

Dec. 31, 1944

On Sunday the 17th received a warning order from Hqrs XVIII Corps to be ready to move on 12hrs notice to the front. A German attack was apparently making unprecedented headway between the first and third armies. First order received at 1900. At 2100 received notice to move as soon as possible. Order issued to the 82nd to move at 0900 the next day the 101st to move at 1400 the next day. Oise Base to provide the transportation. I left at 2300 for the CP of the US First Army arriving at 0900 the 18th. Things in an uproar: The Germans about ten miles away and coming on. CP at Spa Germans at Stavelot. Decided to put me at Whebarmont. Div started to arrive just before dark. First Germans, and AG of the 1st SS Div knocked out by a 30 Div road block at Hablemont at about 1800. Div concentrated and ready to move by daylight. A quick move executed to the line Trois Pont-Vielsalm-Salmchateau-Regne-Ffauture. Contact made with the 7th Armd, 106th, and 28th Divs which were almost cut off. Held line against determined and strong German attacks for several days during which time we mopped up the cut off spearheads of the 1st SS at Cheneaux, covered the extrication of the 7th Armd thru Vielsalm. Withdrew to the line Trois Ponts-Floret-Manhay. Right flank up in the air and never covered by the 3rd Armd Div nor the 7th Armd. Badly chewed up several German attacks against the new line. Right now today the Germans are thinning out on the division front and what the future holds is a big question. He is capable of making a very strong attack to the north out of his salient but on this front he is definitely falling back. What is the answer? This has been an experience the like of which I hope I never have again. It will be invaluable to me in future years. Our army has a hell of a lot to learn but at present these airborne troopers of this division are making monkeys out of the Germans opposing them. They are better trained and far superior combat soldiers. The German has better armor, panzer fausts, mines.

Nonceveaux Belgium Jan 14th

The division moved into a rest area extending from Chevron to Pepinster two days ago. We finally attacked and retook the Thier du Mont crossed the Salm at Grand Helleaux and entered Vielsalm and Salmchateau. In the attack we completely destroyed the 62nd Volksgrenadier Division taking 2500 prisoners incl 5 Bn COs. One Regt CO Col. Franke of the 190th committed suicide, his Adj. surrendered. He was guilty of advising his troops against taking prisoners so it is just as well that we did not get our hands on him. The division was wonderful in the



attack. That is their forte still. Several days ago FM Montgomery at a pressconference very kindly told the world that he ordered the division to withdraw after it had saved the 7th Arm'd, 106th and 28th Divs. Ordered it against the protests of the division commander. Published in the S & S it helped a great deal. In the attack I lost some very fine officers, notably Vandervort who lost his left eye just outside of Abrefontaine. Crossing the valley from Abrefontaine was very rough until the 508th captured the west end of Thier du Mont thus denying the krauts observation. Cpt. Olson my aide was again hit, this time in the right leg. We were together following a connecting platoon of the 325 work between two battalion when the krauts threw lots of arty at us. Tree bursts. I was very lucky. The boy between Olson and myself had his leg ~~severed~~ just above the knee. I put a tourniquet on him and to our surprise we saved his life. Olson gave him the morphine. His leg flew across the road and for a minute Olson thought that it was his. Woods was hit a few days earlier when we were up with the 517 trying to push one of their attacks. This business of making green outfits go is positively dangerous but it must be done. During the past few weeks Barney Oldfield has been very helpful with the publicity. The XVIII Corps is now attacking with the 75th, 106th, 30th, and 7th Arm'd Divs, we are in corps reserve and I believe that Army has a string on us although corps will not admit it. Our position is unusual. Army, I believe, wants to keep us out of further fighting to save us for an airborne mission later. This may be a SHAEF directive. Ridgway who commands the Corps, his first corps in combat is most anxious to committ us. It will undoubtedly make his attack a success, otherwise the attack will very likely bog down. Our regular divisions appear ~~xx~~ at this particular time to be with few exceptions of poor ~~xx~~ quality. There is little doubt in view of our losses of the past few weeks that continued attacks will do the division irreparable harm as an airborne division. Ridgway is very ambitious however and it is unlikely that he will ever command a ground corps again, at least it doesn't happen every day. I do not believe that he would hesitate to exploit the 82nd to the utmost regardless of the long range harm it may do. Came close to getting shot at Grand Halleux when I had to dive into one of our own fox holes to avoid a schmeiser that was squirting in what a quick estimate led me to believe was my direction. Conditions have been very rugged. Temperature around 18° F, snow wind. It is amazing how these lads live sometimes.



In all of my good paratroop units they attack in ordinary combat uniforms, hoping to bring up the overcoats and blankets later. Rations are cold entirely unless they can heat them in a hole if and when they get to one. Most regular outfits wear overcoats. Soldiers must be taught to be tough and in teaching them officers must set the example. There is a fundamental difference between combat and maneuvers. Combat is the payoff, there is no discomfort to great if it will bring victory in even the smallest fight. Most outfits bring up hot chow when they can which is frequently often. We eat cold chow entirely in the forward areas. Trench foot is a source of casualties in some cases greater than gun shot wounds. One Bn my 551 did not wear its overshoes in a n attack and sustained about 230 trench foots cases in three days. Gun shot wounds and shrapnel wee about 190. That Bn is comparatively ineffective now. We are now training with panzerfausts which are damngood. They will punch the front plate of a tiger tank. We are alos training our men to drive tanks and tank destroyers since our armored supporting people frequently abandon their vehicles when threatned in an attack. Commanding this division is quite a task and a feat. I hope that I measure up to it well. These troops are the best inthe world and are deserving of the best leadership. Given it they will do anything.

Nonceveaux, Belgium Jan. 18th  
Still in a rest area. A most unusual state of affairs. If our infantry would fight this war would be over by now. On our prësent front there are two very weak german regts holding the XVIII Corps of four divisions. We all know it and admit it and yet nothing is being done about it. American infantry just simply will not fight. Noone wants to get killed, not that anyone else does but at least others will take a chance now and then. Our artillery is wonderful and our air corps not bad. But the regular infantry, terrible. Everyone wants to live to a ripe old age. The sight of a few germans drives them to their holes. Instead of being imbued wi with an overwhelming desire to get close to the german and get him by the throat they want to avoid him if the artillery has not already knocked him flat. This is the fault of our training. Our paratroop infantry is superb, close quarters killers.



Nonceveaux, Belgium

Jan.. 24, 1945

Still in the rest areas but with promise of moving into the attack. I am pleased with my feelings in the matter. The fact that we were again going to attack I found rather pleasant. The troops are ready also. Sitting around gets rather tiresome. Especially in a place such as this. If the war must be finished why then let's at it. The other night I had dinner with Gen. Hodges and his staff. Gen. Keen his C/S had asked me. Nice for a change although as usual it is always disturbing to go back to a higher headquarters and encounter their lack of familiarity with the things that go on in the front. They were all most outspoken about the Stars and Stripes claiming that Gen. Patton gets all of the headlines. I have a feeling that it is not the best staff in the world. They are much more capable than personable. Keen told me that in his opinion the Div would be in the lines about another three weeks, that in that time we would attack with the 1st Army to the east towards the Rhine. He must have been given this impression of our stay by SHAEF. He said that he would like to keep us but that he doubted if he could. He would also like to keep Gen. Ridgway with the XVIII Corps staff and of this he felt that it may be possible, reasoning that there is little chance of an A/B Corps operation. Ridgway on the other hand is hell bent on keeping us in his corps and he will never let us go without a direct order from SHAEF. It is all most unfortunate from an A/B viewpoint. I believe that SHAEF would promptly act on his recommendation to send us back for A/B preparation if he would so recommend. This he will never do until he is ordered to command an A/B operation. Quite a mess with all of the complexities of ambition and subterfuge involved. We are at present under orders to attack on the 27th perhaps the 29th. During the past week I have talked to quite a few of the troops talking to each battalion for about an hour and a half and at the end giving them an opportunity to ask all of the questions they desired. It seems to do a great deal of good. It is foreign to many of our teachings and a bit unusual. Some people would feel that my office was being improperly used but I do not believe so. Many odd and sometimes questionably proper questions are asked. The usual is when are we going home. Gen. Prickett CG of the 75th Div was relieved yesterday, Gen Porter formerly of the 1st now has his division. The elimination rate among Division Commanders is very high. I can understand it. One gets quite a screwy



attitude after a bit that was be carefully controlled. Akin somewhat to indifference but more just simply "browned off" or maybe I need a leave. The life of an MG is not much fun, rather solitary. If one is too tough, just annSOB it soon reflects itself in the division. There is bitching and griping about everything with little cooperation. If one is too easy things stay in order just so long ad not a bit longer. Needless to say one must know everything that goes on and learn the business from the ground up. There is where I believe that most of them make a mistake. They do not spend enough time in their front positions. Soon they lose touch, lose confidence, make bad decisions, and generally do not get the performance out of their troops that one would normally expect. But to command a division for a long period of time in constant combat is difficult and trying. The mental problem is greater than the physical. Hugo Olsen is back on the job. I'll have both for the attack. The Russians are doing wonderfully thank god. We may yet end this in 1945.

Holzheim, Belgium

Feb. 3rd, 1945

About six days ago we jumped off from the Wallerode-Medell line just NE of St. Vith with the mission of punching the Seigfreid line near Udenbreath and Neuhof. Yesterday we seized that portion of the line within our sector and it was a very rough deal. Five days of attacking thru country entirely devoid of raods and even in many cas<sub>e</sub>s trails. Deep snow hampered all movement throughout and the krauts resisted quite bitterly. Fortunately after the first day we had him on his ass and it was simply a case of going fast enough to keep him there. This we did. The attack was generally advanced with the main effort along the high ground fanning out only to gain contact with adjacent units and mop up. It is a preeminently fine technique and although it means much sweat it also means little blood lost. The Seigfreid line was of considerable professional interest. It is a fine defense and could, with stout hearted, well equipped well led defenders accomplish its prupose. But the best defense is ~~ext~~ still to attack. The division is still in a interesting tug-of-war with Gen Ridgway holding on to the division for dear life and Gen. Brereton not knowing what to do about it and, as well as I can determine, doing nothing. I would like to see the war in Eurppe brought to a successful ccnclusion and if our retention on the Western Front will effect that



then we are being well employed, if not properly employed. The present situation is full of promise. The Germans appear to be beaten and beaten badly. With better troops I see no reason why we could not run all over them. The public will never know nor never appreciate this. Our american army individually means well and tries hard but it is not the army that one reads about in the press. It is untrained and comparatively inefficient. Certainly our Infantry lacks courage and elan. I do not see how this can be acquired in less than several more months or war and careful digestion of the lessons learned in each operation. Some people say "The Battle is the Payoff", in fact a book has been written about it and a best seller at that. This is a fallacy. The digestion of the lessons learned and their application is the payoff. Ed Ostberg was hit and killed yesterday. Like most paratroop officers he was hit exposing himself when he should have been using cover. We have all learned how to move and fight a division with efficiency and dispatch. It seems very clear to me that our higher headquarters take entirely too much time to put plans and orders into effect. I wish that I could spend some time on an army or an army group staff. We must learn to move more quickly or we will be beaten. Gosh I would like to fight troops with more speed and killing power than we now have. Only the airborne units have it. Some say its being overburdened with heavy equipment others say its just their mental attitude. It is hard to say. Certainly older officers get ideas that stay with them that they can neither rid themselves of nor do they desire to rid themselves of them. The solution would appear to get younger officers in some of the higher commands or on the higher staffs. To take 24 to 48 hrs to get a division rolling in the attack is ridiculous. How can it ever win a fight. Nowadays one must move fast both to stay alive and to kill. If considerable confusion and chaos results that is to be accepted as a normal component of such an operation. If all is orderly and well conducted speed is being sacrificed. It seems to me that this war could fold up any day now. Then for the Pacific.



Rott, Germany

Feb. 10, '45

To our dismay and disbelief the penetration into the Seigfried line at Udenbreth was not exploited. In fact the entire 1st and 82nd Div sectors was taken over by the 99th Div as a holding mission. The background is that FM Montgomery obtained the go signal from gen Eisenhower to launch an attack with the British and Canadian Armies and the US 9th. The US 1st is protecting its southern flank. Thus the build-up is to be abandoned and much of our sweating and losses was in vain. Difficult to explain this sort of thing to the troops. It is surprising how influential Montgomery is. It is understandable when one looks back over the futile efforts of the US Army during the past winter. Definitely decisive action was lacking. The German succeeded amazingly well in spoiling all of our attack preparations. We have just simply have got to learn to take risks to gain combat successes. Nothing ventured nothing gained never was more true. Mental courage and confidence is essential. Up here the 505 and 508 have been working with the V Corps to assist in capturing the dams along the Roer river. Nasty job and one that could have been done by anyone. Next we are to attack across the river on the southern flank of the US 1st Army thus protecting the flank of Montgomery's effort. Even if Montgomery's effort succeeds it will not accomplish a great deal. The snow has melted uncovering many of the dead and decayed of the past several months on this front. The 28th Division evidently took a bad beating in this area. A discouraging sight to see. Much of their tanks, jeeps, weasels, arms etc. abandoned. Their wounded and dead left on the ground now rotting. If only our statesmen could spend a minute hugging the ground under mortar fire next to a three months old stiff. We just simply have got to stop wars.

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Hurtgen, Germany Feb 13th '45

A comfortable in a cellar of this what once was no doubt a lovely German town. Under direct observation of the Germans across the Roer river but not receiving much fire. I get the impression that the German is about through. We have been planning a river crossing for sometime now. It has been delayed because of the deep water. Just a few minutes ago we received word that we were to return to our base at Rheims without delay. That will be good news to all of these lads. This type of ground fighting where everybody sits around in the mud and no one wants to fight is most unpleasant. I am ready to return.



April 9th

It seems to me that it takes two different temperments in this army. One for regular ground divisions and a different for an airborne division. The airborne trooper gets furious, impatient and finally disgusted with the vacillation and delay in getting going in a ground fight with ground units. They take forever to plan and stage a show and then they get nowhere after they start. The analogy of hitching a racehorse to a plow is no fallacy. The airborne trooper wears himself fighting the system, he is a bit too high strung to be wallowing in the mud indefinitely. Our first cases of lice showed up yesterday. Came from occupying former German billets. The german army is ripe for airborne operations. They could be taken apart now.

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Camp Sissone, France

Feb. 26th

Returned at last to our base. The area has been taken up by two general hospitals but with their quota of about 190 nurses they are rather welcome. The troops have been moved under canvas, rather comfortable however. Attended a 504th prop blast several nights ago, lots of fun much like old time Welles talked about their attack to capture Herresbach, they were, as the saying goes down to their uppers. The men were finally so exhausted that they dropped in the snow, which was in places waist deep, unconscious. Their company commanders and platoon leaders would drag them to their feet and slap their faces until they came to and then make them continue walking. German snipers, which was all that there was finally, were practically ignored unless some men got hit. Finally they staggered to the ridge north of the town and attacked down it. They surprised the Germans who had no idea that any human could have gotten there and killed 62 along the road and into the town. The 504 did not lose a single man. The perfect battle. Met a Lt. Peggy Knecht of the 242 at the prop blast and dragged her to a movie last night. Rather interesting. The crossing of the Roer finally underway.

Camp Sissone

France

Mar. 12, 1945

A very busy three weeks. Reorganized and reequipped about 75% to date. Given mission for the jump near Worms to get the Third Army across the Rhine about two weeks ago. Today it was definitely called off. Given mission for a jump on Berlin about a week ago. Operation Eclipse. Attended a dinner in Rheims with Gen. Eisenhower, Ridgway, Chapman, Miley and Capt. Butcher USN. Butcher evidently voicing the views of



his chief suprisingly frank in saying that Eclipse probably would never come off because the Russians would be there first. With that background I have not been pushing our planning. Today however Eaton C/S of XVIII Corps said that the whole thing was firm politically and that it would go. Hard to believe but it may be. How in the world can it be arranged for the Russians to wait at one street while we load up and jump a week later. Even now they are close to Berlin. Had a wonderful three days in London. Val looking well and as attractive as ever. I really worry though about her attitude and how unhappy we could be unless she changes. Prospects do not look too good for us. The division doing beautifully and having less disciplinary trouble than ever in its history. I believe that I have them all with me. Jump tested the C-46 yesterday. Lindquist who jumped with me told me this afternoon that he sustained a partially fractured upper arm. I'd sure like to live through combat jump five. I believe that five are as many as one man should be given. Beyond that is too much. We all realize it now. There is a drain on the courage of a man that cannot be replaced. Leave nor passes do not make the fourth and fifth jumps any easier. Went to Picaudville to award gold watches to two Francais who befriended us in Normandy Saturday. Quite an affair. Got in a good plug for the Division Fourriguerre.

Camp Sissone, March 18th

A full week of jumping and glidering. Jump tested the C-46 Sunday, jumped with the Div Hqrs flight Tuesday, jumped with the 508 Wednesday. During the am drop on Wednesday a C-47 lost a propellor, dropped into the pattern, took six jumpers along in its crash to the ground. Thought it a good idea to jump with the troops in the pm and so did uneventfully. Lost twelve men including four air corps. Marlene Deitrick here Tuesday. A bit demanding and expectant and in a way supprisingly unattractive. Had an interesting conversation with Mrs. Ernest Hemingway last night re this bright and happy world that we are all looking forward to so eagerly. She was particularly interested in my political views and stated that the press had been told by one Maj. Kirksey that the airborne troops would be rugged well led troops that would keep America safe for fascism in the post war world. She said that she had come down from Paris particularly to find out how I felt about this thing. Interesting. What will the post war years bring. She seems to be trying to align someone up for something. My sympathies are essentially with the people, certainly not the interests well intrenched and honored only by time.



Well, Miss Gellhorn turned out to be quite a person. I have never met her likes and would just as soon not in anyone else. She took the damn place apart. It was wonderful. There will be no more visits with her here. Tuesday, the 20th, went to HQs 9th Army at Munschen Gladbach for a ceremony at which FM Montgomery made several British awards. My DSO included. A nice affair. Lots of Rank, Hodges, Gerow, Simpson, and a half dozen MGs. The staff gossip is that the Germans have practically no organized resistance on the far side of the Rhine. The crossing is to be made by Montgomery on the 24th. His technique is interesting. His patience and thorough buildup is extremely conservative but undoubtedly what it takes in this kind of fighting. Patton is roaring along on the southern front and may cross the Rhine today and to hell with an airborne bridgehead. That is good fighting. Talking before dinner last night the staff seemed quite taken by the well known anecdote concerning the 504th's efforts to get prisoners on the Nijmegen front. The patrol leader would slip in on a fox hole, reach in and attempt to pull the kraut out. Crigging in the bottom he couldn't quite be gotten hold of. The patrol leader would drop a grenade in and go to the next hole looking for a bigger kraut who could be reached. That is their report. The story is however that they would pull the krauts out of their holes and if they were not big enough they would drop them back in, drop in a grenade with them, and go on to the next hole until they found one of satisfactory and suitable size.

Camp Sissone March 25th

Yesterday took off at 0815 and went to Munschen Gladbach, took off from there at 0940 and was over Venlo at 0955 there we sighted the US 17th and British 6th on their way into Opn Ararsity. Quite a sight, as far as the eye could see wave upon wave of planes, fighters darting about. And ahead billowing clouds of dust and smoke from the battle area. They appeared to hit their DZs a bit early, the flak initially was heavy in both sectors, the americans were on the right and the British left. As the dropping progressed the US flak stopped but the british continued quite heavily finally throwing up bursts after the last landing was made. Counted over a dozen ships shot down, the C-47s get in trouble with their poor gas tanks. In some cases the crews bailed out in most they went down in a ball of fire. Crossed over into the german sector to get a close up view of the DZ area and was fired at by small arms fire. Was down to about 1000 ft at the time. We had been observing at 2500. The US TCC formations were beautiful, the british



not as tight, bomber stream in fact, and they flew finally at 3000 ft. The DZ patterns did not look too bad, at least some of them were excellent. But all in all it was a very rough show and, in fact, it appeared a bit dangerous.

*(near Cologne)*  
Weider, Germany April 2, 1945

Attended a conference at FAAA CP at Maison Lafitte Thursday afternoon March 29th. Two plans advanced for the use of Abn TRPs before the war ends on the continent. One, dropping ahead of the armed spearheads for the purpose of supplying petrol and infantry; two, dropping separate bns of PW camps to protect the prisoners from fanatical civilians. After the conference visited Gen. Parks and he told me that Gen Bradley had just conferred with Gen. Eisenhower and had secured permission to use the 82nd and 101st on the west bank of the Rhine in order to release about eight divisions. SHAEF approved. The orders were issued Friday and here we are. The Div has been assigned to the XXII Corps of the 15th Army. Called on Gen. Gerow on my way up Sunday the 1st. We are relieving the 86th, a very green but very fine looking division. This was their first position and not too good a one. The krauts apparently have pulled out. The division frontage is 35 miles generally centered on Cologne or what is left of it. It definitely appears as though the German is through. We were ready to leave Sissone. Six weeks out of the line is plenty although I appreciated the opportunity to absorb and train the reinforcements. ~~XXXXX~~ Made a delightful acquaintance in Peggy Kenecht of the 242nd General. A nice girl and we get along very well together, however it was time for me to leave.

Weider, Germany April 3rd

The boys still arriving. Those by motor coming into Stolberg near Aachen. The motor serials closed last night. The 86th still holding eagerly but very greenly. Captured two prisoners in the six days they have been on the front so far. Had a patrol over night before last that picked up and talked to a German who convinced them that they should not take him prisoner because the patrol would be shot up going back. They had seen a MG which tracked them but which they did not disturb. He said that it would be very hard on his family if he surrendered. (He was already captured) He was carrying a bucket of pea soup. Said that that was all that they had had for food for the past three weeks. They let him go instead of killing him. An American boy is not a killer and short of combat it is hard to make him one. He has got to see killing and be shot at.



Weider, Germany April 9th

Took over and holding 35 miles of the Rhine river line as well as governing about 650 square miles of Germany. This includes three displaced persons camps which are quite a headache. The Germans across the river although in what is clearly a hopeless plight are nevertheless very tough. On April 5th a German Colonel Corps Surgeon of the 81st Corps accompanied by a second Lt. who spoke excellent English came across under a white flag. He had with him a letter signed by Gen. of Inf. Kochling and a map showing two areas in which they had concentrated their wounded civilians and soldiers. His mission was to request us not to fire into those areas. This we certainly would not have done if they were properly marked anyway. He got as far as a company CP in a cottage in a house in Merkenich. My first reaction was to take him prisoner as I always have in these cases but after some thought I figured with his rank and XXII Corps' newness they might overrule me after he reached the Corps PW cage. That would then be a hell of a mess since he would have seen all of my area. It also was possible that higher Hqs would be interested in them as emissaries to the surrounded Krauts. I therefore called Gen Harmon the Corps CG who in turn called the Army CG who said let them return. This was done the following morning. The night of the 6th A GO 504 was sent across and took over the town of Hildorf. The German reaction was strong and violent evidently thinking that it was a bridging site. We had a hell of a fight and finally had to withdraw the company with about 30-35% loss the night of the 7th. Had quite a fight with CG Corps who seemed to fear leaving them over there. It was best to withdraw them finally. We have had numerous patrols cross the river although it is quite a gamble. The Krauts wait until the boat is just about ready to touch down on the far shore and then they blast it out of the water. No future in that. Bob Capa and Martha Gelhorn arrived for several days stay on the 8th. Nice to have them and they are very interesting. Martha is a very nice person. The displaced persons, slaves really, are quite a problem. Especially the Russians who love nothing more than to beat up or rape a German. Next to burning his home to the ground or robbing and looting they like this best. I have 7,500 of them as well as several thousand Poles and more miscellaneous. Gen Gaither visited. He would like when the division returns to the states to have me take over the Precht School and he take the division. Rumors rampant. Are we to return to the states shortly? We are apparently being held back for some reason. It may be.



not as tight. bomber stream in fact, and they flew finally

Weider, April 13th

Heard this morning that President Roosevelt had died yesterday. A shock and an irreplaceable loss at this particular time. Regardless of how much any of us disagreed with him the facts were that he was a great man and a real war leader. I do not see how we can replace him. His Vice-President, Mr. Truman, appears totally inadequate. We Americans are due for dark and trying days and years ahead and the world peace efforts have been done an irreparable harm. Willkie was a great man. What for the future, at least it will be interesting. Humanity is on the march and we for a change are not in the van. As long as our markets last and our natural resources are full and plenty we can afford the luxuries of a purely capitalistic nation but our days are numbered and we will have to join the march. Our front is becoming more and more quiet, soon there will be no enemy whatsoever. Had General Harman in yesterday for lunch, he allowed as to how our fighting on this continent was over. On the other hand I visited Hqrs XVIII Corps and learned that General Ridgway had elicited and obtained the backing of Gens. Hodges and Bradley to get the two ABN Divs to the eastern front for the final clean-up. Gen JCH Lee who was in a day or so ago said that he did not think that the fighting up there was now worthy of the 82nd. There may be something to that, the fact of the matter is that there is practically no fighting. The daily advances are hardly more than marches, the biggest problems being those of supply and transport. Last night we had patrols across the river into Hildorf. We used for the first time infra-red flash lights and beacons to signal to the patrols. It was preeminently successful. Next we want to develop the PND, or "mouse-detector" as it is affectionately called. Miss Gellhor still around. I like her very much, she is brilliant and charming. Had her land at A-58 with Bob Capa when they arrived. That way we found out why the airport was not being used. The krat. in the sack are still being tough. When they are wiped out we should know more of our future, we all suspect that it is destination; New York. I want to get to the Pacific. As this thing approaches a wind-up I realize that I will have a frightful time adapting myself to the years of peace and ways of peace. Fighting and excitement have become my daily sustenance, I miss them after awhile. I will die as a quiet civilian. I will get used to it all too soon as so many have in the past but the adjustment will be a painful process. I will not go back to my regular rank without leaving the service. There is so much to be done both in the development of Abn techniques and means and for our people in the fields of economics and politics.



Germany April 15th  
Received movement imminent orders yesterday, no idea where.

It is about time, we are far too comfortable here. Have stayed up until about 100 and 200 am the past week talking to Martha. She is by far the smartest woman that I have ever known, she is most sincere and genuine too. One of the few genuine people completely devoid of pretense that I have ever met. I like her ideas very much. Mentally we could be very happy but sexually I believe that we are far apart. She writes only as she feels and the public can go to hell if they don't like it, which I admire very much but it isn't necessarily going to make her a lot of money. She has been a wonderful influence and experience for me, I need to know people like her. She frankly criticizes me and the army and what ever strikes, or fails to strike, her fancy. Which is good for me and which I do not get enough of.

Germany, April 17th  
The movement imminent was apparently a staff officer's ill-considered haste, but that we are moving soon is quite apparent. We are to be in SHAEF reserve and to move to the area Wesel-Frankfurt-Kassel in what I believe will be an occupational role. Gen. Harmon told me yesterday that he had it from a very high level that we are on a high priority for shipment to the Pacific. I have also had it from another source that we are on a very high priority for shipment to the states. So far everything fits into the picture. We are being held back for ready preparation and shipment to the states and then to be refitted and shipped to the Pacific. But as always in war anything may happen. The front is moving along nicely and contact should be made with the Russians within the week.

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T- Germany April 18th

The First and Ninth armies remain on the Elbe where they are now closing. The Third advances to the East to join the Russians. We continue in our present occupational role and in SHAEF reserve. We all feel a terrible let down. The war on the continent is over. The mopping up of the redoubt area should be not too difficult a problem, really just what the new divisions will need and they are anxious for it. My 417th FA group just off the boats has been given a definite occupational assignment. Their guns are to be put in cosmoline for long storage and they are to start guard duties of the occupied areas. It kills them. Fortunately they fired about a dozen or so shots when we had some front on the Rhine.



Germany

April 21st

The place and time of meeting the Russians now looms large as the most intriguing thing of the moment. Our Staff pool amounting to 22 pounds is at stake. Dresden looks good. My choice is Ubigau. The most important thing is that a meeting is to take place at last after these four years. Inherited 9,500 more Russians yesterday. They are all doing well. They are a fine people. The divisions future is as much in doubt as ever. I believe that we will be given a good idea as soon as the Russian corridor is opened and SHAEF can feel certain of a clear unobstructed road to victory.

Weiden Germany

April 24th

Received information yesterday that the division would be ~~xxx~~ go with the XVIII Corps to the 2nd British Army for participation in the severance and clearing up of ~~the~~ Denmark. We should move in about three or four days and be closed up near the Elbe by the 30th. It cannot amount to much except considerable physical discomfort and very little fighting. I do not like to go with the XVIII Corps. They take away everything that is not nailed down and give us nothing. Made a trip to Versailles and talked to Col. Kessinger, ADCS G-1 SHAEF yesterday regarding redeployment. I am sweating it a bit. Then went to FAAA at La Maison La Fitte and talked to G-1 re our Nijmegen citation. Back at Sissone called G-4 Oise Base and found out that we are again being moved out of our home. The redeployment program sounds all screwed up. The 13th which has not heard a hostile shot and which has been mere coincidence just missed participation in a local Abn show has been given top redeployment priority for return to the states, wow! they have only been away six months and haven't been in combat. What will happen to us Christ only knows. My heart is set on the Pacific. I would die if I had to sit in the States with a war in the Pacific and not get in on it.

Weiden Germany

April 25th

Visited Gen Ridgway for a few hours yesterday. Finally received our plan for the operations in the vicinity of Hamburg. I asked him about our citation for Nijmegen, he has asked Gen. Eisenhower about it and has been given some assurance of favorable consideration. No guarantee however. He told in the course of our discussion that Gen. Eisenhower had not approved of the 101st citation at Bastogne, that the War Dept. had jumped on the band wagon and ordered it without consulting him. A splendid public relations job. He told me that there is little chance



of us going to the Pacific after this winds up. This was a shock. We have had our hearts set on it. I asked him to do all that he could to arrange it and he said he would. I believe that he may be in error. Rumor has it that we are going. He also told me that there are to be two Abn Divisions and two separate regiments in the post war army. Where I will fit into this god knows. I am not anxious to return to the states to sit and decay. We move to the 2nd British Army area today.

Hohenzethen, Germany, April 27, 1945

Arrived here last night. The Division CP in the assembly area of the division six miles from the Elbe river and forty miles from Hamburg. The 26th returned to Sissone for a short visit principally to talk to CG Oise Base re our having to move from Sissone in connection with the redeployment program. We apparently were in priority one for return to the states to parade in NY on VE day with one Armd and one Inf div. When the 13th was not sent in they took our priority and they are to return first evidently for transit to the Pacific or breakup. Here we have a new division that has never heard a hostile shot that is being sent back to the homeland to parade as a representative combat division because of a staff convenience while a veteran division sits and fights. This will never be understood by a staff officer. It is unbearable to a combat soldier. Anyway the prospects are that we will have to move from Sissone to make room for divisions going back to the States. A most unpleasant prospect. Had a short visit with Peg Knecht. A hell of a nice person. Loyal, sweet. This sector looks OK from here, thousands of DPs wandering about and a number of PWs. Had a guard murdered on the motor pool of the 456 last night. Haven't seen the actual front yet but I understand that it may be wet. To our right on the 9th Army front quite a number of Germans are coming into their lines to avoid the Russians. I have been advised by higher Hqs to be prepared to receive the Russians in traditionally good style with gifts etc. It nauseates me, why gifts? We give gifts to only our proven friends and to no other living being. We'll fight them if they want to fight. We would sooner do that than give them gifts.

Bleckede, Germany April 29, 1945

A small tidy pretty German town on the Elbe. The CP is about a half mile from the river. The town has been held by the 5th British division, we are taking it over in about an hour. We plan on crossing with the 505th tonight. The division will not close for several days but the crossing must be made as a political necessity. The British are intent on seizing the



Keil Canal before the Russians get there and take over. In addition they want to take over control of Denmark. The Russians cant be very far away, no one knows how far, consequently the British crossed the Elbe on our left at 0200 this morning three days before the planned crossing. We are to protect their right and meet the Russians. The krauts on the river are in a disputative frame of mind, we apparently lost some men in a patrol last night. Reached the depths the day before on reconnaissance in Hitacker when I came across a pig eating a dead kraut. The noise that he made was more bothersome than the act. I could hear it at lunch. I have seen enough of war for a lifetime. The current practice of the kraut of making fertilizer of their enemies gives factual proof to the exponents of the theory of reincarnation. They can at least prove that one of their apostles turned up as a turnip

Ludwiglust, Germany May 3rd

There will never be a day like this again nor a week for that matter. The division crossed the Elbe with one regt, the 505th, the night of the 29th-30th. Moving with its usual elan and speed the bridgehead was established by daylight the crossing having been started at 0100. I followed at 0430 and by 0500 found myself in the heaviest artillery concentrations the I have experienced for some time. We encountered something new in a sea mine, a mine activated by a magnetic activated switch pre-set for a certain number of fluctuations. The 505 was followed by the 504 which attacked to the south and cleared Darceau in an hour thus uncovering another bridge site. The 32nd Armored Division COB of which had been attached to the division. The german resistance up to this time had been spotty but mean, lots of sea mines which were most fatal and undetectable. The 2nd an attack was ordered to seize Ludwiglust to Domit. First the germans fought and killed a number of our men, by noon they were surrendering in groups and it was difficult to pass through towns without picking up large groups of willing prisoners. By early afternoon complete units were passing thru our lines ignoring everyone and everything ready for surrender. By midafternoon I arrived in Ludwiglust and there found a steady stream of germans, civilians and soldiers alike, passing thru our lines for surrender. Families were riding halftracks, soldiers were accompanied by their women, complete units were coming in. At about five o'clock I had established my CP in the Palace of the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg in Ludwiglust when the CG of the 21st Germany Army had three staff officers



August 17th

visit my CP to arrange the surrender of his wounded and allied PWs. I told them that I would accept the surrender of his complete army only and on unconditional terms only. He said after some talking that he would transmit these terms to his CG. The son of the grand duke was present and wanted to stay overnight in the Palace. This I refused to let him do informing him that he would be processed as a PW if he remained. He told me that the house was the property of the english crown etc. I reminded him of the english bombed homes and so it went. At about 2000 Lieut. Gen. von Tippelskirch arrived with his staff to arrange the final surrender. After much talking and lengthy discussion in which he asked me my plans and wanted obviously for the US troops to move out and accept the surrender of his army where it stood I accepted unconditionally the surrender of his complete army. There was little choice for him. I told him that the Russians were our allies and that I proposed to move against him and destroy his army in conjunction with them if he did not surrender. He surrendered returning only to work out the details of the withdrawal of his troops. All day yesterday and today his army has been coming into our lines. It has been a sight like nothing else in history. Their troops look well. They are well disciplined. They are however outnumbered and completely out-quantified with equipment. Our prisoner take must total near 70-90,000. I have never expected to see the equal of it. Late this afternoon contact was made with the Russians and a meeting took place with the CG of the 8th Mech Corps. Gen. Danit. We agreed on a final location of our front lines and on a kilometer of no man's land between us. Tonight they visited the division CP and I had Gen Ridgway and the staff present for some palaver champagne and brandy. I visited their CP also and it was an experience. I understand why the Germans do not want to surrender to them. They kicked in store windows, looted, rolled a big keg of wine onto the dirty square where anyone who came by with a bucket could have a fill. Drunks swanned about the streets flagging down vehicles. Their military courtesy was unusually good. Very enthusiastic and very rough on the Germans. They tear everything apart and loot everything. It is an experience to watch them work. Their common hatred for everything German seems to bind them together. With much drinking of champagne and brandy they were sent on their way tonight. I would as soon fight them as anyone. The quantity of US equipment in their possession was remarkable.



Ludwigslust Germany

May 6th

The days have been filled to overflowing. The 4th I visited the concentration camp outside of town and there met a sight the equal of which I have never even imagined nor expect to see ever again. About two hundred dead were scattered about most if not all of them having died from beatings and starvation. It was horribly gruesome. It is inconceivable to imagine such a thing happening in a civilized world. I ordered all unit COs to visit the place and as many troops as possible. Those guilty of fraternization are to be punished by visiting the place and assisting in removing the bodies. This morning we had a funeral burying the 200 unburied in the local city square. The most prominent citizens in town were required to dig the graves and remove and lower the bodies into their graves. The services were very good and I am sure brought home to the local Germans the error of their ways. Perhaps it did, I'm not sure. Yesterday had a meeting with the CG of the Russian 5th Guards Cossack Division at which time he presented me with a silver plaque in commemoration of the occasion. It is a beautiful memento. This afternoon Lt. Gen. Dempsey met Lt. Gen. Greishen, CG of the Russian 49th Army at the Div CP. It was a very nice affair. I still think that Gen. Dempsey is one of the finest that I have known in the war. At noon word was received from Gen Eisenhower that all hostilities were to cease that the German Armed forces had surrendered unconditionally. This is it. After two years. One doesn't know whether to cry or cheer or just simply get drunk. It is difficult to give full expression to one's feelings while in uniform in command. Now for the Japanese.

Ludwigslust, Germany

May 8th

A visit yesterday from the 385th Infantry Division at 11:00. Visited the Hqrs of the 5th Guards Cossack Division at 3:00. Greeted by a band and assembled staff, that followed by some toasting with some excellent hair raising vodka. Then dinner which was quite an affair. We were shown their 120mm AT gun and I rode in their T-34 tank. After dinner we all sang and they did some dances outdoors. Then the movie and home shortly after midnight. All in all quite a day. The JA was the only one who got combat fatigue. They are fascinating people and without exception are well liked by our people. I was presented with a cossack sabre and a Russian tommy-gun. Things are shaping up well. The apparent prospects are that we will stay here for several weeks and then god knows what. Extra officers are beginning to arrive, my talk to them I am afraid was anything but inspiring. Everyone is trying to jump on the bandwagon, the 82nd, the proven outfit where reputations are made and fame is everywhere.



Ludwigslust May 17, 1945

Returned the visit of the 385th and that was some affair, next returned one with Gen Dempsey to the Russian 49th Div and that was almost as rough. My aide passed out so I had to relieve him. Rumors of our ultimate demise continue to fly

about with far too great a number and improbability. It seems certain that we will not see the States before the Fall if not Xmas. Yesterday I had a long talk with Gen Ridgway about the possibility of the 101 returning first. That would be a tragedy. We expect to leave here for our south Germany sector in about two weeks. It should be interesting, but few things are now.

Ludwigslust, May 20, 1945

An affair with the 5th Guards Cossack and the 385th. Very enjoyable. We like the Russians very much. They had a film for us. "The Red Star", plainly propaganda and an orchestra that was excellent. Have been informed by XVIII Corps that our priority for shipment back to the states is being reconsidered, we were placed after the 13th and 101. That would be extremely unfortunate and I am not sure if I would survive it. Our next area and assignment is in doubt. It does appear certain that we have from four to nine months to do on the continent.

Ludwigslust, May 29th

Being relieved by the British 5th Division starting the 31st of May. We are returning to the Sissone area where we will catch up with our tails and prepare for redeployment. I personally doubt that we will be redeployed now but everyone says that there is a strong possibility of it. Gen. Ridgway is in Washington and should get some decisions. I received word that I am to return on the 10th of June to participate in a war bond drive in San Antonio, Texas, followed by two weeks leave. It is hard to believe after all this time. My feelings are mixed. I do not want to leave the division at this time. Dominating all else at this moment is worry about P. Overdue. The possible consequences are, well death and disgrace. It is hard to accept calmly. Going back to Sissone will not help matters. I have used poor judgment. I'm extremely unhappy.



Ludwigslust, Germany

May 31st

This, the last night in Germany. Tomorrow will tell a great deal, I am still worried but hoping for the best. Called on Gen. Moore, C/S of the Ninth Army today. Had a long talk with Billingslea. He was surprised at Rommel's mental state in Africa. I told him that I was not. No one but one who has been through it can appreciate the mental strain and anxiety of a combat commander faced with independent decisions. We agreed that there are two things that are outstanding in war for an officer fear and anxiety. Of the two fear is the least bothersome and the easiest to overcome. In peacetime we must have realistic training in airborne units accepting a loss of about 1% per year from small arms artillery etc. I am not exactly looking forward to my return to the states.

BERLIN, GERMANY August 2, 1945

June the 5th the division closed back in Sissone. There a few difficulties with the Assembly Area Command which was about to use the area for redeployment. June the 10th I left with Capt. Thompson ADC for San Antonio Texas where we arrived June 13th. Quite a celebration, met Fraye Gilbert of WOAI. From there went to Washington to rejoin Peg and the Babe after two years. They were fine. To NY for several days then to Mt. Carmel. In NY met Martha Gellhorn, a remarkable person, went to a show. In Mt. Carmel had a hollywood homecoming and sold war bonds. Returned to Washington. Later went to Fire Island NY where I spent several days with Martha at ~~Point of Woods~~ Point of Woods. A delightful place, the first real vacation. Returned to the division which had now moved to Epinal France on July 3rd. Flew via Newfoundland, Azores in a C-54 both ways. The division in fine shape, splendid relations with the local populace. Our entry into Berlin tied up so that the 2nd Arm'd is to go in first. We are to go in about August 1st. While in Washington talked to Gen Ridgway about Pacific prospects. Appears to be little chance. I am to go to Berlin and that's that. The division was slated for demobilization. Called on Gen. Marshall and Pres. Truman. Both delightful to talk to. Attended a sea at the home of Sec. of State Stimson. Epinal very nice, Mon. Parisot and family very fine people. He is the Prefect of the Vosges. His chief of cabinet Mon. Lelay OK also. The Berlin sector is interesting to say the least at this point. The plan worked up last winter at SHAEF provides for a Berlin District that in theory operates under Group Control Council of Gen Clay. Clay despite his nation wide role is taking over close control of



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the US sector of the city and everything in it. Parks, who runs BD is gradually being pushed into a useless role. There are at present 80 general officers in the city. Parks staff refer to them as the political carpet-baggers (they are Clay's specialists) There are 40,000 troops in the city, far too many. I hope to get the number reduced. Relations with the British are apparently fine, with the Russians touch-and-go. I arrived with an advance CP yesterday, today will be the first full day of business.

Berlin, August 3rd

Called on Gen Parks and Gen Collier. Continued reconnaissance of training areas. Does not look too bad. I can see where one could get settled into a routine and not too unpleasant of a routine here. The weather continues to be bad.

Berlin, August 4th

Continued reconnaissance of training areas generally out towards Potsdam. All evidence shows that the Germans turned in a good fight even after the city was captured. Made a ~~xxxxxxx~~ short broadcast for AFN-Berlin, it opens tomorrow. Accompanied Gen Parks to the locale of the Group Control Council meeting to start on the 10th. Needs a hell of a lot of work. Parks informed me that he is taking a three-weeks leave in September and that I would represent the US in the Berlin District meetings, quite an opportunity to learn a few things. I would like to make a name for myself at these international conferences, this international security council is the biggest thing that has hit this world in our time, to qualify for sitting with it is worthwhile.

Berlin, August 5th

Reconnoitred the NE boundary, looks none too well. The Russian units in that sector no where near up to the standard of the 5th Guards and 385th Cavalry. Accompanied Gen Parks in a call on Gen Clay. Interesting to see and talk to him again, call ordinary. Apparently the Group Control people have been quite incensed by the possessive attitude of the 2nd Arm'd towards all recreational and athletic facilities. Took a walk with Tommie down through the Gruenvald.

Berlin, August 8th

The division arriving. Many difficulties with the Russian handling of the trains. Yesterday flew to Helmstedt to look for four missing trains, figured on resupplying them by air if necessary. German propaganda excellent still, they tell



our troopers that the war was not their fault, they could do nothing about it. The new men believe them and I am afraid are beginning to feel that the older soldiers of the division are unreasonable in their hatred of everything German. They tell the troops that the Russians are not to be trusted and they get the troops bitching and blaming all their difficulties on the Russians. The Germans will be disappointed and I believe surprised if we do not come to blows with the Russians before the winter is over. I take the sector tonight.

Berlin, August 10th

Took over the sector at 0803 August 9th, so far all is well although there is a great potential source of trouble in this place. Yesterday attended the first Kommandantura meeting, most impressive. It is truly our first experiment in real international government. There is the small amoebea of peaceful government, fuel, food, transportation, news, radio, all controlled in a central headquarters for the common good. It is a wonderful thing. News of the first atomic bombing of Hiroshima still crowds everything else off the front pages. It is frightening and unbelievable in its implications. Last night Bob Capa brought Jack Benny and Ingrid Bergman by the house for supper about 2300. Had a nice time. She is lovely.

Berlin August 12th

Japan has accepted the Potsdam terms and we have started negotiations with a view to their surrender. Its all over over there. So ends our chances for the Pacific. Right now however we could not be better situated. This is interesting and instructive. Attended the opening of the Berlin Press club Saturday night. Quite nice, three German girls there. Very difficult to accept that, much more difficult than I suspected it would be. Having a hard time getting close to the Russians, someone gave them a chill. The 2nd Arm'd shot four of them.

Berlin, August 13th

No surrender from Japan yet but it is certainly in the offing. Dated Katharine Clark of CBS Sunday evening. We started making a broadcast at 1500 that wound up at 1380530. She says that the Russians are saying; see, when the red army threatens the Japs surrender. You have been fighting them for three years and you have done no good. Propaganda. But it is passed around by the best people. Saw GI Joe last night, a wonderful movie. Dinner at Gen Parks. The French are having difficulties getting started. We are feeding them. They are to start feeding themselves on Sept. but very likely will not be able to make it.



Berlin, August 17th

The war is over and peace is here at last. It made little difference to the soldiers ie there was no celebrating. What the future holds in the way of a quick return is the closest thing to their hearts now. The C/S hung up a sign "Mr. Weinicke" life insurance, Billingslea called me Capt. Gavin and so it goes. I don't care a hell of a lot. The division is doing a fine job. I am having my usual troubles, more than usual I guess. My present position and rank ar such that I can't seem to keep out of it. I hardly know howto cope with it. Must learn to discipline myself.

Berlin, August 31st

This winds up August, one of the busiest months that I have ever known. Tomorrow I take over the command of Berlin District. so next month should be worse. Yesterday we had an airborne review for Gen. Eisenhower, he seemed quite pleased with it. The Kommandantura meetings have been aneducation. The US sector is rapidly becoming overcrowded with DPs and refugees from the other sectors of the city. The Russians or deserters from the Russian army, of which there are many, seem to like to raid, rape and loot in the US sector. The food requirements in the US sector are not being adequately met. Thiswinter there will be no coal for the civilians. All in all it prombes to be a win winter of starvation and riots. May heads will fall I believe. Within the 82nd I have started checking all supply agencies carefully to avoid the growth of leaks, it is a serious and difficult problem. If I survive this winter I will be a hell of a lot better informed by spring. The Russians are not very easy to get along with compared to the combat units in Mecklen burg but in t&me may melt.

Berlin, Sept. 1st

An airborne review for Gens. Baranoff, Garbotov, and Antinov. It was taken over however by Marshal Zukov and staff, the othe were scared away. It was very well done. Unfortunately there was one fatality. A trooper became tied up with an equipment bundle that finally landed on his chest. Later in the day I called on Baranoff. He had a Russian translation from a recent S&S, he objected to the article which implied that the russian were aiding the black market. In the afternoon Congressman Luther Johnson of Texas and party visited the CP. In the evening two troopers refused to obey the order of Col. Hughes GCC to release a german whom they had apprehended. To bed early. Attended a soldier show in the div arty area.