit the ground when it started to blow up. Shells whistled over our heads and no one was injured.

Black marketing was big business, both inside and outside the camp. The troops would sell their personal items, toiletries and cigarettes for ten times their value. We would wheelbarrow the motors and equipment out at night and sell to the Japanese for several thousand yen. Some guys had huge bundles of yen. I got to go to Tokyo on R and R and got rid of my yen, buying silk yard goods and garments and ivory figures. I boxed up all my war souvenirs and merchandise in two wooden boxes and shipped them home. I was

assigned a teaching job at a resort, Moosehead Country Club 20 miles from Tokyo, to teach soldiers electricity for two weeks and enjoyed the hot steam baths and relaxation.

Other places I was able to visit were Urigamawa, Haraya Mura, Yorii Arsenal, In Tokyo, I visited MacArthur's Headquarters, Ginza, Marunouchi, and Showa Streets, Hathegado, Nikke Yomeinon, Emperors Palace and Cherry Blossoms on the Moat..

The occupation duty became very boring and we started various carpentry projects. I tried to teach English to Shorty, a Japanese carpenter, He could really do a good job mocking me, singing "You Are My Sunshine, My Only Sunshine", but not knowing what it meant. The Japanese had a thick, dark beer that they drank warm and their favorite drink was Saki. It was like vodka, but very strong. They used small tea cups like shot glasses and sipped the saki. The favorite food was fish and rice. The fish was like sardines, and with their chopsticks, pick up the whole, cooked fish and bite the head off first. In the cafes, we sat on cushions and the meal was cooked on charcoal and prepared in front of you. The geisha girls would wait on you, wearing their kimonos and chattering all the time. There were girl barbers and girl dentists in the shops. I had to have a front tooth filled with gold while in Japan.

12 Oct 1945, – Brent J Morrison 2nd LT. 386th Assistant Adjutant – Regimental History

On 12 October 1945, the Regiment with CO B, 322nd Medical Battalion attached, moved from Miizugahara Airfield to the following locations:

Headquarters and Special Units-----Omiya, Honshu, Japan

1st BN HQ -----Yorii, Honshu, Japan

2nd BN HQ -----Kawagoe, Honshu, Japan

3rd BN HQ -----Okegawa, Honshu, Japan

The 3rd BN, 303rd Infantry, 97th Division was attached for occupational duties 10 October 1945 and relieved from attached duty on 11 December 1945.

The 79th Military Government Headquarters and Headquarters Company were attached to the regiment 20 November 1945.

12 Oct 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Although not noted in 97th Division notes, 386th UPS and Company George packed up and moved to Omiya. 386th took over a compound containing a zero factory, dormitories for its employees, a communal bath and sauna. George took over a wood-working factory and dormitories located about a mile west of 386th UPS. Attached medics took over an aid station in Omiya, itself (and incidentally brought out a couple of units of houses of prostitution!)

12 Oct 1945 – Transmitted herewith Regimental history of the 386th Infantry Regiment for the year 1945

The Regiment with Co B, 322 Medical Battalion attached move from Elizugahara Airfield to the following locations:

Headquarters and special units: Omiya, Honshu, Japan

1s Bn HQ – Yorii, Hon Shu, Japan

2nd Bn HQ – Kawagoe, Honshu, Japan

3rd Bn HQ – Okegawa, Honshu, Japan

The 3rd Bn, 303rd inf, 97th inf div was attached for occupational duties 10 October 1945 and relieved from attached duty on 11 December 1945.

The 79th Military Government headquarters and HQ CO was attached to the Regiment 20 November 1945.

13 Oct 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

97th Division established new guard posts at a powder factory in Iwahana, at the Tatebayashi Airfield and at numerous former Jap AA Gun positions.

14 Oct 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Elements of 97th Division assumed responsibilities for security of OTA Airfield (8 miles north of Kumagaya) and the XI Corps Arty relieved Jap naval guards at Yatabe Airfield (10 Mi southwest of Tsuchiura)

15 Oct 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Units of 386th Infantry secured Semayama Airfield

15 Oct 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

1135 Col. Kidde C. of S. visited and inspected troop area, everything was satisfactory.
1530 Lt. Palmer and his party returned to troop area.

16 Oct 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

9ssnd FA BN (97th Division) closed at Matsumoto in Nagano Prefecture during day, while 158th RCT Continued recon missions in Tochigip prefecture

16 Oct 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0730 Captain Swainbank and Pvt. Cutlip returned to the area.

17 Oct 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0730 Captain Swainbank and Pvt. Cutlip left for Matsumoto. 1500 Sgt. Macleod and 9 EM returned to pick up all equipment of men that have moved up. 1930 Troop was paid.

18 Oct 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0900 Lt. Jennings and all remaining EM in the area (except 29 EM and LT. Palmer) moved out to Matsumoto. 1420 Lt. Jennings and his party closed at Katsukake, where the 1st platoon was located and spent the night.

19 Oct 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0945 Captain Swainbank, Lt. Jennings and all their men moved out to Matsumoto. 1400 Above party closed Matsumoto and spent the night with 922nd Field Artillery.

20 Oct 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Realii & Koehn won drawing for 24-hour pass in Tokyo, to see Emperor's Palace, and including former Radio Tokyo Building.

20 Oct 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0800 Captain Swainbank and Cpl. Millard moved out to Shimo-suwa where the 2nd platoon was located and alerted them for move. 1510 Captain Swainbank and troop moved out and proceeded to INA where Lt Jenny had arranged billets in a library building. 1700 Closed INA and setup mess and quarters and CP. 1930 troop commander and 3 Officers held meeting with local Japanese authorities.

21 Oct 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

97th Division reconnoitered Yamanashi prefecture

21 Oct 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

1000 Lt. Walther and Pfc. Jones left for Kumagaya and troop area. 2nd platoon moved out to Iida to guard Japanese bullion.

22 Oct 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop started check of local districts for all types of Japanese war material and collecting of same.

23 Oct 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

While 97th Division prepared to assume occupational responsibility for Yamanashi prefecture and advance detachment of 303rd infantry departed from Kumagaya for Kofu at 1800

23 Oct 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0600 T/Sgt. Braddy, Sgt. Lee, CPL Lindewald left CP to go to rear detachment at Kumagaya to pick up equipment and take important papers to the rear. 2nd platoon continuing policing up the Iida area.

24 Oct 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Additional advance elements of 97th division left Kumagaya Enroute to Kofu. Division notes contain no mention of small earthquake which hit area of Omiya that date.

24 Oct 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0001 Ration truck arrived from Matsumoto with first mail received. CP moved into INA. A Bazar was opened in the town of INA for American Personnel stationed here. Troop and 2nd platoon continued checking and making inventories of supplies and equipment in area. 1600 Lt. Walther, M/SGT Richardson, T/4 Sandberg and Pfc Jones arrived at CP with supplies, etc. 1730 T/Sgt Braddy, Sgt. Lee, CPL Lindewald returned to CP.

25 Oct 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop spent the day checking area and warehouses and maintaining vehicles. Signed payroll.

26 Oct 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

303rd Infantry relieved the AMCL Division of all occupational responsibility in Yamanshi prefecture

26 Oct 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0900 Sgt. Richardson, Pfc. Jones left for Kumagaya with payroll. 1230 troop less men on guard and detail went to Araho to see Japanese's wrestling match. 1530 Troop returned from wrestling match.

27 Oct 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Japanese Besibol Game at National Park in Omiya Stadium about 2 mi from 386th UPS Headquarters. Shrine lies in the middle of the park. Over 10,000 people witnessed baseball game between a Japanese team and a team made up of some fellows from A QM outfit. Jap movie stars presented. Game ended in a tie. Clyde Miller and Ralph Koehn started out for Div HQ to take 52 men and pick up 143 more. Went by truck. We assigned new men to companies in 386th Infantry (Fresh troops from U.S. with less than 5 points apiece) since men had to await two weeks of quarantine, we took their records back to 386h UPS with us. Without supplied transport, we crawled into window of EL which ran from 97th HQ to Tokyo via Omiya and at the Omiya automatic stop, threw two boxes of records out windows and departed same way. Walked the records back to UPS (1 mile from Sta)

27 Oct 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0630 CPT Swainbank and PFC Harper left for Kumagaya, training rear area 1500 VOGC training commander was transferred to G-2 section effective 29 Oct 1945

28 Oct 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

1530 CG Division Artillery arrived at C.P. INA and inspected billets, training area and airport. Everything Sat. 1630 CG Division Artillery left CP

29 Oct 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

387th secured misc documents, chemical dyes & precious metals stored at Sakai (12 mi NW of Kumagaya) while 922nd FA BN Established guard posts at Japanese army research lab at Matsumoto.

29 Oct 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

1st LT. Yenny assumed command of training per V.O.C.G. Captain Swainbank, LT. Jennings, T/4 Klemann, T/4 Sandberg, CPL Lindewald, T/5 Benstein left C.P. for Troop Rear DET at airfield, Kumagaya.

30 Oct 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

97th Division secured stores of enemy gasoline & ammo at Akano and Yotsuya (12 mi SE of Ubda)

30 Oct 1945 - 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Majority of men spent day at INA Airport cleaning out planes and equipment to be destroyed.

1930 All planes at INA Airport were fired and burned as much as possible.

31 Oct 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

303rd Inf placed guards on Jap Military installations in Kofu and at Yoshida airfields (18 MI SE of Kofu) 386th UPS received Bubonic Plague & Flu Shots.

31 Oct 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0900 All planes at INA Airport were set on fire for the 2nd time and completely destroyed.

1000 received word that LT. Palmer, 1st Sgt Lewis and 20 replacements were on way to Matsumoto by train and requested that transportation be sent to pick them up and drive them to INA.

1115 Received wire for LT Palmer that his party would not arrive until Friday due to landslide.

1310 SGT Ayers and 12 members of the 2nd platoon reported back to C.P. at INA for DY with troop.

1 Nov 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

387th Inf secured EN installations at Maebashi & OTA during day while Div ARTY placed under guard. Research & Electrical EQPMT discovered at Matsukawa (13 MI NNW of Matsumoto)

1 Nov 1945 - 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

LT. Walther and party spent the day searching area for hidden stores, found drums and gas etc.

1340 Part of the Troop went to gym in INA and played basketball.

2 Nov 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0915 received word that 20 men would be able to go to rodeo in Tokyo on the 11th of Nov.

1045 LT. Lewis arrived with remainder of 2nd platoon.

1400 SGT Miller, CPL Lindewald arrived INA with the payroll

1700 LT Palmer, 1st Sgt Lewis, Tec5 Enter, Pfc DelFaua, Tec5 Wigton arrive INA from Kumagaya.

1800 Troop was paid.

3 Nov 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

97th Div ARTY transferred all Japanese medical supplies in Nagano prefecture to control of Japanese home office.

3 Nov 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

1320 S/SGT Miller, S/SGT AYERS, SPL Lindewald left C.P. for Kumagaya with Payroll and SGT Ayers was returning to leave for Yokohoma then States for discharge on points.

4 Nov 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Japanese presented program of Japanese culture to us at 0100. Troops of 387th Inf investigated factories at Okushi, Yoshii and Onishi (south of Takasaki) and placed guards at Numata Army Broadcasting Station.

4 Nov 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

LT. Walther and party spent Troop had the day off (Sunday)
1430 Men held baseball game at airfield. Local merchants reopened Bazaar for men.

5 Nov 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Each man at 386th UPS received 4 Japanese blankets for warmth this coming winter. Motorized patrols from 387th Inf checked Military installations at Shibukawa (8 mi NNW of Meebashi)

5 Nov 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0900 Tec/5 Noyes, Tec/5 Collins left on TD to SP SU to participate in the rodeo to be held in Tokyo on the 11th of Nov.

6 Nov 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

1500 Division Sanitation Officer inspected troop area at INA and found everything in order.

7 Nov 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

1045 Received call from T/4 Zajag from Kinoshita, saying that the ration truck driven by T//5 Dagenhart had hit a Japanese child in Kinoshita and wanted orders as what to do.
1100 1st Sgt Lewis, CPL Millard, T/5 Novakoweich (SPELLING?) (Medic) and two Japanese doctors left to drive to Kineshita
1115 Arrived Kinoshita with medical aid and child that was struck by truck had died from skull fracture.

7 Nov 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Pay day, men now only allowed to send home what they earn at pay table, to prevent extra earnings from black market to go undetected. Four EM who exceeded quota received 4-year sentences apiece today.

8 Nov 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

1100 1st LT Jones from 922 D F.A. arrived at C.P. INA to investigate accident on 7 Nov 1945

9 Nov 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0900 LT. Jones left C.P. to return to Matsomoto. He found out that T/5 Dagenhart was not responsible for the accident.

0945 Captain Dobson S-4 of the 922d F.A. Bn, arrived C.P. And stayed for dinner before he returned to Matsumoto.

9 Nov 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

97th Div ARTY transferred to control of JAP home office. Jap Military petroleum products in Div ARTY area.

10 Nov 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

1000 Troop held inspection of arms and personnel

1200 Troop had afternoon off – Saturday

10 Nov 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

97th Div established guards on installations at Ogasawara (8 mi sw of Kofu) Yamura (20 mi SE of Zofu), OTA (Maebashi area) Maebashi and Fukushima (29 mi SW of Matsumoto)

11 Nov 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Lt. Palmer and 25 EM left by train for Tokyo for rodeo. Troop had day off as much as possible, Armistice day.

12 Nov 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

LT. Palmer and his 25 men ~~plus T/5 Noyes and T/5 Collins~~ returned from rodeo.

13 Nov 1945 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

LT. Yenny (troop Comor) Pvt Transali and interpreter Sam went to Mitsushima where a P.W. camp had been located and inspected area and discovered an underground factory. Trip was performed by rail car for all roads in area were out. They were the 1st allied personnel to enter the area since occupation of Japan begun.

14 Nov 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

389th FA BN (975th div) moved to airfield 5 mi ENE of Kumagaya and closed at 1400. 1844 drums of Japanese petroleum TR from medical supply warehouses & 476 tons of Jap clothing from Utsunomiya area were transferred to Jap home ministry. (although, somehow EM managed to get one pair of aviator's gloves apiece!) 68 pointers leave units for states.

15 Nov 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

At 386th UPS, Al Tinder "ACE", Gregorio and Ralph Koehn draw 3-day passes to Moosehead Country Club, outside Tokyo (Formerly Tokyo Country Club, now our R & R area) Registered in same book bearing ambassador Grew's signature & viewed Babe Ruth's left-handed Golf Clubs.

16 Nov 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

97th Div ARTY placed under guard 7 ¼ tons of narcotics at Taneo Factory (vicinity of Nagano) 18 Jap medical supply warehouses & 476 tons of Japs clothing from Utsonimiya area transferred to Jap home ministry

18 Nov 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G
3rd BN, 386th Inf occupied storage area at Daimon (8mi ESE of Omiya)

21 Nov 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G
66-pointers leave for states

22 Nov 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G
Thanksgiving day, 386th UPS held grand opening of regimental service club, featured by Jap troupe of acrobats, singers, jugglers & dancers.





24 Nov 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Stores of precious metals were shipped from 97th div area of responsibilities to bank of Japan while 77 tons of food stuffs in vicinity of Utsonomiya transferred to Tochigi Home Ministry

27 Nov 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Advance parties of 303rd inf initiated movement to Fukushima and to Niigata at 0700. Today we were ATZD Victory Medal & American Theatre Ribbon.

28 Nov 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

97th is guarding military installations in 3 Japan prefectures north of Tokyo. 386th Inf has Saitama pref, an area of 10,000 square miles. Japs had huge military supply depots here. Our job (should we care to accept the assignment) is to inventory supplies, destroy all war-making equipment.

29 Nov 1945 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Moved to Kumagaya Air Field Nov. 29, 1945. 150 miles north of Tokyo.

1 Dec 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

97th Division assumed occupational responsibilities for Fukushima, Niigata & Tochigi prefectures & also operational control of 158th Regiment. 1st Cavalry Division assumed OCC. Resp for Yamanashi prefecture from the 97th Division and 1st Cavalry Division ARTY (less 271 FA BN) relieved 303rd Inf in vicinity of Kofu. 1st Bn, 303rd inf moved to Fukushima and 2nd 303rd inf (less CO E) with REGTL HQA & HQA CO closed at Niigata

2 Dec 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Men's glee club went to Tokyo to cut records for broadcast in states at Christmas time. ARR Radio Tokyo 0100 went into MacArthur's HQ building & ate GI chow in 7th floor cafeteria. 66 & 65 pointers left for states

3 Dec 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

303rd regiment headquarters completed move from Kofu to Fukushima at 2750L.

5 Dec 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

386th UPS assigned 166 new men from states. Sent 87 men home

12 Dec 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Advance party of 3rd Bn, 303rd Infantry closed in Wakamatsu during day as 55 tons of QM items & 370 tons of metals were released to Tochigi Home Ministry

13 Dec 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Elements of 389th FA BN Enroute to Nagano as 303rd Infantry closed at Wakamatsu

18 Dec 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0800 3 men went on 12 hour pass. Lt Walther and S/Sgt Macksod and Sgt Mass?? And crew went to 9th lab to load more ammunition on freight cars for shipment. Lt Lewis and S/Sgt Coffman continue to load ammunition and weapons freight car for shipment.

1100 4 AMG – EM set up offices at CP to work this ARSD.

1200 Lt Lewis and crew returned for chow

1300 Lt Lewis and crew went back out to work loading freight cars.

1630 Lt Lewis and party returned to CP

1700 Lt Walther and party returned to CP

2000 Had a drawing for weapons and PA supplies, (watches, pipes etc.)

19 Dec 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0800 4 EM left on 12 hour pass. Lt Walther and party left CP to continue loading of ammunition for shipment.

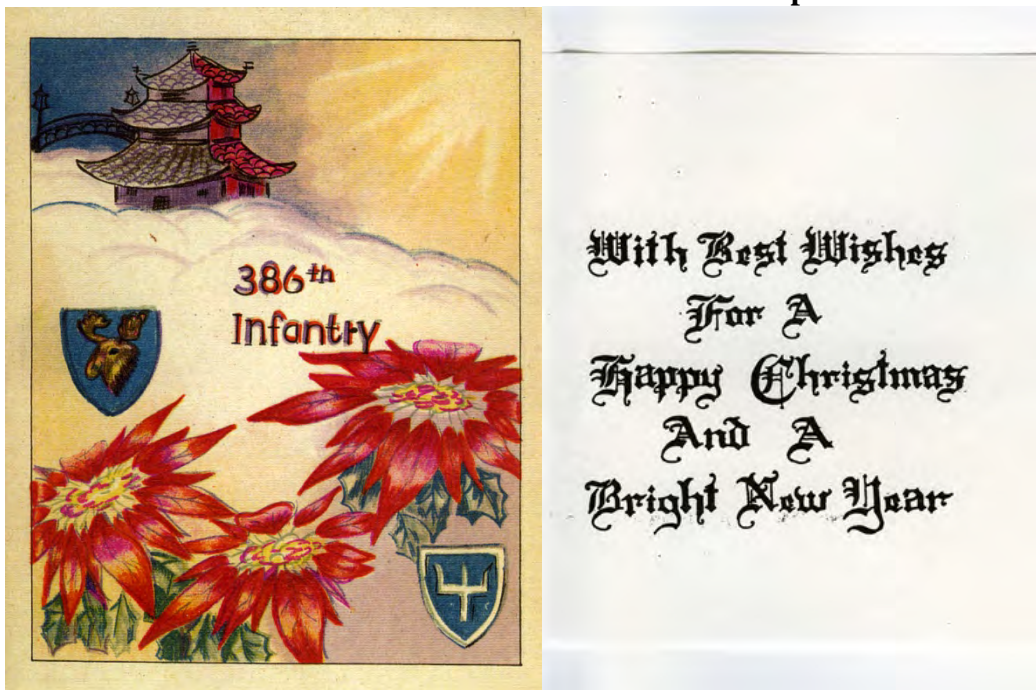
1235 Lt Walther and crew returned to Cp. Lt Lewis and party remaining in ITDA

24 Dec 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

386th UPS chorus sings carol's at Japanese orphans home



25 Dec 1945 – A Christmas card the division received while in Japan



27 Dec 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Koehn packs, records and jeeped to Yono, Japan visiting George Co area for few days checking records and having payroll signed. Visited outpost of 2nd and 3rd platoons.

29 Dec 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Philadelphia paper reporter present at 97th chorus' recording flew home & wrote that 97th had "Best Glee Club in Japan".

29 Dec 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0800 S/SGT Coffman and detail left for Akano to load weapons of personal and equipment. Church services held by Chaplain from 922d F.A. Troop had the afternoon off – Saturday

30 Dec 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop had day off - Sunday

31 Dec 1945 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

1st BN 158th Inf (attached to 97th Division) moved from Techige to Utsonomiya.

31 Dec 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop spent morning working on vehicles

1 Jan 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop had day off being New Year's day. Catholic priest arrived CP to spend the night 2045 Pfc. Dietz left CP in ambulance send down by 922 F.A. to take him back to Matsumoto to the medics because of a possible appendix attack and operation might be needed.

2 Jan 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0645 Catholic priest held mass for Catholics of the troop
0800 Sgt. Haney, Pvt. Strickland and interpreter ITO left by train to proceed to Hiroaka to get shipping tickets signed by chief of police of Hiroaka. Troop packing and preparing as much of equipment as possible for move to Kumagaya. Overcoats issue to all men here in INA

3 Jan 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop spend day loading equipment and preparing to move.
1300 LT Walther and Pfc. Dietz returned C.P.
2400 troop relieved from duty to INA by C Battery 922d F.A.

4 Jan 1946 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

3rd BN 387th Inf closed at Utsunomiya during day. 386th UPS sees American USO show M.C. said "Your Col. Is a nice guy; he spoke to me tonight – he said, "get out of my way!"

4 Jan 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0830 Lt Yenny and detail left for Tatsano to check on train, cars and equipment being shipped.
0500 troop left INA by rail on move to Kumagaya.
1545 troop arrived Tatssono and transferred from electric train to steam engine.

5 Jan 1946 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

At 0100 3rd Bn, 387th Inf relieved 158th RCT of all occupational responsibilities in Tochigi prefecture.

5 Jan 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0700 Train arrived at Kumagaya train depot and closed troop area. Miicupahara Airfield. Troop spend day unloading and setting up equipment.

6 Jan 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop had day off - Sunday

7 Jan 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop spent day working around area and vehicles And setting up training schedule

8 Jan 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop spent day as prescribed by the training schedule. 1st Lt Irving, F De Milt assigned & Joined troop. Assigned per division SO #4 dated 5 Jan 1946. ED CMR 4 Jan 1946 1300 troop spending afternoon as prescribed by training schedule.

9 Jan 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop spent day as prescribed by the schedule

10 Jan 1946 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

In view of rapid reduction in theater strength and inadequacy of replacements, it is imperative to inactivate the 97th division.

10 Jan 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop spent day as prescribed by the schedule

11 Jan 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0800 10 EM left for 4th REPL Depot on way home for discharge

12 Jan 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop spent day as on the schedule

13 Jan 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Sunday – day off

23 Jan 1946 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

386th UPS sends all men with 36 months of service home.

26 Sep 1945 - Thomas Gourlay 386th Infantry Regiment, Company F

I left Japan by ship late in January 1946 and landed in Long Beach, California. Some of us were flown from Burbank to Washington, DC, my first airplane trip. At Ft. Meade, I received my discharge on February 14, 1946. I guess I am up to the present time now and will sign off. Maybe I will add a postscript later on. Maybe someone years from now will get some enjoyment and information from reading these recollections.

27 Jan 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0900 Nine EM left for 4th REPL Depot for discharge. Troop had the day off being Sunday

28 Jan 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0900 Five EM left for 4th REPL Depot for discharge
1530 Troop took typhus shots

29 Jan 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0900 Eleven EM left for 4th REPL Depot for discharge
1300 troop had physical examination (short arm)

30 Jan 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop spent day as per training schedule

31 Jan 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

One EM left for 4th REPL depot for discharge. Troop spent day as per training schedule

1 Feb 1946 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Koehn leaves 386th UPS for Camp Zama, West Point of Japan, now snow-covered 4th REPL Depot of US Army

1 Feb 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Seven EM left for the 4th REPL depot and discharge. Troop spent the day as per training schedule

2 Feb 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0800 two men left for 4th REPL depot for discharges. Troop spent day as per training schedule.

3 Feb 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop had day off being Sunday

4 Feb 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop spent day as per training schedule. 2nd platoon had Honor Guard

5 Feb 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop spent day as per training schedule. Troop had security guard

6 Feb 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop spent day as per training schedule

7 Feb 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop spent the day at motor pool preparing vehicle to turn in. Troop had honor guard.

8 Feb 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop spend day at motor pool preparing vehicles for turn in. Troop had security guard

9 Feb 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0700 Lt Berbaum, Lt Hudak and 27 EM left with 25 jeeps and one C&R car, for Yokahoma to turn them in

1600 Lt Berbaum, Lt Hudak and 25 EM returned from Yokahoma.

10 Feb 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop spent day at Motor pool working on M-8's.

11 Feb 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop spent day at Motor pool working on M-8's. Troop had security guard.

12 Feb 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop spent the day at motor pool working on M-8's that are to be turned in.

13 Feb 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0700 Lt De Milt, LT Berbaum and 18 EM left CP with M8's for Asaka to be turned in.

1400 Lt De Milt, Lt Berbaum and 18 EM returned from Asaka

14 Feb 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

General Kramer inspected area. Troop spend day processing weapons for storage.

25 Feb 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0800 1st Sgt Coffman and Sgt Wisniewski went to Yokahama to turn in CWS.

1600 Troop had Honor Guard

2230 SGTS Coffman and Wisniewski returned from mission.

26 Feb 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0900 All Officers and EM went on road march on reservation.

1100 Troop had physical examination by CAPT Bond (Short Arm). Troops spent the day as per schedule. Troop had Security Guard.

26 Feb 1946 -Art Guggemos Transferred to 23rd Regiment, Company B

On Feb. 26, 1946 Art returned home. He ends his account of his war years with the following entry:

“As we entered the harbor, we were met by tugboats on either side. They were covered with huge banners which read “Welcome Home.” They blew their horns all the way through the harbor. It was great! We disembarked the ship, and boarded buses for the short ride to nearby Ft. Dix, in NJ. We were tired! We were beat! But we were “home.”

(Note: For almost 50 years following his service, Guggemos did not share his World War II experiences with anyone, not even his wife, Donna, to whom he has been married since 1951. “It was hard to talk about,” Guggemos said. “You went through it and you came home, and you were so dang glad you did come home. You wanted to forget about it. Guggemos completed a written, 19-page account of his World War II story which he titled “World War II . . . From My Eyes.”)

27 Feb 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop spent the day as per training schedule. Troop had Honor Guard.

28 Feb 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troops spent the day as per training schedule. 0900 – 1200 Road March. Troop had Security Guard.

28 Feb 1946 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G

Effective 2359, 1st Calvary Division relived 97th Infantry Division of occupational responsibilities in Fukushima, Nigata, Nagano, Ugunma, Tochigi and Saitama prefectures

1 Mar 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troops spent the day as per schedule

Pictured: Kumguya – DLAWSOON advised “Kumaguya Japan, Deployed to Kumaguya Japan Sept 1945. This picture was taken March 1946 getting to know the local populace.



97th MECI RCN - 2 Mar 1946 – UNIT JOURNAL

Troops was paid. Troop had Security Guard.

3 Mar 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop had day off being Sunday

4 Mar 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troops spent the day as per schedule and regular garrison duties. Troop had Security Guard.

5 Mar 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop spent the day as per training schedule. Troop had Honor Guard.

5 May 1946 - Charles Franklin Hazel 303rd Infantry Regiment, Company D

Charles Franklin Hazel was honorably discharged from the military May 5, 1946 from Fort McPherson, GA. His armorer duties were listed on his discharge papers as "Served with the 303rd Infantry Regiment in Japan. Inspected, repaired, and maintained such small arms as caliber .30 machine guns, automatic pistols, carbines, garand rifles, and heavy mortars. Kept a supply of replacement parts on hand and installed them as needed. Used armorer's general hand tools and special tools for each weapon. Installed new firing pins, sears, connectors, apertures, sights, and other small parts. Removed rust and obstructions from bore. Tightened loose nuts and forwarded major repair jobs to ordnance."

6 Mar 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troops spent the day as per training schedule. Troop had Security Guard.

7 Mar 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop spent the day as per training schedule. Troop had Honor Guard.

8 Mar 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troops spent the day as per training schedule. Troop had Security Guard.

97th MECI RCN - 9 Mar 1946 – UNIT JOURNAL

Troop spent the day as per training schedule. Troop had afternoon off being Saturday.

10 Mar 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

LT De Milt and Walthers left for Tokyo. Troop had Sunday off. Troop had Security Guard.

11 Mar 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troops spent the day as per training schedule. Troop had Honor Guard.

12 Mar 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop spend day as per training schedule. Troop had Security Guard.

13 Mar 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop spend day as per training schedule. Troop had Honor Guard

14 Mar 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop spend day as per training schedule. Troop had Security Guard.

15 Mar 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troops spent the day as per training schedule. Troop had Honor Guard.

16 Mar 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

0730 LT Berbaum and 8 EM left to turn in rest of vehicles. Troops had Security Guard.

17 Mar 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop had the day off - Sunday

18 Mar 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop had Security guard. Troop spent the day as per training schedule.

19 Mar 1946 – 97th MECI RCN - UNIT JOURNAL

Troop had Honor Guard. Troop spent day as per training schedule.

31 Mar 1946 - Company G - Written by Ralph E. Kane

97th Division was inactivated at Kumagaya.

31 Mar 1946 - Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G - END OF TOURS:

The 97th Infantry Division consisted of the following units during German Campaigns: 303rd Infantry Regiment, 303rd FA BN, 386th Infantry Regiment, 365th FA BN, 387th infantry Regiment, 389th FA BN, 922nd HHB Division Artillery, 782nd Tank BN (20 Apr – 9 May 1945), 630th TD BN (18-20 Apr 1945), 820th TD BN (20 Apr – 9 May 1945), 444th AAA auto Wpns & 542nd AAA Auto Weapons (2-4 Apr 1945), 322nd Engineer combat BN, 322nd Medical BN, 97th counterint Corp Det, HQ special troops, HQ CO. 97th Infantry Division, M.P. Platoon, 797th ORD Light Maintenance Co, 97th QM CO, 97th Signal Co.

While in Germany, strict non-fraternization was enforced. While in Japan, 386th Medic Det at Omiya owned two Pom-pom houses, treated mostly Navy troops (who were off limits from Tokyo), deeded girls to the 97th Div Chaplain's assistant at conclusion of occupation.)

31 Mar 1946 – 97th's Travels to End – Tridents Division Will Inactivate – Unknown writer

Kumagaya – the globetrotting 97th Infantry Division World War II career, which has ranged from combat against the German army in Europe to occupation in Japan, comes to an end with inactivation on March 31. Commanded by Major General H. F. Kramer, the division was relieved of occupational responsibilities' February 28, after six months of duty on central Honshu. Activated in 1918 and disbanded the same year, the division was reactivated February 25, 1943 at Camp Swift, Texas. The 97th participated in the entire

central European campaign and was one of the few American divisions that were attacking when the end of the war came. Its ETO mission complete the 97th returned to the States. News of Japan's surrender caught 97th men at Fort Bragg, N.C. preparing to leave for the Pacific. Amid victory celebrations Trident troops shoved off for their role in the occupation of Japan. Under invasion plans for the final reckoning with the Japanese the Trident division was scheduled to go ashore on Honshu with the redeployed First Army, its mission to aid in the destruction of the Japanese Army and occupation of Tokyo-Yokohama area. Arrival in Japan terminated the long four-month redeployment move from Czechoslovakia. The division assembled on Honshu at Milzughara Airfield near Kumagaya in September and by December was at its maximum deployment of over 20,000 square miles of the principal Japanese Home Island's Kanto Plain and mountainous west coast region. In the short span of six months Trident men had touched both ends of the crumpled axis, journeyed three-fourths of the way around the world, and since their original departure from the United States early in 1945, had traveled upwards of 20,000 miles – enough to gain their division claim as the “Army's most traveled combat division”. The 97th was an original component of the 15th Army, then served with the First, Ninth and Third Armies before joining the 8th Army in Japan.

Mar 1946 -The 97th Infantry Division during World War II –

The War Department decided to inactivate the 97th Infantry Division in Japan effective March 31, 1946. During the first three months of the New Year, units and individual soldiers were ordered home and discharged. On the specified date, the Trident flag was furled and returned to the United States.

Ralph E. Koehn 386th Infantry Regiment, Company G – On Our Own Two Feet, Once Again

Since it was “Every Man for Himself” after the 97th de-activated, there was no mass transit as a unit from Japan to P.O.D., USA and therefore, no bands met us at the pier, no ticker tape was dumped on us at our separation centers, and very little notice was paid to us when we finally arrived home. After discharge, except for the notice from one's draft board that he had ten days to report his return!

Brigadier General Sherman V Hasbrouck

“I think it was a terrible mistake to have your command decimated by the point system. What they should have done was to have sent replacement troops for occupation duty, and then returned the Division, as a unit, to the States, have one last parade in San Francisco or some place on the West Coast and then send the men to their homes.” ~

21 Aug 1946 Famous U.S. Army Divisions

The Naples Record, Naples, New York, Wednesday, August 21, 1946

97th INFANTRY DIVISION

A FAR-TRAVELED OUTFIT is the 97th Infantry Division now on duty in Japan after nearly half a year of active service in the European theater. In the closing days of the war with Germany patrols of the 97th made contact with Russian troops near Luditz in Czechoslovakia and four months later had returned to the United States and were

redeployed for the journey to the Pacific. In the United States the Division had probably greater travel experience than any other of the larger units of the Ground Forces. It was activated in Camp Swift, Texas, in February, 1943, and trained at Swift and Camp Leonard Wood, Missouri. After participating in the Louisiana maneuvers in 1943, the 97th went back to Leonard Wood but in July, 1944 it packed up for Camp San Luis Obispo, California. In November, 1944, it moved to Camp Cooke, California where it remained until February 1945, when it departed on its first long trip overseas. On its return from Germany in July of the same year it was reassembled and trained at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. It sailed for Japan in September, 1945. The Division's components on its departure for Europe were the 303d, 386th and 387th Infantry Regiments and the 389th, 303d, 365th and 922nd Field Artillery Battalions. The 97th went into action soon after its arrival in Germany and performed notable service in the liquidation of the Ruhr Pocket. It moved up the Rhine to Bonn and crossed the river on April 3. The line of action, at the southern end of the pocket ran along the Sieg River, and Siegburg was one of the first captured towns. From Siegburg, the Division fought north closing the pocket from the south and ending up in Dusseldorf. The Division was then transferred to Patton's Third Army and was committed near Hof, holding the flank near Tirschenreuth. Reaching the farthest point of advance, patrols were sent out to contact the Russians moving west. The shoulder patch is a vertical trident in white on a blue background shaped to form a Saxon shield with a white border. It was designed to represent Maine, Vermont and New Hampshire from which personnel was originally drawn.