

My Days

*A Memoir of Life
in the
100th Infantry Division
of World War II*

by Pfc. R. Emory Smith, Jr.



Edited by Marcia S. Davis, Summer 2007

Foreword

In the 1990s, I decided to transcribe my father's war journal about his experiences in World War II to make it easier to read. It turned out to be a way to get to know him, too. You see, he was killed in 1967 when I was two so I never had the opportunity to hear about life in the war, much less get to know him personally. Through the experience of documenting his own words—both from his journal and from his letters home—I've gotten to know him pretty well. I know he had a good sense of humor and he liked to sing. I know he enjoyed eating and riding trains and going home on leave as much as possible. I know he was not thrilled about the idea of going to war. And, we share some traits: an interest in language (especially dialects), spelling, and grammar; a penchant for planning, organizing, and documenting; a curiosity about life.

The journal pages I've transcribed were written between 1943 and 1946, sent home to his mother, and later numbered with red pencil. I believe he intended to compile them at some point. Along with the letters home to his parents and his sisters—Elizabeth and Marion—they tell quite a story. If he were alive today, I think he also would have corresponded with and visited the many people he befriended during the war. I know this because I have letters sent to him from these people, even from the year he died.

What started out as a transcription process turned into a quest for me. I began to connect with him and understand more about myself. But I wanted to know more. As I came across the many names of guys who served with him in the European Theater, or trained at Ft. Benning and Ft. Bragg, I wondered what they might remember about "Smitty" or "R.E.," as he was known in the army. Lucky for me, the internet was becoming robust. I did a search for "100th Infantry Division" and started making connections. Soon, I was on the phone with veterans from World War II who had walked side-by-side with my father. One even came to visit me. And then there were the reunions. My sister, Beverly S. Truebig, joined me at our first reunion in Pittsburgh, PA, and since then she has connected with many of the same guys who knew our father during the war. We are grateful for all their letters, conversations, and insights about the war and about our father. They have helped us make his acquaintance. They have helped fill the void.

*We dedicate this memoir to the
guys of Company A—new and old—who helped us
in many ways to know our father,
R. Emory Smith, Jr.*



Acknowledgments

Beverly and I would like to acknowledge the many people—friends, family, and members of the 100th Infantry Division and its Association, both living and deceased—who have corresponded and conversed with us, and who shared their experiences and expertise about World War II:

Marv Alpert, Walter Backus, Melvin Baker, Waltraud Beckmann, Sandy Bjorum, Kit Bonn, Patti Bonn, Jay Boyd, Elizabeth Brobst (Emory's sister), Stan Brodsky, John Chichester, Hugh Creveling, Thomas Davis, William Henson, William Holm, Jack Houser, Robert Huffman, Roland Kimmey, Joe Klemyk, Bob Kramer, Harold Krivoy, Morris Levine, Rick Miller, Cheryl Murdoch, Caldon Norman, Jack Pointer, H. Edward Rawlings, Thaddeus (Sam) Samorajski, Robert Schoewe, Gisela Strand, George Tyree, James Volstad, William Watson, Richard Welke, Hank Williams, Harry Wannamaker, Bill Young.

“Smitty” or “R.E.,” as he was usually called by the group in the mortar section, always managed to maintain a friendly, engaging attitude, and most importantly a sense of balance, calmness, and reassurance whether under fire in a foxhole or pinned down on some forbidden, frozen terrain. He displayed the same steadfastness and spirit during long, grinding marches in bitter, blinding snows. He was a great asset to our mortar section....

In our foxhole, New Year’s Eve, we were both trying our darnedest to keep warm and stay awake. We had no food except for cold “K Rations.” We could hear artillery, our and theirs, blasting away, on and off. Once in awhile the snow-covered terrain near our position shook from the impact of incoming shells. R.E. maintained his cheerfulness. We talked, we joked, and I occasionally cursed the miserable cold and enclosed, stifling, unending world we were locked into....Then, just before midnight, your father sprung the surprise: the cocoa—probably hidden in his gas mask.

Excerpt from a letter from Stan Brodsky, written April 12, 1998

New Year's Eve '44

Long ago, on a frozen, wintry landscape,
Me and R.E. shared a burrowed hole covered with pine boughs.
With darkness descending on our battlefield position
We realized a new year would begin in a few hours.
This Thought stirred fresh, new hope in our young minds,
Even as we continued to endure bitter temperatures and
persistent dangers.
The time edged closer to midnight;
R.E. suddenly disclosed his hidden gifts from home –
packets of hot chocolate.
With great emotion, he offered them for our celebration.
Then, on a tiny heating tablet he stirred the precious
powder in his canteen cup.
We anxiously smelled its aroma, tasted its confection
and toasted the New Year.
We savored this special moment.
Our cold, stiff fingers warmed to the heat of the metal
and our tongues lingered over the sweetness of the chocolate,
while we silently wished that the ordeal of war
would soon vanish from our lives.
Sipping slowly, amidst the black space and reverberating
artillery,
We exchanged tales, dreams and hopes, recalling our past,
wiping away our present and fantasizing our future.

By Stan Brodsky

Written New Year's Eve, 1994

Printed with permission

Dec. 7, 1944

Dear Mother,

Enclosed herewith is the first of that history of my life in the army. It covers the time just to our last post in the States.

There are 89 pages in all and after they all come and you've all read them, please put them someplace I can get them when I come home. It seems quite complete to me, and far more detailed than I planned at the beginning.

They are all written now, but I won't mail them all at once.

Love,

E.

Spring 1943 – Williamsport, Pennsylvania

March, 1943

Dean Paige of Bucknell spoke to boy seniors of WHS during “Move-Up-Forward” Week. He explained the coming Navy V-12 test and program.

March, 1943

Bill Bachman, Dick Bower, and I went into Dr. Nancarrow’s office for V-12 application blanks. He told us of the similar Army A-12 test. We three decided to take the A-12.

April, 1943

V-12 and A-12 tests given at 9 am. Regardless of test a student was originally signed for, he could take either or show no preference by checking the proper one of three squares. The test proved to be tough enough but a large percentage of our group passed. The ones taking A-12 were in the majority; the navy checkers heard first.

May 15, 1943 - Sat.

I received a letter from the Adjutant General’s Office in Washington telling me I’d passed the A-12. An enclosure admonished me to join the ERC, telling me that by doing so I’d be doing my country and myself a distinct service and be furthering my own military career. I was among the first of our crowd to hear from the Army.

May 19, 1943 - Wed.

Some of us were at Carl Strub’s catching up on our physics lab manuals and Mr. Strub spoke of attending a meeting at Bucknell that afternoon and personally having spoken with Dean Paige. His statements made us feel that the V-12 program would be more solid, and on his advice we planned to go to Philadelphia the next Sunday to see about transferring since the same test applied to both programs.

May 23, 1943 - Sun.

Mr. Strub, Carl and I set out on the 2:48. I had notified Auntie M. of my plans and she met the train. Saturday night I received a telegram asking us over after we'd finished our business. During Sunday dinner she called to get the details. Her reason for coming over was to tell us about Mr. Arey, her former principal, now a lt. (j.g.) supposed to be in the Widener Bldg.

We registered at the Arch St. YM, ate, and then returned to Broad St. Station to talk. During that time there was a state blackout and she just made the 10 p.m. bus for home. We retired early, expecting a trying next day.

May 24, 1943 - Mon.

We arose, ate, and made our way to the Office of Naval Officer Procurement on the 17th floor of the Widener Bldg. The lieutenant to whom we talked said that once the army had us there was nothing we could do and that the "no preference" had all automatically gone to the army. They knew nothing here of Lt. Arey. We next tried the 12th floor, with less success. That was the location of V-5 (naval flying program) headquarters and Carl had the idea that maybe that would be OK. His father discouraged him in that.

From there each place we tried was worse. We thought of getting additional information about the A-12, which as a program was known as ASTP, Army Specialized Training Program. We tried the Customs House and one other place which closely resembled the place I was later to remember as an induction station. Heaven forbid! I still had six months of life using my own powers and brain to guide me.

We ate dinner and returned to the Y to talk. I was anxious if the others thought our mission was either accomplished or considered to be a failure to go over to A.C. [Atlantic City] taking the Strubs with me as re-urged by Auntie M. in person the night before. However, they felt that the trip should be reserved to celebrate and subsequently decided to go home on the 6:40 p.m. I had always wanted to take some friend my own age to Auntie M.'s, but such was not to be.

Carl and I took in a movie and stage show and Mr. Strub said he'd rather watch the people. We gathered once more at the station in time for me to get the 5:25 p.m. bridge train. I'd already bought a round trip ticket straight through and even in the face of defeat could enjoy a trip to A.C. It would give me a chance to see Auntie M., let her know the outcome,

and keep her from being disappointed to some degree.

I hated to break away from the Strubs after they'd sponsored the trip and more or less taken me along. However, they said they understood and urged me to go on alone; I went along, and they returned home. I arrived at Auntie M.'s a little after seven.

May 25, 1943 - Tues.

The next day I spent on my own seeing once more the familiar sights. Auntie M. hustled over to the station from school to see me off on the 4:40 p.m. connecting with the Susquehannock in Broad St. My hurry was due mainly to the fact that that was my last regular week of public school, and class day was to be Friday. Miss Gordner was anxious that we be present as much as possible for rehearsal of the skit in which I had a part. As it was, we had just three days more to clear up the last class work.

So we decided to try the A-12 course after all.

Summer 1943

Received another letter from War Dept. urging the ASTRP: college, active duty, basic, college.

The Real Beginning - Summer 1943

** Editor's note: August 18, 1925 was Emory Smith's birthday*

August 18, 1943

Registered under Selective Service Act at Local Board No. 2, City of Williamsport, Susquehanna Trust Bldg., W. 4th St.

October, 1943

Received blood test and preliminary physical in office of Dr. George Klump, second floor, Medical Arts Building, 416 Pine St. Dr. S.B. Gibson, one of Ditty's employers, assisted.

Induction – November 1943

November, 1943

Received “greeting” from the President of the United States and therein was ordered to report for induction at P.R.R. Park Station at 6:00 a.m., Fri. Nov. 19, 1943.

November 19, 1943 - Friday

Reported as above and left in special car on 6:30 a.m. train (No. 632, The Susquehannock) for Harrisburg. The trip being very familiar to me, passed without incident. Bob Malick and Clyde Rollen also were along from our church. Clyde Taylor, Jr. was an assistant acting corporal. At Sunbury we were met by Mr. Witman and Henry who wished us good luck. We then proceeded to the capital and were herded into a “column of threes” on detraining and walked to the armed forces induction station on Cameron St. Immediately we were segregated into high school and non-graduates. (I’d always known that a diploma was important these days but never expected it to crop up so early in my army career).

Next, pertinent data was secured and then we journeyed from station to station going through various aspects of the physical. The final step was the classification into the proper branch followed by fingerprinting. As an aid to getting into the army I had my papers and credentials from the Adjutant General’s office certifying my passing of the A-12 test given April 2, 1943.

This brought the time to noon or so and we proceeded to a small restaurant about a block down the numbered street on Market St. We ate lunch with fish as it was Friday. Then back to the building where we just sat around and waited, which habit I was to find out is so typical of the army in particular.

At 2:30 p.m. or a little before, we were sworn in by a second lieutenant. And after a little more waiting were lined up to be taken back to the station. Also along that day was Evan Rosser, Jr., a friend of mine through later high school and attending Dickinson Jr. College with me that fall. He was rejected due to lasting effects of an attack of polio during his sophomore year. His presence and interest in railroads proved to be a great help to me on that day, so trying physically, mentally and spiritually.

We went home on the 3:35 p.m. local (No. 501) and again the Witmans (en masse this time) were at the station. I definitely remember Mr. & Mrs. Red (home from air corps pre-meteorological school at Denison Univ.), June Diehl, and I think Frank. I don’t remember

whether or not Hank was working then.

We gave them the results of the day, and I mentioned that I was to return to Harrisburg the next day for a joint meeting of the Conference Board of Education and the Conf. Council of MYF. I was a member of the first and ex-officio member (as a Dist. Pres.) of the latter.

They then invited me to Thanksgiving dinner which they were having five days early because of Red. I accepted with the understanding of the arrangements related in Saturday's schedule.

The train arrived home just about on time and the Rossers were there to meet Evan. Very kindly, they drove me home where an anxious family awaited reports. I jabbered as fast as possible and then ate supper in preparation to departing for choir practice then realizing how much I intended to enjoy my three weeks' "reprieve."

Coming home I hastened with the essentials towards getting to bed in order to arise early once more for the 6:30.

November 20, 1943 - Sat.

This time I took the 5:56 bus rather than the 5:41 since I just wanted to make the train rather than appease representatives of my draft board. I felt much more at home with the *Gazette* and *Bulletin* in hand, good clothes on, and seated in one of the modern air-conditioned cars. As I remember there was a group going that day also for induction.

Today was even less noteworthy and we arrived just a little late. I had more than an hour until the 10:00 meeting and so watched some of the maintimers. On Market St. I saw Mrs. Marsh Turner, daughter of Mrs. Oberfell, who lived with her mother next door for some years.

In ample time I arrived at the YW where we met in the Industrial Girl's Lounge. I was first to arrive followed by Mrs. Frank (Helen) Ake who was then with her mother across the river in W. Fairview, I guess. At any rate, she hadn't come down with me.

Those present included Mr. Kebock, D. Perry Bucke, Tom Hopkins, and others – Dr. Myers. We discussed many plans, and the advisors depended on the members who were in the minority as usual to make motions, etc.

We lunched at the cafeteria, and there a nominating committee, of which I was

appointed a member, chose Perry as director of the MYF event at MFC for summer, 1944.

Returning to the conference room, we hastened on since I had to get the 3:35 local again and Mr. Myers was equally determined to be aboard. I didn't especially enjoy making the plans, thinking that in three weeks I'd be at New Cumberland for the duration, and in six be unable to do much in the line of youth work.

Mr. Myers and I broke away in time and I think the train left late. It was just about OK at Sunbury, and I made my way to 217 Arch St.

The dinner was delicious and filling, and I had to run for the 7:00 Edwards bus, Frank escorting me to the station. The old bus puffed its way home arriving just about on time, and I hurried over to Pine St. Church where their MYF was entertaining ours as part of their regular Saturday night recreation program. Our bunch got home late to meet again for the Sunday activities.

November 24, 1943 - Wed.

Stopped going to school and next day was Thanksgiving with Auntie M. home. She returned Sun. at 2:48 p.m.

November 30, 1943

Grandma Smith and I left for A.C. at 6:30 a.m., leaving Philadelphia on the 1:30 from Broad St.

December 3, 1943 - Fri.

Grandma and I left A.C. on the 7:30 a.m. for Broad St. to get No. 25-571 at 9:40. Arrived home OK. It was my final fling without furlough papers in my pocket. That evening the choir had a tureen supper as a surprise farewell for me. Mr. & Mrs. T.E. Wilson, the new residents of our parsonage, were present.

December 5, 1943 - Sun.

Today our new pastor was in the pulpit for the first time. We had been using supplies since Mr. John H. Greenwalt, with us only since conference in May, died Oct. 23. It was a time for many official good-byes and my last Sunday in church in civilian clothes.

December 10, 1943

After much bustling about all day doing this and that (even though I'd had over eighteen years to do it all), I left for the station accompanied only by Dad. The time for reporting was 2 p.m. At the station was Mr. Strub, to meet Carl, expected home from ASTP at Univ. of Pittsburgh (the program did seem to be working after all). (He was 18 July 4, volunteered for induction, left without three weeks' inactive status Aug. 19, and eventually shipped to Ft. Benning for 13 weeks basic.) We left on the 2:48 and at Sunbury I handed off a cake tin to some of the Witmans to whom it was being returned by Mrs. ? V. Moore. Mr. Witman said they'd pray for me, and right then I believe I never needed it worse. We arrived at Harrisburg; the train was split into the Philadelphia and Washington sections, and we made our way across the Cumberland Valley bridge and to the first stop, New Cumberland. But a short distance farther we stopped at the reception center siding. We received our two barracks bags with staple equipment, ate, and went to barracks.

New Cumberland, PA
Dec. 10, 1943

Dear Folks,

We arrived safely just a little late. First was a preliminary physical. Then we got barracks bags, etc., then ate. No uniforms until tomorrow. The address is on the envelope but folks are advised not to write here because we leave in such a short time—we hope.

Just across the aisle—sideways—is a boy from Harrisburg. He's in A.S.T.P. and been here 12 days. In that time quite a few have passed through here, and he's found only 4 in A.S.T.P. People are held until there is a bunch worth moving.

We had a lesson in bed making. It's hard but not impossible. If I'm here a while you can write but if we leave, our mail has to follow. I'll try to call before I leave. I am on the first floor of our building.

The train let us off special below the town. We had a good supper all by ourselves. We overlook the river and are just in York Co. There isn't much to say...

Now don't worry—so far everyone is real friendly including sergeants.

We get up at 5:30 tomorrow, lights out at 9, must be in

by 11.

Love,
Emory

December 11, 1943 - Sat.

We were given AGCT, and other aptitude tests and given uniforms in the p.m.

December 12, 1943 - Sun.

I was on K.P. 6 a.m. - 6 p.m.

December 13, 1943 - Mon.

Shots and orientation films. The first shipment from our roster was alerted to leave early the next a.m. My address at this time was:

Pvt. R.E. Smith, Jr. 33872802

Rst. 3881, Bldg. 321

Co. G, 1301st S.U.

New Cumberland, PA

December 14, 1943

I reported to Classification Building as a runner. This job continued through Dec. 23, 1943 - Thurs.

December 18, 1943 - Sat.

Having been there seven days, I was eligible for a pass. I got the bus to Harrisburg and the first available transportation was the 5:05 p.m. bus (Greyhound) arriving home with a change in Sunbury at 8:20. I wired from Harrisburg and was met by Grandma and Grandpa Strait and Auntie M.

December 19, 1943 - Sun.

I practically shocked the whole church by appearing in uniform so soon. Much handshaking on all sides. I returned on the 7:50 local to Harrisburg, bussing over from Market Square.

December 24, 1943 - Fri.

I was on sick call after going to bed early and being relieved from my runner's job for the evening. After going through the channels I was sent to the hospital and finally about 11 a.m. entered one of the wards to be greeted by Lt. Betty Dickson and "Why, Emory Smith from Williamsport!" She was going home for Christmas and volunteered to call Mother.

December 25, 1943 - Sat.

Christmas! And I had the ward radio right beside my bed to get all the good programs. Because of my temperature I was on a light diet and couldn't partake of any of the very wonderful army Christmas dinner. During the afternoon I turned over from reading and looked toward the corridor to see walking in Mother, Ditty, and Beth with Mr. & Mrs. Lester Carson who had driven them down on their way to see son Earl (who had been in ASTRP at Univ. of Florida all fall, and whom I'd helped to process Dec. 20th with a group of other ASTRPs). I felt I was dreaming, but it was true. After Betty had called, they decided to celebrate Christmas on Sunday. Every time I saw them or went home I thought it would be the last until after basic at least. Also in our ward was Miss Gerber from W. 4th St. near Henry Schultz.

In hospital
New Cumberland, PA
Dec. 28, 1943

Dear Folks,

This is my third letter since Christmas, and I am wondering how they are getting there. I just got your combined letter just about 15 min. ago. It's postmarked at home Sun. 11 p.m. The mail has all been slow up til now, but I did get that one letter here on Christmas Eve in just one day.

I usually think of eight in our combined family, minus me is seven, plus G'pa and Ma is nine. However, I count just the eight messages in the letter. Mayhap, Marion, that your Christmas dinner lasted over into Sunday? I have not heard from you, except in one of the earliest letters Beth traced Spacky's paw and wrote "her mark," and you wrote "not mine." I believe this is right—the letter is in my barracks.

Today finds great activity in Ward 1, and I'm glad I feel as well as I do to take it. They are laying plywood over the board floor to serve as the base for linoleum. First they moved everything real close together down at my end of the room, and now everything's the other way, and I'm just even with the middle side door. They've been pounding and sawing since about (my medicine just came again) 8 this a.m. They even have some of my co-convalescents pounding in the sunroom at the far end.

Again in reference to Marion, this letter as addressed will technically conclude my obligations to the immediate incumbents of both divisions of our palatial estate. But maybe I could have addressed it more advantageously.

My temp. was normal this a.m. and I got my first full diet at noon. I'll underline what I ate. Menu: chop, mashed pot, lima beans, roll & butter, bread, dark cookie or cake, milk, ice cream, soup. I'm supposed to stick around bed now today, but will no doubt get up tomorrow.

I heard *Mirth & Madness* this a.m.—pretty good. Their town was "as we leave the little hamlet of Gold Bridge on the Upper Molar." Sadie was good too. They were opening an old roll of blankets. Roger was having a lot of trouble with the knot, blamed the old Mrs. for being stingy and not wanting to buy new things...

Ditty, you better have some oily drops and a new inhaler handy to send to me when I get shipped. I don't know how your supply of samples is. The good neighbor letter on Bat S. was from a Marion Fleming of Akron. Church is held in one of the other wards. Those up can go. When is Spacky going to Dr. Littles? Tell her to be a "gooooood puppy dog."

Love to all,
Emory

New Cumberland, PA
Dec. 29, 1943

Dear Folks,

I take my pen(cil) in hand to begin this, the fourth in my series of out-of-the-hospital epistles. Today dawned beautiful about eight, and a perfect blue sky continues. Today I got a letter from Jane and an old one of yours, Mother, from Christmas Eve, which doesn't give too much actual news.

I was in bed this a.m. until almost 10 and then in the company of several others, was told I could get up. This included the two pneumonia patients right across the aisle (where the screen was and right next to him) and at least one more.

We put on our shoes and then at noon went to the medical mess hall, where the staff eats, too. This p.m. we've been doing about the same as if in bed. I was in the sunroom for awhile. Now I'm sitting on the chair by my bed.

The plywood—I'll just interrupt this for awhile. Helen Walker, from Hollywood has just walked in as one of those 200 stars entertaining in various camps. She told two jokes here in our ward, and I confess, I wasn't too well impressed. The ambulatory patients were sitting by their beds, and for part of the time she stood with her hand on the end of my bed. She's a star, but I don't remember any of her pictures.

As I was saying, the plywood is finally all down. Everything was back in place last night after supper, and only the hall and the final nailing from yesterday in here were done this morning.

Ask Ditty if she got the December Trains. Soon now it will be time for the February Railroad magazine which comes about Jan. 1. I'm sure that my subscription doesn't start until the March issue out Feb. 1, which necessitates buying the Feb. R.R. at Halls. I remember there was one of each to be bought before the subscriptions start, so I believe the underlined above are correct.

I found out last night that this ward is the regular psychoneurotic ward. As far as I know, all the patients of that type are still here. One is a nervous case, and that one I pointed out on Sat. has been here in the hospital since I've been in camp (Dec. 10) for epileptic fits, having been discharged only the day previous for the same thing, I guess. My temp. was .2° above normal last night but must have been down this morning.

I am back in the sunroom now. Do you remember on Wed. a year ago we were out to Cases' with the high water and the tea wagon catastrophe? I had just been to the dentist's. I suppose Ditty is home today, and you maybe are visiting today, too. I will mail this now and then read awhile. Is Auntie M. going back Sun. at 2:48? Did Marion go caroling or "too tired?"

Love,
Emory

December 31, 1943 - Fri.

I was discharged and told at the orderly room I was no longer part of the running staff. We cleaned up for Sat. inspection.

January 1, 1944 - Sat.

We got passes about noon and I was able to get the 3:35 local train. This was the earliest I got home, 6:11 and right on time. Mother and Beth were at the station; Ditty and Auntie M. we met on the way to Maynard and Third - they hadn't been able to get the same bus. Even if I was in the army, this way I could enjoy the Christmas music in part, the decorations, cookies, etc.

January 2, 1944 - Sun.

Church again and Auntie M. postponed her 2:48 p.m. departure on my account, telegraphing her principal some excuse. She no longer used the for-many-years-SOP method of the Williamsporter on the Reading plus the early bus arriving Pleasantville 8:45 a.m. on the day school began again. Due to the contingencies of wartime travel, the only method was Pennsy 2:48 connecting with PRSL 8:35 in Broad St. Just as I was leaving for the 7:50 again Jack Houser (whom I saw as he arrived for active duty the night I got sick) called to say they were driving back and wanted me to go along about 9:00 after church was over. This seemed very good, and we did go that way, arriving back about 11:30. Jack was over in "B" Company I think.

New Cumberland, PA
Jan. 3, 1944

Dear Folks,

We arrived safely about 11:30 last night. We drove to the main gate out the road here where the MPs are and sat until 11:45 when the MP told us that the 12:00 passes had to be in their barracks then. Jack and I walked up the road, and I left him at my barracks which is first...

This morning there was snow on the ground and the precipitation is now rain. The uniform of the day is helmets with the wool undercap and raincoats. I never had mine on before, but they keep the water off...

This a.m. six of us cleaned up the non-commissioned officers' club including beer bottles, some glasses not quite empty, etc. I never knew there was a place like that in an army camp. The bartender is a regular army man (draftee) and has done nothing else all day for six months. It surely was disgusting and rather hard on me this dreary day especially after just coming back from a pass. Our barracks was very nearly empty, and only a short time ago we

got a new bunch in from Chester and Media. They are taking their tests now. I'm surely glad I had a better day than this to come here, and I hope I have a better one to leave on.

The NCOC I wrote of before is financed primarily with two slot machines. I was offered some beer on the side. It was quite an education to me, but by some it was considered quite a respectable and easy detail (job duty)...

No news about leaving yet.

Love to all and puppy dog,
Emory

January 5, 1944 - Wed.

Cpl Pfaender appointed me senior barracks guard. My assistant and I were in charge of the cleaning and policing and in complete charge when none of the cadre was present. I was what might be called "private, second class."

New Cumberland, PA
Jan. 5, 1944

Dear Marion,

We have eaten, and I am taking the time now before we are released to answer your letter.

I am now barracks guard as appointed by Cpl. Pfaender this a.m. Our two previous ones left just before. I am the senior one of us two because I have been here the longer. We stay here in the barracks all the time, and hence don't get sent out to sweep streets (a la Tuesday), unload freight cars, etc., etc. The job consists of administering the cleaning orders of the corporal, mainly. The other men are supposed to do the job we assign them, and thus we might be called "private, second class." It's better than nothing but I would *much* rather be back as a runner or usher.

Just now I was called on the speaker to go up to our orderly room to get the mail as part of the job. Of course I can't be here much longer since tonight begins the 27th day...

Love,
E.

New Cumberland, PA

Jan. 7, 1944

Dear Beth,

Well, we are finished eating and are waiting our evening's release once more. Last night it was 8:20 again. As barracks guard I do not stand retreat. When I went out tonight to eat about 5 (7:20 now, I've been talking all this time. During that time my pen borrowers have used all my ink, so now I will have to make this do. Also, we were just released now) we stood in line about 45 min. before eating.

Today was a very nice day with the stars shining as we arose. Today we scrubbed the floors upstairs and down in preparation for tomorrow's inspection. This afternoon we got a new roster, mixed from at least two or three places. Once again I helped Corporal Pfaender in the bed-making demonstration and he bragged our barracks and present gang in here up. Once more I am losing my assistant, and the next one will be the fourth since I was appointed...

Any letters postmarked from H'bg have been given to one of the PX girls to mail. Most of them live over there. The U.S.O. stationery came in one of the Christmas boxes when I was in the hospital.

I am quite tired tonight after a strenuous day. I also got shots again including one each of tetanus and typhoid. Some of them go to the dances, USO shows, radio program, etc. but I don't see how they go all the next day. A lot of us go to bed at night, too...

Now I am going out for a little air—then back here for some washing, etc. and then to bed—now 7:50.

Love to all,
XXOOXXOO Emory

January 8, 1944 - Sat.

We received our passes late and the best I could do was the 8:35 – Susquehannock.

Meanwhile I visited Uncle Carl & Aunt Mildred. On the train I saw Guy Wolf, Jr. (ASTP, Haverford) and Jack Wilde (Merchant Marine).

January 9, 1944 - Sun.

Housers took me back as before. We stopped at Bucknell one of these Sundays and I saw Jane.

New Cumberland, PA

Jan. 10, 1944

Dear Folks,

And thusly ends a very strange but enlightening month of my young life.

We have eaten once more—baked beans, string beans, stewed tomatoes, cabbage salad, bread & butter, peach pie, and coffee—and are returned to our barracks waiting the evening's release.

We arrived last night almost on the stroke of twelve, and the MP asked a soldier in a coupe to take Jack and me in from the gate. He left me out at the hospital, down here at the intersection, just a step from our barracks. He took Jack on up the hill the way the bus goes but not the way one would go to Jack's Co. A from here...

Today I b.g.'d as usual and we got the little extra scrubbing done. No officers were around today for inspection. A lot were on k.p. from our new roster here today, but the upstairs Cpl. (Falkove) didn't waken me until almost 10 of 6. Quite nice here today, but cold. Much better than dreary last week...

Love,
E. XXOOXX

January 11, 1944 - Mon.

I was alerted for shipment the next morning. One of the cadre whom I'd come to know told me privately that I could call up if I wished. I called Mother and took a long time to get through to Jane. The lights were out when I got back to the barracks and I had to pack my barracks bag in the latrine. During this time we had another state blackout. (There was also one Mon., Dec. 13, 1943, which caused me to get the cold while running to the shelter area, which finally put me in the hospital). As barracks guard I stayed in and saved myself the same procedure.

Basic Training— Fort Benning, January 1944

January 12, 1944 - Tues.

I reported to the Transportation Office side of the Classification Building at 7 a.m. and was read the rules and regulations. We then proceeded down to the siding to await the train. I suspected it was the 8:03 a.m. out of Harrisburg for Washington since we all thought Ft.

Benning was our destination. This proved correct although it never came until 9:15 or so. We (48) got on two tourist Pullmans. Most of the fellows already knew each other from Univ. of Florida. I received my first introduction to army songs. We proceeded down through York and Baltimore to Washington. This was my first railroad trip on this line. By the time the train arrived in Washington about 12:30 most of us had eaten our bag lunches. Soon we were switched to the lower level. I suspected ACL, Seaboard, or Southern from my studying of timetables, but I had none with me and could only guess the route and roads.

Being on the RF & P narrowed it to the first two. We arrived in Richmond about suppertime. Developments showed we were attached to the Seaboard's "Cotton States Special" and at least Atlanta bound.

We ate dinner in the dining car and returned to our cars to pass through Petersburg. From here on every mile would put me farther south than I'd ever been before. We were all grateful to the Seaboard for putting the state names on its station signs. Next was Norlina which I remembered as the junction with the branch to Norfolk. Here we became a service person's special with sailors going from Norfolk to Savannah and women marines, which were still with us at Atlanta.

Just before I went to bed we arrived in Raleigh, and the Pullman conductor, corporal in charge, my berthing companion, and I ate some Christmas cookies which I'd brought back on Sunday.

Fort Benning, GA
Jan. 12, 1944, 12:35 p.m.

Dear Folks,

Well, here we are sitting in the Washington (D.C.) Union Station, having arrived late just a few minutes ago (supposed to get here 11:25). We left camp the same way we came in on No. 542 on the Pennsy. It is supposed to leave H'bg at 8:03 and we are only 4.3 miles from H'bg. It came at last at a little after 9, and we were about 50 min. late all the way down.

Our bunch of 48 (mostly U. of Florida A.S.T.R.P.) is in two tourist Pullmans. We are under a corporal, and I am charge of my car. It consists of counting the "membership" every once in awhile, keeping order, which isn't necessary, and keeping the car clean. It was pretty cold waiting an hour or so for the train, but we might have known it would

be late these days. Just ahead of ours was the train with the Trail Blazer, Jeffersonian, and Spirit of St. Louis cars for Washington. It should have left H'bg at 7:22. Both it and ours were double-headed. Ours was long with lots of express and mail. The trip from York to Baltimore is much like the Reading in the coal regions. We just ambled—not as fast as on the Williamsport Division. It is very curvy and hilly, and many times we could see the whole train—first to the left and then to the right.

Of course this won't be mailed until we get there...

Going into Baltimore we stopped in the station, our cars on the end of the train. Then the electric engine was put on the back, and then we backed out and around a curve going through the famous tunnels to get here to Washington so that everybody was riding backwards from before.

Last night during my telephoning (I finally reached Jane a little after ten) there was a false fire alarm at camp which caused a little excitement. Then the blackout, which I suppose was state-wide. I had just got everything into my one barracks bag when the trouble began. Everything was much like that last month, except that we barracks guards didn't go outside. Luckily I wasn't undressed altogether this time.

Now our barracks bags are stacked in the ladies' room. I am going to write Auntie M. a similar letter sometime on the trip. I saw the Washington Monument off to one side as we came in, but that is all. I think there is only one other regular A.S.T.P. besides me along. 1:25—Will stop for now—more later. Saw lots of engines and cars from southern roads in yards here. A switch engine has just backed us up a little.

5:40 Our train came over to Terminal Sta., Atlanta, and since about 2:15 we have been out of the train. Now we are back in again ready to leave as part of a regular train at 6 p.m. From 2:45 to 3:45 we had free time seeing the town. We split into groups of 6 or 7 and went where we pleased to be back at quarter of four. I was one group leader. We walked around a little and went into a 10-cent store. We almost got lost when we saw the Union Station, and it confused us. It is just one diagonal block away from ours. At 3:45 we had our first roll call since we left and everyone was back on the dot. The lady Marines were in and out of their cars about the same time. At 4:30 we ate in the station restaurant and are now back here. From here we go on the Cent. Of Georgia and are a part of regular train #18.

8:15 Be there in about an hour now. Will write later.

Love,
E.

January 13, 1944

Wed. morning found us past Hamlet and in South Carolina (way down South!). We passed through Chester, Monroe, Clinton, and Abbeville, and before 11:00 were in Georgia. Athens was reached just about 11:00. The outskirts of Atlanta, Howell Yard we saw about 1:00 p.m. but didn't see Terminal Station until about 2:00. The Cotton States arrives at 8 a.m., and we were supposed to get the morning train to Columbus. Now we must wait for the evening one.

We were split into groups for a brief time of sightseeing, and I had one of them. We returned for supper in the station restaurant and got into our cars attached to the 6 p.m. train on the Central of Georgia.

It arrived at Columbus on time at 9:20 and we waited there with other groups til all the trains were in. Then onto GI trucks to Harmony Church area, Ft. Benning. Our processing was complete that night.

Fort Benning, GA
Jan. 14, 1944

Dear Folks,

Here is my new address on the envelope arranged correctly as to lines. BTC means basic training center. We sat in the station in Columbus for several hours after we got here although our official time of arrival in camp is 10:30 p.m. (2230). Our barracks boys were all loaded on a truck, and after a bunch from Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas arrived, we all pile 16 in a group in trucks and drove the 12 miles or so to our section of camp. We are in an older part known as the Harmony Church area. The streets are just clay, and today it's raining after misting on the truck trip from Columbus. It is flat here with pine trees around.

On arrival we got our own barracks bags and came into the barracks, which are known as huts. That was part of Carl Strub's address when he was here. Twenty to a hut—double-deck bunks.

One of our head sergeants came in just then and gave us our orientation talk, and then it was time to eat. He is southern (of course) and seems quite decent.

Last night we got either keys for our foot lockers as I did or linen for our beds and made them up. In my case the linen and blankets were in the locker. Then we went to the mess hall for coffee and cookies about 12:30 and remained at the tables for our processing. We filled out a mimeographed form and a 3"x6" card. It was almost 3:00 til we got to

sleep in cold huts without a fire until about 10:30 this morning. The stove is just a small one in the middle of the room, and the latrine is a large building down the street. We don't usually get up here until 6:30 or 6:45 and this morning it was about 7:35 because of last night. We wear fatigues, helmet liners (plastic, green), and leggings just like the Basic T. unit at N.C. Is our section here ever different from there! That is heaven we think up there. However, this is not too bad. The railroad and camp are on EWT, but Columbus itself is CWT. The Alabama border is only 5 blocks from the station. It gets light here very late because we are really in the Central time belt. By that time we are really on a schedule just like N.C., but just calling it different makes it more like what I'm used to.

Last night when I mailed the air mail letters I saw a palm tree. I don't see how they survive this weather but I know the temp isn't as low as it seems.

It's still pouring here, and they say that our 13 weeks will be mainly in the rainy season. Some say we will start our "cycle" next Monday, and some say Monday a week. On our beds we have one sheet, two blankets, and a quilt. Because we were chilly beforehand most of us were cold with no fire when we came in.

This place is immense and we are just one small corner—40 square miles they say or about 5 times the area of Williamsport.

Soon they will arrange us in barracks alphabetically. Now I am in Hut 61, Platoon 3, but that doesn't have to be on the mail. The cards I am sending to the girls I bought at the Kress 10-cent store in Atlanta. Of course we could mail nothing on the way.

1st Bn=1st Battalion, Regt=Regiment. The rest is self-explanatory. I don't know why U.S. Army goes at the very end at least I don't know of any Navy or otherwise here!

The fire is soft coal. We had quite a hard time building it. At the coal hopper we saw a 1st Lt. without any visible bars whom we asked very flippantly about the method of getting the coal out. He finally explained that his raincoat identified him. However, he was very friendly and evidently appreciated our error. Later he brought us a few sticks of dry wood. Finally a corporal really got it to burn.

I am going to get my haircut tonight if possible since that is one of my company officers' fussy points or "hobbies." This has been a poor week for sleeping. Monday was the only good night. Tonight may be better—at least our roof doesn't leak. Tell Ditty that on the train yesterday I heard one of our bunch praising Camp Rucker. But there may be just as much contrast there as here. One thing—our place here won't be any worse. About all for now. I don't know

what's up for this p.m.

Fort Benning, GA
Jan. 17, 1944

Dear Folks,

Here is a clipping from *The Pine Bur*, the ASTP publication here. I think it is pretty good...

This p.m. we went on a march like we did before—only farther. We went on into another area and then into a building like our rec. hall. There our battalion commander addressed us; he is a major. Then we heard the chaplain and our executive officer, a 1st Lt. It was quite an interesting trip with a few hundred feet on some state or federal highway.

When we returned the permanent barracks—excuse me, huts—were allotted. I am now in 70 just across from my other one. We are alphabetical and there is one other Smith from Lincoln, Neb. I remember seeing him in the Columbus station the night we came. There are just three from PA: I, one from Phila who came from N.C. with us, and one from Chambersburg who came through Ft. Meade. Now instead of Pennsylvanians, they're from Okla., Texas, Ark., Ill., Neb., Conn. that I know of. The drawl is very interesting. Dear knows what kind of accent I'll have until I get home. Our choice test words are *coffee, water, and five*. It's very amusing when we show each other how they sound to us.

The one from Chambersburg knows Sarah Newton from M.J.C. He doesn't know Auntie Catherine though. Now I am singing band marches with someone from Okla.

Now I have to shine my shoes after the muddy march and get cleaned up before going to bed.

This p.m. or maybe morning too, I got a little sunburn and my face is hot now. Imagine in January! The air is cool though, but sometimes we don't have a fire, like tonight. Today was the second time we moved bags and baggage in a week. This time it was bedding and everything else.

How much did the call on Sunday cost? Will close now.

Love to all,
Emory

Fort Benning, GA
Jan. 17, 1944

Dear Marion,

This may be a short letter because our activities (as

the rumors have it) will probably be long today. This a.m. we went out and drilled a little and then had another orientation lecture in an open air "stadium"—logs arranged around a hill. Then they showed us the obstacle course, and after a demonstration we went over it once.

Now we are back from eating, and I confess it still isn't any better. Chicken, Brussels sprouts, turnip tops, butter-less bread, coffee and fruit cup (I had none). It is another nice day here....

This p.m. we are supposed to get our permanent quarters—that is, to be placed alphabetically in the huts. We still are kept plenty busy, although our cycle won't start until next week.

It is very interesting talking to folks from all over the country. I would say S.D. was west, but the ones in here don't feel that way.

Last night the stars were beautiful, and it's been clear ever since. Our officers are very nice to be under directly, but I feel the non-coms are different. Here in ASTP they say *twicet*, as you was, etc.

Well, there isn't much to write except that I'll be awful tired tonight because of these strenuous activities. No requests this time—I guess they've been taken care of in the other letters.

Will make sure my shoes are clean now as we go out soon.

Love,
Emory

Fort Benning, GA
Jan. 19, 1944

Dear Folks,

Yesterday in the morning we took a psychological test (the same one I had at Dickinson). Then there were some more orientation talks and finally filling out some forms.

In the p.m. we were interviewed by three people. I had a T-3 (Sgt. Technician), a 2nd Lt., and a WAC 2nd Lt. She went through her basic with a girl from Williamsport, who was always extolling the virtues of the home town. She took the transcript of my college marks.

We are what you might call going through our STAR unit now, and the rest of this week there are various tests. "B"—high-school level which I am taking because I haven't had the equivalent of Term 1 of ERC (haven't been given yet). It, of course, is the correct one for me.

Last evening one of our 2nd Lts., Lt. Allen, had a

refresher course in the Bn Rec. Hall on math and chemistry for those who were interested. We started with about 100 and the number gradually thinned during the evening. Tonight I think it will be physics. He went to Drexel, but I don't think he is from Phila since he doesn't say "cawfee" like Auntie M. or "wooter" (water).

This a.m. we got some new equipment and were out for calisthenics and close-order drill. I think for never having it like the ASTRP did that I'm doing OK. We just came in before I started to write again.

Today is nice but not crystal clear and perfectly blue and warm like yesterday. Because of the course last night I didn't get this mailed or written rather, but it will go out this afternoon. At our first mail call yesterday I got your last N.C. letter, one from Uncle William, and a card from Mrs. Schultz, attending Bishop's Crusade meeting in Elmira. All were forwarded from N.C. Almost time to eat again.

Love to all,

E.

Fort Benning, GA
Jan. 19, 1944

Dear Mother,

It's almost 10:00 and lights out so I won't get much written....

Our basic "cycle" starts next Mon. we think, and on the forms yesterday we put as date of our completion, April 29. I got my hair cut on Friday, I guess, at the barber shop down here a little way. We aren't exactly quarantined, but we can't leave camp and are restricted to a certain area, which is big enough. The dampness has given me something of a cold, so I am taking 2 pinks, 1 gray, and 3 sodas, besides drops. It's not bad at all.

Jan. 20. The lights went out just then so I will continue from now. In the first mail call today I got your and Beth's letters of Monday. Today is very nice again. This morning we had calisthenics and quite a bit of drill again. Tomorrow we have our final interview when they tell us if we've "made" the program. The "B" tests weren't bad at all, and I'm sure I passed them...

I know Charles Yerkes, also that he is here. However, I think it is the regular infantry, how far from here I don't know. Remember, this is a mammoth place and between each section, areas of open country...

Sunday is a rest day, but every day we are on the jump. I'd say we were rested and unrested again. More about

selection and choir later. Must get this in mail before 1:50 formation.

Love,
E.

Fort Benning, GA
Jan. 20, 1944

Dear Beth,

I was very pleased to hear from you in the first mail call just before dinner today. The good weather continues, and I'm quite sure I'm more sunburned today.

My opinion of Georgia is slightly on the upward trend by now, but when it's dry, the sand in spots is just as hard to walk in as lots of places in New Jersey.

The camp, according to the map of the Central of Georgia RR, is 3 miles SE of Columbus. They say we are twelve miles from the main post, which total looks like about 15 miles. The bus service is terrible, and I seriously doubt if I'll ever leave here to go only to Columbus. I may go to Birmingham, Atlanta, Montgomery, or Florida sometime in the next three months...

This afternoon we took a march around the area seeing all the fire alarms, hoses, and other equipment. Then we had our pictures taken as a company and divided into platoons. Later we learned how to pack a full field pack. Tonight will be quite busy writing, etc.

Tell Mother that I think I was picked for car leader because I was near where the corporal was sitting when he looked over the list. Also my serial number was quite obvious since the enlisted men's start with 1. The second digit, 3, is the same since it means Third Service Command. As for in Atlanta, I had talked with him during the trip—also given him and the Pullman conductor some of the cookies the night before. They are all gone by now.

As to the choir, all interested will no doubt be called together soon. I or we weren't individually picked—just a general invitation...

Love to you and Spacky,
Emory

Fort Benning, GA
Jan. 23, 1944

Dear Marion,

As usual on Sunday there was just the one mail call, and for being a regularly slack day, I reaped quite a harvest. A letter each from you, Mother, and Auntie M., all postmarked Thurs. 9 p.m.

...Today remains clear and warm, and we go everywhere just in shirts—no blouses or jackets. It's fine for drying our fatigue clothes, which have to be clean for tomorrow. We did them in cold water in the shower room, scrubbing them with GI yellow soap and hand brushes or even toilet brushes. I also did long underwear, one pair of socks, and some handkerchiefs. The fatigue pants and the underwear are still out. The wool stuff dries very slowly.

Both Jack and Arnold passed for BE-1, term 1, the same as I. They had their final interview this afternoon because they had everything to do from Wed. night of this week—get equipment, take tests, preliminary lectures, etc. I much prefer, now that I'm here, to have the extra six days for getting ready.

The food here has improved during the last two days, and at dinner today I had the first meal when I was full of regular, common food. There was enough and to spare. Ham, sweet potato, cut-up tomato and lettuce salad, hot biscuits with more butter, string beans, celery, ice cream, and coffee. Mostly we've had such vegetables as broccoli, some sort of greens—not even regular spinach. Today was by far the best as I've already said. I've really been hungry some other times. I hope you make out good in all the exams...

Love,
E.

January 24 to March 19, 1944

We completed an eight-week basic training, very concentrated.

The eighth and ninth weeks were compressed into one for our firing on Carmouche Range. During the pre-cycle period we had orientation, calisthenics, and placement tests by the STAR unit. I qualified for BE-I, Term 1. My address during this period was:

Pvt. R.E. Smith, Jr. 33872802

2nd Co., 5th Regt.

ASTP BTC

Ft. Benning, GA

U.S. Army

(Jack Houser was in 4th Co.)

No one could ever figure the reason for the last line, and it didn't stay on our envelopes long.

The 1st battalion commander at this time was Major Neel, Co. C.O., Capt. Scanlon, and platoon leader Lt. Adair who I hear was killed at St. Lo, France during the post-invasion period.

This section is well-known as the worst of the post. We were quartered in twenty-man huts, heated with coal stoves in the center. The PX was very poor after the one at the reception center. Milk, ice cream, and candy were often sold out. Sunday services were held in the regimental recreation hall. I remember later how wonderful a real army chapel looked. The chaplain was John Baergen, a 1st Lieutenant.

Although I was on the post over ten weeks, I never visited Columbus other than passing through it on the train. The bus service was the worst imaginable with poor schedules and equipment, which often broke down. From our regiment it was over a mile to the nearest stop.

Our company was quite mixed, although there were more than 40 Pennsylvanians (our group) and a large number of Oklahomans. We were arranged alphabetically in the huts, and I was in the fourth platoon. My first arguments in the army with state versus state and region versus region were between Northeast and Midwest/Southwest. Due to sickness followed by transfers, our original company became broken up and the perfect alphabetical order destroyed.

As long as one is in the army he is a constant target for rumors, and Benning was the eating that proved the pudding. Constantly we heard this and that about what was to happen to us after April 29, the end of our basic, and further words about the program being completely disbanded.

Finally it appeared certain that 110,000 of the ASTP enrollment of 140,000 -- all except pre-med, pre-dentistry, and advanced engineering -- were to be transferred to combat outfits. This was a serious blow to those who had taken the program in preference to air corps when, at the time of their enlistment or induction, they could have easily met the requirements. It was an equally bitter pill to those who because of their high AGCT scores could have easily been accepted for almost any branch they desired. It seemed almost an official scheme by the powers that be to trick new soldiers of high IQ into a place where they could continue their college work (with some degree of conversion) and be ready for the job

of high skill, which this war created only to transfer them practically en masse (mess!) into other fields indiscriminately. Meanwhile, the V-12 program carried on, and I thought of a number of my classmates studying at Bucknell Univ., 25 miles down the river from home.

However, we tried to accept it as philosophically as possible and waited to see what a transfer would bring us.

I called home twice, once the Sunday after arrival and again several weeks later. The first call took two hours, and I can remember Marion, when asked, if she would accept a call from me at Columbus, GA, excitedly shouting, "Mother, come quick! It's Emory calling from Columbus, Ohio." Like me, the family was quite non-conversant about the South, and I had the edge with timetable study. My second call required nearer to four hours to complete. C'est la guerre!

Fort Benning, GA
Jan. 24, 1944

Dear Folks,

Well, the first day of the cycle is over, and it wasn't bad. This a.m. we had a lecture and saw some training films. This afternoon we were on a march into another area and had instruction there and on the way, both directions...

STAR means spec. training and replacement. It determines if and what term you go to college. However, I understood that it came after basic. ERC is the general name for the reserves. They were in the ASTRP specifically. Now we are all together. The only difference is that some of them are in term 2 or better, and their serial numbers begin with 1 instead of 3, being enlisted men. I can write to Carl here—I understand, it's often done on posts this large.

We just had the one class (refresher), but Lt. Allen would like to have several a week during the cycle. I feel pretty well these days...

Love,
E.

Fort Benning, GA
Jan. 26, 1944

Dear Mother and all,

Just a line as we were busy tonight getting things cleaned up with 8/20 of the hut there—the other 12 being

table waiters, not KPs. I am table waiter tomorrow. We go a half hour before meals and in the evening stay several hours after supper. I am writing this in latrine.

...Today cloudy with a little rain, but there was a rainbow and nice sunset about 7 tonight, and stars are shining now. Now in the cycle we eat at 7 instead of 6 so have a whole hour less "free" time.

This week isn't bad, and I enjoy the lectures. Also wrote to one of my corporals over the weekend—he asked me to. Must close now. Very tired after longest hike yet.

Love,
E.

Fort Benning, GA
Jan. 27, 1944

Again just a line since in a very few minutes I must assume the position of table waiter for the third time today. After I get finished tonight it may be too late, although last night they came back about 10.

Today is nice again and very warm. I don't, of course, know the temp...

Soon I'll have to get washed up as we are very dusty. No jackets this p.m....

Dollar received—thanks. Have nothing but Company paper after this letter. More later—days quite ordinary.

Love,
E.

Fort Benning, GA
Jan. 28, 1944

Dear Marion,

Still just a line since we were cleaning and polishing, etc. for Saturday, the inspections day in the army. Today I got all my mail in the first call...

Today was warm again and foggy and cloudy all day. Now stars and new moon are out fine...When you send more things to eat anything is acceptable—you've all fed me long enough to know what I like. With some things remember my 19 companions here, too. Tonight's supper not so hot—got off waiter's job last night about 9, quite early. Thought about you enjoying M-Y vacation.

Love,
E.

Fort Benning, GA
Jan. 30, 1944

Dear Folks,

...Jack and I are in Rec. Hall and with radio in one ear, buzzing and radio in other, and writing, I am bound to make some mistakes. Soon I hope we'll be hearing Charlie McCarthy. My sunburn is hardly such, but on me I suppose it's noticeable. My nose is a little peely but our helmet liners keep a good shade over most of the head.

We get fruit everyday for breakfast and such things as applesauce and fruit cup at some of the other meals. A few additional apples or oranges wouldn't be bad. Even some small cans of juice...

Our laundry starts this week. It's a flat rate of \$1.50 per month. Whatever we have has to be at the supply room by 8:00 Monday evening. We are to get it back the next Friday...

They want us to each pledge an 18.75 bond plus original monthly allotments to be paid out of this Feb. 10th partial pay and the March 1 full pay. Some of them seem to complain. As I told Mrs. Sears (after she mentioned the contest at Curtin) it amuses us when they ask for at least 10% at home. Personally, I don't mind.

Love,
E.
XXX 0000

Fort Benning, GA
Feb. 1, 1944

Dear Marion,

I found your letter very fine, telling all about the mid-years. Jack and I shared our respective letters from our sisters...

Tonight, time is again short so this will be, too. I re-rolled my pack for tomorrow and polished a pair of shoes besides this & that. This noon I got Mother's letter of Sat. p.m. and this evening the pretzel-sock package and the Thurs. Sun. It was sent to the 6th Regt first.

Tomorrow night our company has guard duty for the first time. They start from Z to A and I am the last one on the first list. I think it will be quite interesting. We've had several lectures, demonstrations, and practical work in it.

I'm sure we'll enjoy the package—or should I say have already. I'll write a note to Aunt Margaret now. Weather cool and breezy...

Find out Stanley Wharton's (1500 block W 4th) address. I saw him last week but was in formation.

Love,
E.

Fort Benning, GA
Feb. 6, 1944

Dear Folks,

Here I am in the rec. hall from which I called, having the dance orchestra rehearsing and blaring in my ears as when I called. This is to answer any questions in letters from last week.

I will try to repeat what I said tonight. Send more chocolate bars like in that pretzel package. That package Aunt M. gave me on the way to N.C. would go over big just now. I think I have written this before, but this is just to make it more clear. Also more Wege pretzels. Ask G'ma to knit me a scarf of O.D. yarn. It can be any type—only the color is regulated. If this isn't specific enough I can go into more detail. Please send the *Grit* regularly...

I placed my call today at 2:30 and got it through at 8:45. So you see it's hard to regulate. However I will try to let you know the next time...

We have night problem(s) this week, and I have guard duty Tues. so letters may be a little scarce.

Love,
E.

Fort Benning, GA
Feb. 7, 1944

Dear Mother,

I got your letters of Fri. and Sat....

This letter is really for this: immediately by air mail send me a Valentine suitable for Jane. It should be nice and cost quite a bit but nothing mushy. Of course I'll have to receive it in some additional covering. Do you think that is OK? Or should I get (or rather you) some candy and have just a little card? The first seemed a little more practicable and I think I'll stick to it...

The doughnuts are all gone. I needed them today. We had just about 35 or 40 minutes at noon to eat and roll our packs. We surely rushed—mostly with the meal, eating in 10 min. or less...

Today was quite a hard one, but I am all ready to get into bed. I'll be looking for some more packages—there was no candy at the PX tonight. We should be eligible for passes this weekend, but I don't suppose that we'll get them with shots (not for me), inspections, etc. and only a certain percentage allowed off the post at once.

Remember about the Valentine. I guess this is about all for now. Last Sat. the 29th I had my last tetanus and a

vaccination. Did I tell you? The latter hardly shows.

Love,
E.
XXXXXXXX

Fort Benning, GA
Feb. 10, 1944

Dear Folks,

I heard from Lucile Antes, June, and Mother yesterday and Miss Ida, Mother, and Ditty today. We were on night problem last night so no writing. Tues. night on guard I had the 3-5 shift. No rain until just about 5.

Today we've been on a hike already, and I suppose this p.m. something usual. This will go out this afternoon so I thought I'd get it rushed off at noon.

No package or *Grit* yet. Quite chilly here today. Not rainy, but cloudy. Send more soda tablets, sal. and phen. Not paid yet.

Love,
E.

Fort Benning, GA
Feb. 10, 1944

Dear Marion,

We do have a little time for writing tonight after all. Contrary to all expectations, we weren't paid today. I've just talked to Jack, and he said that they were told that tomorrow is their day, so maybe we'll be lucky, too.

I'm now in my third month in the army, and have almost a month (four weeks ago tonight) here. Anytime will be acceptable to me, but I really don't need the money, since I have a lot—most—of the sum of when I left home the last time. Without a doubt, there are a lot here who must need the cash...

I got the *Grit*, etc., this evening. Also a valentine from G'ma and a large one from "Guess" postmarked Nby Sta. Feb. 8, 1 p.m. I don't recognize the writing.

Please accept these letters as my valentine. I can send "you all" something when I get back to civilization (Columbus and/or beyond).

Must close to get into bed after two sparse nights.

Love,
E.

Fort Benning, GA
Feb. 11, 1944

Dear Mother,

Just a line again. I got your valentine, letter of Wed., Pop's and the girls' valentines today, plus one from Mrs. M_____. Still the packages aren't here, but they will be tomorrow, I'm sure.

We were finally paid today. With everything out I got \$59.55. I understand that there are 3 insurances (3 x \$6.40) and 2 bond allotments (2 x 6.25) out this time. I also am buying an extra 18.75 bond by cash. I think I'll send a little home to repay that given to me up till now.

I anxiously look forward to package. Must close and to bed. Another parade tomorrow. Also heard from Auntie M. Very chilly and windy today and now.

Love,
E.

Fort Benning, GA
Feb. 13, 1944

Dear Folks,

This is the third and last of the epistles according to Emory. Some of them here had passes yesterday evening, but they weren't weekend, just for the evening. Also they could get them today. But it's been so cold here, and we had a hard week, that I knew I didn't want to leave. It's very hard to get to town, and I had lots of letters, my washing, etc.

I have finally decided that I want my radio or some [radio]. I didn't realize how much I was missing my various programs until someone got one next door. Just today I definitely decided. Before it was rather doubtful since I won't be here for so long. As I say, I've put my foot down now. There was one in the other end of our hut, but it was broken, and the owner is the one who got the appointment to West Point, and is now taking a refresher course at Cornell. Due to turnovers and transfers in the personnel of the huts from sickness, we have several out and new ones in to replace them. One who came in to 70 was the third Smith I mentioned. He had a radio, but changed his mind and went into 71. There is this one I am hearing now in the rec. hall, but sometimes the dance orchestra is playing or somebody wants some other program. It seems to me that our kitchen one (Mother's) would be best since it is smaller and splits the stations better. The aerial should be enclosed and maybe some of the long wire that is attached to mine (that I've added from time to time). No doubt someone should be consulted who knows about packing it and sending it. Also

enclose a half plug to screw in.

Note *Pine-Bur* article marked in separate envelope. Sometime I am going to get our company picture sent. I'll tell you who some of them are on it. I'll stick mainly to the cadre and officers.

I am fifth from left end of second row from top. Those seated on chairs in center, l to r: Lt. Allen (Drexel man, 3rd platoon leader), Lt. Adair (our platoon leader), 1st Lt. Koselcau (acting Capt. when ours wasn't here), Lt. Culberson (2nd platoon leader), Lt. Cook (1st platoon leader), First Sgt. Meade. Seated on ground at right, l to r: Sgt. Newton (who has charge of the company during our daily touring around), Sgt. Davis (3rd pl.), Sgt. Monkhouse (2nd pl.), Sgt. Alexander (1st pl.), Cpl. Frietus, Cpl. Webb, Cpl. Hicks, Cpl. Robinson, Sgt. Woods (ours, 4th pl.), Cpl. Fleming, Cpl. Hammond, Cpl. Haviland, Pvt. Vowell (busted from Cpl.) and Cpl. Weisner. Our Cpl. are Robinson, Fleming, and Vowell. ...We've had lots of packages in our hut lately. Must close.

Love,
E.

Fort Benning, GA
Feb. 13, 1944

Dear Sisters,

This is what might be called the second part to Ditty and G'ma's letter. Yesterday all but about ¼ (60) of us got some kind of shots. We that didn't (I've had all mine for two weeks) went over to one of the areas where we've gone for instruction and moved a few tables and arranged them. Part of the time we were in the PX which is swell compared to ours.

I had a pint of milk and some cookies plus 6 small chocolate bars (bought in 3 sales) and a box of fig bars, and a box of Nabiscos. I also got the band-aids. With the two packages and two more coming from G'ma and Aunt Margaret I feel quite satisfied for a change and, in fact, a little caught up. I also got two more bars of chocolate at our own PX...

Love,
E. XXXX

Fort Benning, GA
Feb. 15, 1944

Dear Folks,

I have only a minute since today we have current

events. I didn't have time to write yesterday because it was laundry, change sheets, etc. Also we had regular cleaning and oiling of equipment after yesterday's rain and short hike.

Today is beautiful and tonight is the night problem. Last night I got both of G'ma and Aunt M's packages. Haven't opened pretzels, but the big package carried swell. Such a package you never saw. I haven't opened all the sub-packages. Let them know. Everyone seems to enjoy the stuff. Total postage, \$1.03.

Today is warm now, but we wore overcoats for the first time this a.m. Not this p.m., however. This is supposed to be a tough week. I bought my bond last night. Four girls from Columbus ate with us last night, quite an occasion. Almost time to fall out.

Love,
E.

4:15 Sun. p.m.
Feb. 20, 1944

Dear Auntie M,

No doubt you did get my letter from last Sunday, even if not as soon as usual. It was mailed the same time.

The third and fourth weeks were hard but this week next is supposed to be easier. The general tone of each week is more difficult on purpose, I imagine, but we actually mind the week according to subject matter.

We do not bivouac yet but we have had tent-pitching as part of several hikes. That is merely for practice as they are immediately struck. I understand that the first two-week bivouac is during the 8th and 9th or maybe 9th and 10th weeks. Then we have another at the very end, also two weeks long. We will get mail as usual but there is very little opportunity for writing.

Our company had guard duty for eight days and the back end of the alphabet got it twice. There are six reliefs of two hours each and the first time I had the special theater guard job. As I think I've already written, I had a regular post the second time and was on the 3-5 shift. We do no academic work here.

They say now that the ASTP is going to be stopped definitely. There was a rumor about three weeks ago, but everything had once more quieted down until some radio announcement Fri. night. Already, each article or story is a little different, so maybe they really aren't decided on how many are going to be ripped out. It surely would be more logical to close the program to further entrance of members, rather than practically betraying all of us with some

intellect (so they tell us here) who might otherwise be somewhere else. There just isn't rhyme or reason, but I've stopped worrying about it after the first 24 hours.

I wrote postals to Lydie, Ida, and Dot W. last week. I had no more cards, but thought Hep and Martins would get letters sometime. Again I affirm that I really need no more money. This place is something like the nation as a whole. Things are worth more than cash. Family has kept me well supplied. If I ever need money, I'll let you know. I have about \$50 now and have a war bond bought, and pay day is a week from Wed.

We don't see many flowers here, and very little green except for the planted rye grass (like at home) and the pines. The fields are still brown. How different this season will be from your summer at Luken's.

Our co. came in 4th in all 3 regts. (48 cos.) in the bond drive. The leading one was 1st Co. (next to us). They had a lot of money sent in. We had around \$6,000.

Love,
E. XXXX

March 1944 – Fort Bragg

March 21, 1944 - Tues.

We arose very early to be on our way. Before we got on the train a two-mile march up Wood Road lay ahead. On the previous Sunday, 1st Sgt. Meade had spit, "Now on Tooosday mornin', you min, jest about all of yuh *will leave* for the 100th Infantry Division at Ft. Bragg, N.C." Our hearts sank. Could it be true? We remembered the 300th Infantry up in the woods on 1st Division Road. If we'd been living the way we had, how much worse would the next step be?

We boarded the train, made up of the old coaches – C. of Ga, L & N, etc. We pulled out toward Columbus on the line from Cusseta and waited there a little while. The thing that made me feel better or worse, I don't know which, was the train having half Pennsy coaches. This was my first experience on a troop train with kitchen car and all.

We were eating dinner as we stopped in Atlanta. The stop here was short, but as before we waited a long time in Howell Yard. Again we were to use the Seaboard. It took almost all afternoon to get out of Georgia and as the evening wore on we tried to get the best arrangements possible with our uncomfortable seats. The night wore on, and we twisted and

turned.

March 22, 1944, Wed.

Someone said we were in Hamlet. Breakfast was served about 5:30. The last place anyone caught was Aberdeen, N.C. From the map it looked as if we'd go to Sanford and get the A.C.L. branch from there that led to Fayetteville. Good authority had it that this burg was the closest place. However, the train slowed and stopped, and some waiting officers got on. It appeared we were close. Next, a diesel switcher began pulling us backwards into a siding. (Later, it was certain we had left the Seaboard at Aberdeen and used the Aberdeen & 35. Rockfish to the junction with the government railroad.) We traveled this way for about a half hour, passing buildings and barracks of all types.

When we stopped there was a band to meet us and of all people, a Brig. General who turned out to be assistant division commander. Each group of 16 or 18 was hustled into GI trucks, and away we whirled from the post field house siding to Division area, our home-to-be for seven months.

Our bunch went to Company L, 397th Infantry Regiment. The location was a pleasant surprise to us, regular barracks, duplicates of the reception center. Chow was fine as was the PX. The immediate prospects didn't look bad at all. We got our barracks bags in the afternoon and enjoyed *Lady In The Dark* that evening at Theater No. 3.

March 23, 1944, Thurs.

I arrived in my permanent home – Co. A, 398th Infantry. The barracks seemed very empty. The group assigned was about 15-20, half each from 1st and 2nd Co's, 5th Regt.

March 24, 1944, Fri.

We fell out in a training battalion designed to complete the basic we missed by our program being cut short. I was in 1st platoon of the fourth group. In "A" Company I lived in the third platoon barracks. My address now was:

Pvt. R.E. Smith, Jr. 33872802

Co. A, 398th Inf.

APO 447

Ft. Bragg, NC

March 26, 1944, Sun.

I attended chapel at the 397th with Chaplain (Capt.) Bonner Teeter in charge. I returned for the evening session.

Fort Bragg, NC
March 26, 1944

Dear Auntie M,

Here I am sitting in our company day room writing on a desk. We were split up among three regiments of the division on Thursday and I arrived here in Co. A of the 398th Regt. between the other two, the 397th and 399th. This is a very nice post and part of the ?. We have large, two-story, heated barracks, almost duplicates of those at New C. There are two handsome theaters just a step away, several good PX's, a service club (where I intend to go shortly), and last and best, an unbelievable change for the better in food.

The amount is bountiful, quality fine, and the menu something like what most of us are used to. Yesterday at noon we each had two donuts (raised and sugared) and today there would have been ice cream left over in the boxes (cut brick) at our table if several of us hadn't taken 2 or 3 pieces.

As far as living conditions are concerned and the treatment by our superiors, we all like this. Naturally, the implications and results of our transfer are not too pleasing. However, we live "just for today" and are enjoying the contrast from Benning's Harmony Church area.

This morning we were to church in the 397th chapel to the 1100 service. We went over to that one to be with some of our platoon mates from ASTP. The chapel is beautiful, with an organ, etc., and was also much enjoyed. Our captain is from North Jersey - I've heard the place but just don't remember it. Montclair sticks out in my mind just now.

We are on a bus line here which runs into Fayetteville about 14 miles away. It is only 15,000 or so as compared to Columbus. Raleigh is about 80 miles northwest, and Durham and Chapel Hill beyond that. It would be nice to go see Carl Newcomer.

Your figs arrived today in perfect shape after about a 1500-mile trip. They are very good. Sunday the 26th was when everyone was supposed to be out of our area. Today I got up for 8:30 breakfast since we were in bed by 10:30 last night.

The weather is very warm but not muggy or damp like Georgia. They say it's terrible there in the summer. Our whole 500 miles NE doesn't seem to make much difference. Will no catch up further on my writing.

Love,
E.

March 29, 1944 - Wed.

A division review was held for Sgt. Gen. McNair, head of AGF to award first Expert Infantryman Badge in Continental U.S. Recipient was Sgt. Bull of A, 399, then Jack Houser's platoon sergeant. The members of the training battalion were observers. We then went to theater No. 3 for movies and lectures. One who spoke was Chap. (Capt.) Clarence L. Lecrone, regiment chaplain. He said that there were many requests from those who had sung in choirs in Benning to have one here. That evening all those interested were asked to go next door to the chapel. He spoke highly of his organist-assistant T/5 Lee C. Sistare who had studied in New York and been a church organist for some time. That night I became a member of an organization, which in itself and through the doors which it opened, created some of the happiest experiences of my whole life. Outside my company, the members of the choir provided me with some of my best friends. How welcome was a group where we did things because we wanted to and where we could express ourselves as we used to at home as well as seek diversion from this game called war.

I joined the 2nd tenors and we rehearsed "The Palms" for the next Sunday (Palm Sunday) with George Thomas, the other Protestant assistant soloing. I think we also tried some Easter numbers.

Fort Bragg, NC
March 31, 1944

Dear Folks,

Well, tomorrow is April Fool's Day and I must remember to pull something. Tomorrow also we have to get up early again to do the same thing as today. Today was practice and tomorrow the group is firing for record.

A beautiful cool, breezy day here; I thought it would be warmer after clearing yesterday. However, I imagine each day will be some warmer now. I got Mother's letter of Wed. and also Wed.'s Sun. Of course, this being Fri. we had to

get all cleaned up for tomorrow. I want to be in bed as close as possible to 9:30 and still must do ablutions before retiring...

It looks as if everything is all set for Sunday and Holy Week. One thing, I won't have to stand a formal inspection tomorrow. Not much news. I don't have too many letters to answer over the weekend.

Love,
E.

April 2, 1944 - Palm Sunday

We sang quite well in the a.m. and had a short evening service followed by another rehearsal. Our choir was invited to sing John Staener's "Crucifixion" with the choir of the First Presbyterian Church in Fayetteville. They rightly thought that our group could balance their male section.

Palm Sunday (1944)

Dear Auntie M,

Well, I've been here in N.C. almost two weeks now. I may not get this all written since I am going to choir practice at 6:00. I belong to a newly formed choir started mainly because quite a few requested it after having been in the various ones in Benning. We had our first rehearsal Wed. eve. For this morning and tonight's is rather special for Holy Week and Easter services. Wed. eve. This week the Fayetteville Pres. Choir is presenting Stainer's "Crucifixion," Thurs., night is communion, Fri. 1:30-2:30 there's is a Good Friday service (with the whole division being excused to attend if the so desire), Easter sunrise service, and regular 11:00 service.

I don't think I've heard from you direct since I've been here, but we haven't had any mail call today so far. We are still in our detached training battalion taking basic. I think we will have just the week yet and then join our regular companies.

Last Wed. there was a division review and Lt. Gen. McNair (head of the army ground forces) was here. The purpose was to award the first Expert Infantrymen Badge. Our training group did not parade with our respective companies, but rather observed the proceedings from the sidelines. Tuesday night we had a regimental review at retreat in which we did participate. At Benning we never did more than have battalion reviews. Will finish when I return from church.

9 p.m. - I am now back with my good clothes off and hung up and have resumed my writing. The choir practice and service were very nice tonight. We are helping to sing the "Crucifixion" on Wed. night in our chapel and Fri. night in Fayetteville. Tomorrow night we are to go into Fayetteville to practice. Afterwards we will be entertained at the home of Chaplain and Mrs. Lecrone near the church. It all sounds very nice.

I think I must close because I still have to write home.

Love,
Emory

Fort Bragg, NC
Apr. 2, 1944

Dear Folks,

I hope you will excuse the short letter, but I did a lot of other writing today plus other things. I think I wrote to Bob M., Leo, Red, June, Gladys, Auntie M., Jane, and this. Today I was to church in the choir and it was packed. They even used the choir loft (at the rear, like the Catholics) for non-members.

All p.m. I wrote, and at 6 p.m. we had choir practice of the crucifixion. Our choir is going to help the Pres. Church in F'ville on it. Tomorrow night we're going in to the church to rehearse. Afterwards Chaplain and Mrs. Lecrone (the Altoonans) are entertaining us at their home there. Wed. night the combined group is presenting the cantata in our chapel. Thurs. night is the communion service, Friday the Good Fri. service (1:30-2:30), Friday evening the cantata in F'ville at the church, and, of course the sunrise and 11:00 services Sun. Quite a schedule! Tonight there was a very informal short evening service, too.

The weather continues bright and fair with not much news. I meant to write some last night but I stopped into the day room and read the *World Almanac* all evening. Awoke about 8:45 this a.m. skipping breakfast.

After 10:00—must close.

Love,
E.

April 3, 1944 - Mon.

Choir loaded on two GI trucks to go to town for rehearsal at the church followed by a party at Chap. Lecrone's. The organist there, Mrs. Victor Fischer, recently Miss Virginia Harlin,

was director of the combined group, while Lee accompanied. How wonderful the town in early spring looked to us, and especially the colonial Georgian church, after months of sand and pine trees.

A good time was enjoyed at the chaplain's. He is a native of Alexandria, PA, and Mrs. from nearby. His present church was the Presbyterian one in Chatham, N.J. His mother-in-law was also living there. She was Mrs. Mary Heindman, also a Pennsylvanian, and her sister is the wife of Dr. J.C. Reed, Milton, PA.

April 5, 1944, Wed.

The choir came out from town to our chapel for the first presentation. It wasn't perfect, but pretty good for the short time. Two photos were made by Signal Corps.

Fort Bragg, NC
Apr. 5, 1944

Dear Marion,

Just a line to get there before Sunday. We sang the "Crucifixion" here in the chapel tonight and it went off pretty well. Would there had been as many in the congregation as in the choir!

Today was very windy and cold. I wore Uncle Bill's sweater and my scarf this p.m. After the cantata the choir had its picture taken. One of them has the chaplain as the colonel in it.

I didn't hear from home today. Must close. Best Easter wishes to all the family.

Love,
E.

April 6, 1944, Thurs.

We sang for the Maundy Thursday Communion Service.

April 7, 1944, Good Friday.

This was my last day in the training battalion. We took 12 of 20 miles of a march in the a.m., and then if we wished to attend church could do so at 12:30. Everything was jammed. Later we finished the hike and once more hustled to get ready to leave for the presentation in town.

This also was well done and afterwards the church had something of a reception for us followed by gathering at Van Storey's. Returned about 12:00.

April 8, 1944, Sat.

Went to A-399 to see Jack Houser. He promised to reciprocate but was transferred and that was the last I saw him. He was transferred to the artillery at Camp Rucker, Alabama.

April 9, 1944, Easter

Many arose early to go to the division sunrise service held in the amphitheater behind service club No. 2. The combined choirs of the division led in the traditional hymns and sang as an anthem, "The Strife Is O'er." The director of the group was T/5 Gregory of 397th. Major General Withers A. Burress extended greetings to the congregation. The sermon was preached by Chap. (Maj.) Katt, assistant division chaplain. The time was about 6:30.

At 11 a.m. the regular service was held in the chapel. Both of these Sundays the choir sang to a near capacity congregation. During the next weeks the choir rehearsed one night a week and Sat. afternoon as well. We led the congregational singing and used responses and anthems Sunday a.m., and for over a month consistently sang outside for some group on Sun. afternoon or evening. Although we visited the First Presbyterian more than any other, the St. James Episcopal and the First Baptist were also hosts.

The week following Easter part of the newly-arrived ASTP boys were transferred to various branches and posts. Rumor had it that most of them were going to the combat engineers and artillery.

We then began to get Saturday afternoon and Sunday passes, and I usually got to town as soon as possible doing what little shopping I had. Eventually I wound up at the First Presbyterian for their supper at 7 p.m. held in the yard, weather permitting; otherwise in the "hut." Following supper, there were games and singing, as a rule ending about 9:30.

One of my first experiences with individual Southern hospitality was at the home of Mr. & Mrs. W.A. Van Storey at the top of Hale Street. The choir was invited there after singing at the church during the first weeks after organization. The house was large and very typical. One of the parlors contained both a Hammond organ and a baby grand piano. We made good use of both of these with music ever in our minds. Other good friends were

Alexanders (the pastor and his family of Vicky, whom I didn't meet until her return for the summer from Agnes Scott College where she was a sophomore; Tillie, high school junior and present at every meeting or party, and junior-high-aged Johnny.) Mrs. Betty Turner, director of the religious education and personally in charge on Sat. and Sunday evening, Fischers – I never got to know Victor very well because he was transferred to return just before we left; Wests, with whom Virginia lived.

One Sunday evening we sang at the First Baptist when Dr. Pugh spoke on the work of chaplains. Previously, Al E. took Tillie, and I took her cousin, Nell Lancaster, to supper. Nell was from near Richmond and was going to Flora McDonald College at Red Springs.

Fort Bragg, NC
Easter Sunday, Apr. 9, 1944

Dear Folks,

Thanks to my heavy schedule of Holy Week and Easter, I had very little time to write; but also have this extra time this morning to catch up since I've been up two hours and a half. I forget just when I wrote last and may repeat a little.

We sang here at our chapel Wed. evening and went to Communion on Thurs. It was quite interesting having the two ministers have it together. One (the one I consider ours) is Presbyterian, and the other, who preached last week, is Episcopalian. You know how far apart they are in types of service, etc. When they were talking about their joining, most folks didn't think it would work so well.

The ritual was as Methodist as you'd want it although not all the black-face type as we have it was used. The ministers do it all, there being no ritual in our hymnals. Of course, I guess we use the *Book of Common Prayer* quite closely. They did both types of serving—the real Episcopal form of drinking from the goblet and the kind where everyone sits and the "elders" (I guess) pass the elements. Of course, we have the individual service, but at the altar. I stayed in my seat, but in a similar situation again I'd do the other. Every Sun. at 7:30 they have the regular communion, advertised as Episcopal form, with all Protestants invited.

On Friday we were to have an 18-mile hike. In order that we could all attend the Good Friday service (for which time had been allotted by a division order) we took 12 miles in the morning and eight more in the p.m. The service was

1:30-2:30 and we had till 3:00 to change back to fatigues and get out on the drill field.

The chapel was packed! I mean almost as close as the Newberry bus sometimes. When I got there, there was a fan-shaped crowd outside, and since I'm in the choir I forced inside and up the steps at the back, already jammed with sitters. I managed to get almost to the top and found the loft also impenetrable (is that a word?). Soon after the service started Chaplain Lecrone (whose own church is at Chatham, N.J.) asked everyone to move a little tighter and to fill in the aisles. They had 18 rows I could count with an average of 25 across. That would be about 450. I should say there were more than 100 others—yes, even 150 inside, plus quite a few turned away.

In the evening the "Crucifixion" went off even better. We went over the "hut" (sort of a parish house) for coffee and donuts and later went out to the large home of one of the member I can't quite get the name—oh yes—Vicery. Mr. V. is the fire chief here at the fort. I don't have everyone placed, but our director, Mrs. Fisher, who is a bride of two weeks yesterday, was there with her husband, a corporal; the actual hostess was a young Mrs. Van Story who seemed to belong in the house and may have been the daughter. It is one of those large southern homes. In one room they have a baby grand and a Hammond organ and in another room, another piano. I must now close and get ready for church. The choir is to be there at 10:30 and I've been interrupted.

Now after dinner, where I went directly after church. There weren't as many there, no doubt because they were on passes in town. However, there were quite a few civilians there. As usual, Col. & Mrs. Duff were almost in the front row. This morning's services both went off well and without incident. Last night I was over to the service club for the first time and was reading a very interesting library book. Later I went to hunt up Jack, knowing that he was in A, 399th, and as he said when he was in here after the G.F. service, he was in the barracks next to the orderly room. There were several of our old 2nd Co there, and we chatted for quite a while.

Today is nice, but rather dull and muggy. Yesterday I got eight letters...

Love,
E.

Fort Bragg, NC
Apr. 10, 1944

Dear Marion,

Just a line, since I've been catching up tonight and I did write a lot of news yesterday. The cake carried very well and was consumed with little delay...

We were with the company today and had just a regular day. I think we showed them that we learned something at Benning, even if we were "book soldiers." I listened to the radio tonight and didn't write too fast.

Not much news, very warm today...

Must close. I'm catching up on last week.

Love,

E.

Fort Bragg, NC

Apr. 11, 1944

Dear Folks,

Mother's air mail letter mailed Sunday arrived this noon, as my only mail. As anyone here will testify, it's some unusual mail call when Smith doesn't get any. This once more proves that air mail isn't any faster to this part of the South...

Today I was on detail all day. We were on P&P detail, which they say means Prisoner-Police. This work in some organizations is done by the yardbirds, but not here. It consists of supplying coal, etc.; gathering garbage, ashes, waste paper. We did cardboard and dry garbage this a.m., and bones and fats this p.m. It was quite fun riding all over to the dumps in the back of the open 2½ ton GI truck.

Did any of you notice last week in the paper in the upper left-hand corner of the left social page about Mrs. W. S. Green (G'pa's boss's wife?) giving a shower for a Miss Goodkind? She is to marry Lt. Saul Hanin, U.S. Army. He is no less than one of our neighboring 1st Co. officers and instructed us several times in joint classes. He was featured in "Officers Front & Center" of the *Pine-Bur* once. He is from PA we all think, and know he went to Penn State. Quite interesting!

We've been having a thundershower all evening, but it cooled off very nice. So hot and muggy just before. We were paid tonight on the supplementary payroll, which I didn't sign (practicing in town last Mon.). They called me out of the mess hall after I didn't appear for my money, thinking it would be necessarily held until May 1. I got \$35.35. The bond which came most recently was the first concrete evidence of my \$6.25 allotment. This is not cash purchase and comes out automatically every month. Could have easily stood it till May.

Love,

E.

Fort Bragg, NC
Apr. 15, 1944

Dear Folks,

I heard tonight that there is a Sunday mail collection (in the a.m.) so I thought I'd get a line off after a few slack days lately. In just about an hour this evening I wrote four letters...Not bad for an evening plus this one.

We are on fire guard for the post in our company and from noon today till noon tomorrow, 90 of us have to remain in the company area. This is no particular hardship since I do this often anyway. As you see I got a lot done.

There was another division review today, and we were in it this time. The main purpose of this was for correspondents and the press as per *Sentinel*. I guess I won't get to church in the morning, but I guess we're having our own in the evening before going to First Presbyterian for that service to dedicate the service flag. Mother's letter of Mon. came just today with the one from Thurs. on time. Yesterday's came OK too.

...Have our company pictures here now. Something else to send..

Goodnight, love,
Emory

Fort Bragg, NC
Apr. 17, 1944

Dear Beth,

I am sorry to hear you've been sick and hope you'll be well soon. Today I had Mother's letter of Saturday and one from Auntie M.

Today we were in the pits again for our own company. As is usual we got up early at 5:45 going to the range at 7:00. It was beautiful and just warm enough. The days are much warmer than the nights. We had a good time in town last night...

Please send me my dark glasses in that case in my room somewhere. If they're not good for some reason get me another pair of black ones and send them with the case. The sun on this white sand is terrible...

We can call from the Service Club here. What takes the time isn't the long line of callers waiting to put in calls, but rather the time for the calls to be put through. On Easter some of them were clear up to eight hours. Early in the morning is said to be a good time.

Guess I'll close for now.
Love, E.

Fort Bragg, NC
Apr. 24, 1944

Dear Folks,

Well, even tonight I won't get everything written I wanted to since we had to clean up things after a showery day.

Mother's Sat. letter came today, also the donuts—plus Fri. and Thurs. *Sun*, apples from Auntie M., and candy from Betty Kest...

Last week after our hike, which was started at 4 a.m. as I wrote you, we had several classes since the new ASTP's only went 10 miles instead of 25. We had the whole afternoon off. I didn't feel so hot and seemed to have a fever. I slept some and didn't eat any supper. By that time it seemed to be mostly a sick stomach. About 8:30 or so the climax came and after that I felt better. "John," one of the Pfc. cooks, from Brooklyn brought me two lemons back from the kitchen which I drank, squeezed in hot water. I slept fine all night and felt OK in the morning. The exercise didn't make me feel so good, but I got steadily better, and that p.m. out in the field while the rest of them were doing various tactical problems I just rested at our meeting place.

Fri. eve. I ate a small supper and felt real good scrubbing vigorously and ever since much of my weakness was due to that lack of food...

Fire guard is a passive job, and we don't go around peering for shooting flames. We simply remain in the area ready for one.

We go through the reception center part on our way to town. I guess that's what the Ft. Bragg part of *Pvt. Hargrove* is about.

At the Episcopal Church last night we kneeled, read the prayers, faced the cross for the "Gloria" and everything. Last Sat. after our rehearsal in the chapel I was playing the organ, and last night Lee Sistare (our organist from S.C. who played at the Methodist Church, W. Chester) and some of us were playing that organ there. I played "Blest Be the Tie" as recommended by him for having only 3 tones in the pedals. One of the members of our choir does play. He's from Nashville, a very active MYF-er and if I never told you before knows Emma Laura Johnson, the caravaner. Our choir's been depleted by some transferring out of some of the ASTPs. That's all for now. Must close.

Love,
E.

Fort Bragg, NC
Apr. 27, 1944

Dear Folks,

Strangely enough, I hardly accomplished anything tonight in the correspondence line. After supper I went to the PX for a haircut, which took a long time because of the absence of one of the barbers completely and the same for a second of the three part of the time.

When I came back I took a pair of my shoes...down to the supply room for repairing. Then I finally got around to packing my watch! I won't get it mailed right away because we'll be in the field at noon tomorrow, and I have a service club detail on Saturday.

Also I addressed and tied up our platoon picture from Benning. That I put a 3-cent stamp on and put it in the box. Our company picture went for 3 cents from there, and so I knew about it...

I put in for an overnight pass for Sat. night, but I won't be able to get off until 4:30 or so Sat. Otherwise I should be off at 4:00 and could get a ride on the regular Sat. p.m. convoy to town. For the place I put Chapel Hill, but I've never written Earl and don't know just where I'll go. If I don't get anything written Sun., you'll know I wasn't here. I'd have to be back Sun. midnight for fire guard in the company Monday.

Is G'ma 80 tomorrow? I can never remember what year she was born. Well, I'll get to bed now so this is all.

Love,
E.

Fort Bragg, NC
Apr. 30, 1944

Dear Folks,

I am just back from dinner and won't write too much. Last night I went to town about 4:30 with a pass good from then until tonight midnight. Before I went in we had choir practice at 2:30. 1st Sgt. Goodlow relieved me at noon from my service club detail so I could go. I played volleyball in the mass games from 1-2 and then got cleaned up.

In town (by the way I got the T/5 and one of our chaplain's assistants and had the baritone solo parts in the "Crucifixion." After that I went up to the First Pres. for their Sat. night supper. I went with one of the ladies for ice and Cokes.

Two of our choir members, including Foster from

Nashville who knows Emma Laura, came shortly after I did. We had hamburgers (3 for me) onion, pickles, ketchup, mustard, cole slaw, iced tea, Coke. After supper we went in the "hut" and played games. Albert E. came in after supper and at the close of the evening he and I walked Matilda Alexander (the preacher's daughter) and her cousin (who goes to college at Red Springs, N.C.) home. We listened to the radio and talked awhile. Then we came back on the GI convoy. I didn't get awake to get up this a.m. til 9:30, washed my socks, etc. and went to church.

This afternoon A. and I are going to town about 2 and will find our way to the Baptist Church by 7. This is a union service and Dr. Pugh of Phila is going to speak. Quite an honor for us to sing.

I heard from Aunt M. yesterday, also Aunt Lulu (herself) via Benning. Just got your letter of Fri., also Mrs. Sears. I am quite sure I'm going to be here and stay with the division. One other of our bunch that came in at the same time has his name posted for a furlough, but I hear they are all going to be postponed until after certain squad problems the first half of May. So I do feel I should get one soon, and I'd rather have folks come after that as I said before—sometime when I wasn't so nearly due.

Notice my picture in the *Sentinel* at the address by the general a week ago yesterday. The man with his back to you with the helmet liner is Maj. Kirkland, formerly Capt. of Co A and Com. Off. of the training battalion.

Love,
E.

Fort Bragg, NC
May 2, 1944

Dear Folks,

Just a line to say that I am going on a 3-day squad problem tomorrow and will get nothing else written until Sat. I was on KP today and we finished by 6:45—very good. I've been scurrying around getting ready for tomorrow.

Being on KP, I wasn't to mail call, and I think no one who knows me was. The mail orderly probably thought I was already on a problem and so kept my mail. So all I got was a card from Bob Malick now in Richmond, Va.

Very nice and warm today. Must clean up and get to bed.

Love,
E.

Fort Bragg, NC
May 5, 1944

Dear Folks,

Usually I never write on Friday, but because of our problem we have tomorrow a.m. to get cleaned up; therefore I don't have to do so much tonight. We arrived about 4:30 this afternoon, having been picked up at 4 by the trucks. We made out OK, but are glad to be back. I have Auntie R's two letters, Mother's four, one from Auntie M and G'ma Strait plus the package from home and one from Auntie M.

I detect only the one undershirt at present. This summer I'll want to change almost everyday so maybe I ought to have about 5 more pants and 8 more shirts. I won't answer your questions tonight. I'm on fire guard tomorrow so will be catching up on writing then. Last Tuesday (as I wrote) I had as my only mail a card from Bob M. letting me know his new address. Richmond is just 215 miles from here.

Will continue my work now. Good night. Love, E.

Fort Bragg, NC
May 8, 1944

Dear Marion,

I will really give the news to you. Sat. eve. I continued to write, catching up quite well. Sun. a.m. I didn't get up for 8:00 breakfast, but Herman Rawlings from Altoona and I went up to the service club for breakfast. It cost \$.55 and was very good--cafeteria style.

After going to church and dinner and writing some more I went over to the chapel for a short rehearsal before going into town. We took our hymnals with us and sang all the way in. This was a community sing and of course there was lots of vocalizing other than our special numbers. Then we went over to the Presbyterian church for supper. The 399th choir who was singing at their evening service was also there, plus others as usual. The evening until 9:30 was supposed to be free for us. The Presbyterians were having a youth discussion group and then evening service but since this was such a good chance some of us decided to go over to Hay St. Methodist. First of all we observed the "inferior" 399th practicing.

We arrived at Hay St., just a few blocks away, in time for part of MYF. They had quite a crowd although I couldn't tell sitting way up front. One of the boys I met last Sun. was 1/3 in charge and a corporal, evidently a supply student

preacher once gave the topics. Several of the group were supposed to sing "Living for Jesus," and they asked some of the 100th Division to help them out. Lee Sistare, our director (who was one of the six who went there, and formerly Methodist organist at West Chester) encouraged us and we obliged. He said he was humming the bass part.

Just think of all this singing. At the evening service, a chaplain, of all people, spoke. I still haven't heard a civilian in his own church since Chap. Lecrone usually preaches when we go out to sing. He is from our W. Virginia conference and from Waynesburg, PA originally. It was the church that he last served who started this Mother's Day, and the card I've mailed separately refers to it. I got the cards there last night.

Imagine all this singing, but my voice held out. The Presbyterian folder [enclosed] I simply picked up—I wasn't there except for supper.

After the service I met Miss Williams, the Methodist organist; Lee knows them all. We plan to go there sometime soon.

We returned shortly after 10:00 and that's about all. I guess I'll close and try to get off some non-family ones...

Love,
E.

Fort Bragg, NC
May 10, 1944

Dear Folks,

This morning our squad was on a problem and we had the p.m. off to get cleaned up. Tonight the whole company has a night problem on which we're embarking shortly.

It was quite warm today and it was sprinkling a few minutes ago. There really isn't any news today. I had letters from Mrs. Milt W'mson and Vernon besides Mother's of Monday.

Guess I'll get everything ready now and close.

Love,
E.

Fort Bragg, NC
May 11, 1944

Dear Beth,

Today we had off practically after the problem last night from which we arrived back at 4:30 Thurs. a.m. I slept until 11:30 when we eat dinner. I don't know just how long the off period was to be but it rather ran into the time

when we were to mark our clothes.

The clippings [from newspaper, in envelope] are from the *Sun*. The Marshall boy's father was Pennsy & S & NY agent at Marsh Hill, and I've been there with Sharrows twice. The other is Jesse Smith's son, I think.

We are taking our weekly hike tonight (now that it's hot weather). In a few minutes I have to go to the rec. hall about some programs. The hike isn't until an hour later so I may go or not. I got Mother's and G'ma's letters today. G'ma's postmarked only yesterday at 1 p.m.! Must close and rush.

Love,
E.

May 14, 1944, Sun.

The choir was invited to sing at the baccalaureate service of the Chadbourn High School. This town of 1500 is located on the Lumberton-Wilmington highway and the Florence-Wilmington line of the ACL. This was Mother's Day and each company of our regiment entertained a couple from town with a son overseas and furnished two representatives to accompany them to church followed by dinner in the mess hall. They were to return to town about 1:30 and as we gathered to get the trucks for our engagement the parents were just leaving.

We arrived in the late afternoon and had a brief rehearsal. Some of Lee's folks were there. Then we were taken to various homes for supper. Four of us went together to Stroles. We were John Harvey, Jenkintown, PA; Elliot Stewart, Windsor, NC; and Albert Eschenbach and I from home. The married daughter of the family was in the senior class and Barbara was a junior. Ann, a younger daughter, looked a lot like Beth, and it turned out her birthday is the same as Beth's (the day before, May 13) and she is the same age.

We returned to the high school for the evening program and our numbers were fine. Chap. Lecrone used the applicable parts of several sermons he'd preached before. We left about 10 p.m. and arrived in the area by 12:00.

Fort Bragg, NC
May 14, 1944

Dear Marion,

Last night after choir practice in the afternoon I

tried to go into town, but the buses were so crowded and infrequent that I gave up and came back to the barracks where I read and did a little washing besides listening to the radio.

I am not officially the representative for meeting those folks since I would sit with them and feel it my duty to sing in the choir. This p.m. at 1:30 we are going to Chadwick to sing for the baccalaureate service. Will stop now to go to church and a small rehearsal in the boiler room beforehand.

1:15 - Now must rush to get back to start. Church and dinner were very nice. At dinner were Capt. Kierniesky's wife and baby and another couple as his guests plus our co. couple.

Got Mother's letter of Fri. Will answer all questions later.

Love,
E.

Fort Bragg, NC
May 15, 1944

Dear Folks,

Tonight we signed the payroll, and after waiting a long time it was finally accomplished. Since it is done by rank, and being the lowest of the low and an "S," I was very near the end.

We waited a long time without doing anything, but I felt too lazy to walk back to the barracks for any reading or writing materials.

Yesterday we had a very nice time at Chadbourn, as it is properly spelled. The one little girl, also looking like Beth, at the home where four of us were entertained is exactly as old as Beth. Imagine my surprise when she said her birthday was "yesterday" (the 13th). She took her address and said she was writing, so don't be surprised.

The service wasn't until 8 p.m. so we had several hours to talk and eat. AE, John Harvey, Jenkintown; a Stewart boy from Windsor, NC, and I were at the one place, Strole's.

One daughter is in the graduating class and another was an usher or something; a junior. The sister's name is (something) Ann...

Love,
E.

Fort Bragg, NC
May 17, 1944

Dear Marion,

We continue to be busy and will be for another week until this inspector general's visit is over. Tomorrow is the day when we put on that demonstration for the visiting pressmen and we have to get up a half hour early, at 5:30.

I got a return note from Mrs. Swartz today, mailed only about 28 hours before in York.

Tell Beth I enjoyed hearing all about Spacky and her trip. Let me know when they tell about her on the radio. Remind her also that the swimming season in all the ponds and lakes on the post opened last Sat. as per "Sentinel," and that I was in two months ago today in _____ Creek at Carmouche Range in Georgia.

Mr. D.A. is giving forth down the way, but I'm not following it, due to talking on other folks' and writing on my part.

There are a couple of cute puppies that hang around here. Yesterday one of them ate the meat out of someone's mess kit while he was getting something else. We ate outside while they varnished the table tops for this inspection. Very cute except for said part (?).

Love,
E.

Fort Bragg, NC
May 21, 1944

Dear Beth and all,

Well, church is over, and now I'm going to catch up on my writing as best I can. We are singing today, but not until the evening at the First. Pres. All the Protestant churches of F'ville are supposed to be entertaining the Protestants of the division. There will be about 100 voices in the choir and some of us will have to sing from the balcony which goes around three sides of the church. Lee is playing the organ.

Yesterday we went to town—that is, I did—going in on the convoy at 4:15. Believe it or not, I got my picture taken at a studio. The proofs will be ready next Saturday; there are two poses. I am getting three tinted ones, 8" x 10" for \$8.

After that I made a few minor purchases in the ten cent store (!) and then went up to the First Presb for supper. We had had a choir practice in the afternoon and Lee arrived a little late, having been home for two days, and of course the train was late. He just lives across the border at Clio, SC and last week his mother, aunt and sister were at Chadbourn to hear us. Lee and several others of us in the

choir came out with the Lecrones who were coming out to an officers' dance or party.

Despite all the cleaning we'd done this week, we did as usual or better on Friday night and hence I didn't write.

By the way, send me my swimming suit because I might want to go in one of these days.

All the Strole children are at home. Tell Mother that the reason I sent the letter to her last week with the package, etc., is that I thought she could take care of it better and that it wasn't private at all.

Well, the news isn't extraordinary so I'll close. There is a corporal from Huntingdon on our floor. Long live PA!

Love,

E.

I bought the pocket edition of Pvt. Hargrove yesterday, thought it was high time I read it. Enclosed are some views of the burg.

E.

Fort Bragg, NC
May 22, 1944

Dear Folks,

I've just finished writing to Bill (NY), Red (Neb.), _____ (Wis.), and Bob (Va.) besides Lucile Antes. The weather continues to be so enervating as Sally Lehman said in our play.

Today I got Mother's letters of Fri. and Sat. Everyone coming or writing from up north writes of the chilly or cool weather.

I'll enclose the program from last night. I knew Mr. Ferneyhough was going to write to our parents some time.

Today was hot as ever but bearable. Think I'll close to get ready for bed. Mr. Beale's knife arrived today via Auntie M.

Love,

E.

Fort Bragg, NC
May 23, 1944

Dear Grandma and all,

Well, a year ago tonight I was in Philadelphia with Mr. & Carl Strub trying to get transferred to the V-12. I often remark how different things might have been in it. And then I went over to Atlantic City on Ditty's birthday returning Tues. night. Leap year makes it two days later this year.

Note the top of page one of the *Observer*. Imagine 93

degrees at 2 p.m.! I sweat and sweat and took a salt pill at noon and supper. We were in the field today and it surely was hot. Also here is Sunday's program which I forgot to enclose. Auntie M. and all comment on the cool weather up north...

Tell Mother they don't give 3-day passes here and that I'd come home in a second on a weekender when I get one.

I looked at the Co. picture in the day room yesterday and the Rawlings boy is 9th from the left end (as you look at it) and in the same kneeling row as I. He says he looks mad.

Service Co. has people who are important to our functioning but not regular "line" companies. Its personnel includes truck drivers, chaplain's assistants, etc.

Well, *Fibber McGee* is almost over so I'll close.

Love,
E.

Fort Bragg, NC
May 24, 1944

Dear Marion,

Enclosed is one of our shoulder patches just like I have on my sleeves. I don't have many of them, so this one will be for the whole family. You never saw one, although the design was on the program at Eastertime, etc.

Today was hot again, but our program wasn't as strenuous as yesterday. Tonight we are going on our weekly hike and I suppose it'll be better than going in the daytime.

I got Mother's letter of Mon., Ditty's papers and a letter from June. I must get my equipment on later so I'll finish this letter.

12:30 Just back—have had coffee, cake, and shower (bath). Did you hear "Pomp & Circumstance," and Schubert's "Serenade" on the *Voice of Firestone* Mon. evening?

Now to bed.

Love,
E.

May 27, 1944, Sat.

I was constantly plagued by two of my platoon members to lend them \$10 so they could go to Raleigh. I steadfastly refused since this would bring my funds to less than my "furlough minimum," which was the amount I would need to get home plus a little extra, in case of any emergency, even though I didn't expect a regular furlough.

The furloughs were coming in our company then by the time you'd been in the army or since you'd had your last furlough. I expected one shortly, but the would-be borrowers said I couldn't possibly get one before so-and-so and it would be perfectly safe for me.

When I got to the orderly room for my pass the first sergeant asked me if I never read the bulletin board. I replied yes, at least once a day but hadn't for that day yet and asked him what I'd done or failed to do. He replied that I was going on furlough Tues. afternoon and didn't even know it. Just then in walked the two asking for the ten. I said, "Excuse me for making a fuss in your orderly room, Sgt. Goodlow, but I just have to tell these fellows about my furlough."

I went to the chapel after Lee, and we got a ride to town with Chap. Lecrone. They said that the chaplain was preaching the next day at the Methodist Church in Lee's hometown, and that to facilitate an early start Lee would stay with Lecrones that night. As we were getting out of the car they lamented the fact I couldn't go along and then suddenly the chaplain said there was no reason I couldn't and asked me both on the trip and to spend the night.

Lee and I did our collective errands: I bought my ticket, went to choose the proof from my picture which was taken at the Rembrandt the previous Sat. I sent telegrams to Mother, Auntie M. and Jane. Then we spent a long evening at the First Presbyterian and returned to Lecrones about 11:30 where Lee and I shared a room. So to bed.

May 28, 1944 - Sun.

We arose, ate and were on our way by 8:15. We took U.S. 15A south through Raeford and Lauerenburg to McColl, S.C.; then left to Clio. We stopped at Sistares' and met the family. Soon we left for the 10:00 service where Lee played the piano, Mrs. L. sang two solos and I helped in the choir. We had to hurry away for the 11:00 service in St. Paul's Church, or rather, the Church at St. Paul. Here the music was the same, but Chap. Lecrone told of a chaplain's work. I led in the pledge to the flag. We (Lee and I) were entertained at the home of the E.C. Rogers. This again was very typical, a large plantation home. The dinner was delicious and we enjoyed talking. Soon, Rev. Mr. & Mrs. Hoffmeyer returned to take us back to Clio. The Lecrones and children and Mrs. Heindman ate at a hotel in Dillon.

Here we went sightseeing and enjoyed talking, playing the piano, radio and

phonograph. Again we enjoyed a fine meal and about 7:00 the L's thought we should return because of their children. We drove back without incident and Lee and I left them on Hay Street. Mrs. Heindman asked me to call her sister while I was home.

May 30, 1944, Tues.

The great day arrived at last. I was all packed – both barracks bags and my furlough bag. In the morning we went through the infiltration course and as we were cleaning up afterwards we heard the Memorial Day broadcast from Ft. Meade. They used two of our numbers, “We Gather Together” and Beethoven’s “The Heavens Are Telling.” In the p.m. we had swimming in McFayden’s Pond. They promised me I could have my furlough papers at 4 p.m. After swimming I sweated out a first aid class. Thank goodness because of a battalion retreat parade the company came in early. About 3:15 we left the lecture area and by four I was all dressed, had my barracks bag turned in, had my papers, and was on my way to the PX for the bus. I didn’t shower because of the swim.

At the PX I found Jerry Mulvaney (Crookston, Minn.) and “Red” Caldon Norman (Minneapolis) who were also going. The bus came about 4:15 and we landed at the station by 5 to find 5:30 marked an hour late. While the others were out I wired the Witmans of passing through and met Nell Lancaster, on her way home for the summer. Soon we got in line for the train which arrived about 6:45 (ACL No. 76, The Havana Special). We got on okay, but I sat on one of Nell’s suitcases to beyond Rocky Mt. (Kay Kyser’s hometown). At Richmond she got off, and I did also, to help her with her luggage and to partake of Red Cross iced tea and cookies. We were about as late as before and it was near midnight.

May 31, 1944 - Wed.

Arrived Washington about 3 a.m. We three washed, checked our stuff, ate a little in the canteen, and started on a brief sightseeing walk. Returning, we asked to be wakened at 7:00 and settled down in the USO lounge, formerly the Presidential Suite. By 7, there was already the beginnings of a crowd around Gate No. 17, for the 8:10 (No. 25-571). When the gate opened, I got in the Buffalo reclining seat coach, while the others got in one of the Pittsburgh cars.

We moved along on time, and at Harrisburg the Philadelphia cars were added to each

train. At Sunbury the Witmans were on hand – all four of them. Soon we arrived home where I was met by a large part of the family and Spacky. As I saw her on the leash I gasped, “Is that *our* dog?” Although I had pictures of her in Feb. at which time she’d changed much, she still looked big to me. We stopped for a minute at Grandpa and Grandma Strait’s and then went home. Home! How much I’d done since last I saw it, Jan. 10. About 11:30 we were surprised by Auntie M., who had arrived on the Susquehannock. Every word of conversation had to be repeated and we went to bed about 2 a.m.

June 1, 1944 - Thurs.

I slept late and “brunched.” I wasn’t out of the house all day.

June 2, 1944 - Fri.

Went down to high school and visited all morning and until special period. Band played for chapel and I attended the band instrumental music class first period. I played a little there.

June 3, 1944 - Sat.

Jane and I went to see *Show Business* at the Capitol. We had supper in the backyard cooked on the charcoal grill.

Jun. 4, 1944 - Sunday

Children’s Day and church was combined. It was supposed to be the second Sunday in June, but because of baccalaureate the same day, our church put it up a week. The baccalaureate was in the afternoon this year and so wouldn’t have interfered anyway. I had counted on regular Sunday school and singing in the choir. Henry and Frank drove up and in the p.m., he June, Jane and I went up to Salladasburg, where he called on an MFC friend of his, and returned to Sears for supper. They (Witmans) had asked me down sometime during my stay and they thought maybe I’d go back with him that night. Since Auntie M. was home especially to see me I decided to go as far as Sunbury with her the next day. Jane went back to Lewisburg with them, though.

June 5, 1944 - Mon.

Auntie M. and I departed on the 2:48 and soon reached Sunbury. I saw Mr. Marsh Turner at the station and Frank was there to meet me. We waited until the train left. After supper Hank, Bill Kinney and I went to see *Passage to Marseille* and afterwards went to the snack place on the Shamokin road. Then we escorted Mrs. Witman home from Henningers in the next block and so to bed.

D-Day: June 6, 1944 - Tues.

We were awakened by telephone at 4 a.m. Hank answered and called his dad to say that it was the radio station WKOK and they had just heard the invasion of western Europe had started and they wanted him to come up and pray. However, someone else was secured and Mr. Witman occupied the 8:30 slot. I visited the radio station during the a.m., being taken by Mrs. W. on her way to a district convention in Danville. We ate lunch and I took Reading No. 5 at 3:50 or so for Muncy where I was to eat at Uncle Bill and Aunt M's. We went to the Episcopal church for D-Day services at 7:30 p.m. Then they drove us home. The *Gazette & Bulletin* had an extra which just had the two lines, "INVASION LAUNCHED" on the top half of the first page.

I thought maybe the invasion would be around Grandma Smith's, April 28. However, June 6 was both Mrs. Witman's and Red's, who had just returned to Lincoln A.A.F.

June 8, 1944 - Thurs.

I went to Lewisburg on the 10 a.m. bus. Jane met me and we ate lunch at KE house. How strange to eat with a dining room full of girls. We inspected the campus and I saw quite a few from our high school class. I returned home on the bus about 3:45 and went to Ditty's office to come home with her.

June 9, 1944 - Fri.

Today was spent doing all the lasts since I was to start back that night. Aunt M. was up for supper and I drove downtown after ice cream, after Grandma Strait (at a meeting) and after Jane who was at Yerkes following Harry's wedding. She was an usherette.

June 10, 1944

We left for the station about 1:15. Train (No. 580, 1:38 AM) was on time arriving but due to engine trouble didn't leave until 2:00. It was quite crowded. I made the acquaintance of a girl from Wellsboro going to see her husband at Cherry Point, going on the same trains with me to Wilson, NC.

We got seats in the dining section of the café coach before Sunbury. At Harrisburg we missed the 4:20 Washington connection and the 4:40 didn't leave until about 5:20. We arrived in Washington at 8:30, almost an hour late. Already there was a great crowd waiting for the 9:30 (A.C.L. No. 375 - Washington-Miami Section Havana Special).

The only seats we got were in the club lounge and most of the trip was on time. We arrived at Fayetteville about 4:30 p.m. I got a division area bus right at the station and was soon "home" again.

I moved into the 4th platoon barracks where I'd been transferred the week before I left.

On the way from the bus (which came straight out Butner Road and left me off at theater No. 3) I stopped in at the chapel and saw Lee and Alfred Hayden, with an evacuation hospital on the main post. Alfred was a member of Lee's choir in West Chester.

I spent the evening getting things in order and went to bed before 11 to sleep until 10 the next morning.

Less than two weeks after I returned from furlough, I was lucky enough to get a weekend pass from Friday 4 p.m. to Monday 4 a.m. They were usually given until 6:00, but the 1st Sgt. predicted an early reveille because of squad tests that day. One evening in the middle of the week preceding Sunday, June 25, they said, "Who wants a pass for this weekend?" Three of us responded and since there were only two passes, we flipped to see. For once in my life I was lucky. Someone, on hearing I was going home on the pass after just being there, said, "I wouldn't go home so *soon* if I were you," to which I replied as politely as possible that he must remember that he wasn't I.

Fayetteville, NC

June 10, 1944

(written on train at Richmond on return from furlough)

Dear Folks,

We stood to just above Sunbury and then a trainman sent us back to the next car, café car (half coach, half diner) and now we're sitting at tables on wooden chairs in the dining part. It's raining hard and steady after some lightning at Milton. A girl beside me is going to see her husband at Camp Lejeune. She goes to Wilson, not far above F'ville. The train from Washington doesn't go till 9:30. The "8:00" referred to the train arriving from NY. Will send wire from Wash. Love, E.

Richmond, VA
June 10, 1944

Dear Folks,

I suppose with the telegram, card, etc. the trip sounds somewhat jumbled to you. As you know, we left home about 20 min. late, maintaining it to Harrisburg. Quite a few of us were in the aisles, and one of these was a girl from Wellsboro going to see her Marine husband at Camp Lejeune for which the station is Wilson, NC, 74 miles above F'ville. She asked me where I was going and was much relieved and pleased to know that I was not only going to make the change for Washington at H'bg, but continue on the ACL. It was she who informed me that this train leaves Washington at 9:30 instead of 8:00, which was the arriving time of a train of a PRR train from NY. Of course, none of us got the 3:55 train at H'bg but waited for the 4:40 which arrives Wash 20 min. later (it says here!). Even this was 40 min. late all the way down and we didn't get to Wash till 8:25 or so. The train was very long and had a double header like coming up.

The sign was up for our train even then, with a crowd already gathering. They didn't open the gates til 9:20, and we got on near the front and tried to walk back. But since it takes longer to go thru the cars than along the platform, each car was filled about the time we got to it. The train has all ACL cars of varying degrees of quality. We had resigned ourselves to sitting in the last coach on a lady's suitcase, when a porter told us (a group) to stack our luggage in the vestibule and come into the next car, a tavern-lounge run by the RR and not the Pullman Co. I am at a table with seats for two on each side and am writing here now. This train is only 10 min. or so late. With the café each ride from Sunbury-H'bg I am having quite a variety. The country has gradually flattened out since Harrisburg "which is very sad." A girl going to A.C. who lives in Montoursville asked me for a place to stay when I said I knew the town. I recommended Martins and gave her one of their cards which I've been carrying, with explicit diagram on the back with my signature also.

About 1:00 we went thru North Petersburg, which is less than 50 miles from the N. Carolina line.

The trip seems to be going fast, although I didn't sleep except between H'bg and Baltimore (awaking at York), and some above Richmond.

I won't go to sleep now, but get a card off to Auntie M., etc. I have not eaten very much (3 roll sandwiches, 2 ½ pints milk), partially because of my public position. I'm really not hungry.

Love to all, E.

We don't stop Richmond to Rocky Mount, which is the longest non-stop run I've ever made, I think, 125 miles.

Send underwear, picture folder and our 2 sets of pictures.

Fort Bragg, NC
June 11, 1944

Dear Beth,

Our dinner was over early as usual, and the ones coming from church are among the last to get there. It always makes a longer afternoon than at home, but of course we have a supper early comparatively to other nights.

Yesterday on the bus coming out to the east (?) I noticed a T/4 in the medics who sings with us occasionally. He was in the choir at West Chester and I saw him go into the chapel. I thought I'd drop in and see who was there. Lee was running a dust mop over the chancel floor and so I talked for a few minutes there. Our company barracks and area were surely deserted. Quite a few moved out and others on furlough.

Corporal Damon, who owed me the money and is acting as supply sergeant during the absence of the regular one, got me my stuff and then I proceeded to get myself organized here in the 4th platoon barracks. It was just about 10 last night when I had things ready enough to be really finished. This included hanging things up and getting my foot locker arranged. This took me until about lights out and then I repaired to the latrine to write, wash, shower, etc. It was 11 o'clock when I got to bed, but I didn't get awake till 9:45 this a.m. I went to church, and the rather small choir sang an old unison number. Since church and dinner I've been writing. It's now 7:00, but I've just been talking and taking it easy, plus eating supper.

At the chapel I got all these papers (all 3 different) about our program 2 weeks ago. I brought them over and am sending them home, marked, in one of the envelopes I get the *Grit* in.

I could tell I was in the South when I got back, but it's not so hot on the first floor here. I haven't done anything else all day (the choir not having an engagement). Sometime you might send two or three of those hangers covered with the cardboard "roller." I got Mother's letter of Fri. and Thurs. Sunday but none of my back mail. I wasn't to the mail call though! I thought Mother was writing it on Friday maybe. Love, E. Tell Marion not to forget to write.

Love again, E.

Fort Bragg, NC
June 14, 1944

Dear Folks,

Well, it's almost 10:00 now and I just got back from the chapel. I got off KP about 8 and found a note here from Lee that rehearsal was at 8 instead of 7:15 as usual. There were so few there (no doubt due to the weather, etc.) that we just talked in Chap. Tyler's office.

Chap. Lecrone asked me to call Mrs. Heindman after I mentioned that I'd talked to Mrs. Reed. While I was at the chapel, and ever since, we've been having a hard thundershower. It stopped just long enough for us to get back.

Tomorrow, being Infantry Day (nationwide), all we do is see a parade with nothing else, I hope. You remember I told you about some of the fellows going to NY for the celebration there. The storm's cooled it off slightly. Must now shower. Got Mother's letter today.

Mother, sell my algebra book since I probably won't need it at another school. Call the office at school and find out (by title and author) what it costs and sell it for 50 cents or so less since I think it cost \$2.50 or \$3.00. It's almost new, but since it's Donald you could go down to 75 cents off cost. Use your own judgment.

Love,
E.

Fayetteville, NC
June 18, 1944

Dear Folks,

We are in the Anserdon St. USO in the music room where some of the boys are playing records they made here. If this doesn't sound very well it's because of all the conversation and clatter. I'll make one some day.

Last night I was in and picked up my pictures finally. They didn't have quite enough finished, so I ordered enough

to complete the order.

I had a third and final boil on my arm. The medics that live upstairs advised me to go to sick call, so I did yesterday. The doctor told me to bathe it and bring it to a soft head and go back to the regimental dispensary at 3 p.m. When I went back he opened it and they packed it with sulfanilamide and a large bandage. It drained, and this morning I had them put on a new one. Then I'm going to sick call again tomorrow as the doctor-lieutenant told me. I had a .4° temp. (99°) but it's normal today and I've felt fine.

Tonight we're going to the community sing here, like our choir sang at once. Then to the Pres. Church for supper. Just now we're playing the "Hallelujah Chorus."

The box came yesterday and I thought all the pictures were very good. I've shown them all around. Do you remember Commencement a year ago today?

Love, E.

Fort Bragg, NC
June 19, 1944

Dear Mother,

As I wrote you yesterday, I got my pictures on Sat. I guess they didn't get my order straight after all, so I had to order some more finished ones.

In the envelope are 4 large ones (3 colored and 1 bronze), plus three little ones. I have ordered two additional large tinted ones. I thought we'd have one at home, Jane, G'ma Smith and Ditty, Aunt Margaret, Auntie M., and G'pa and G'ma Strait. I'll send Auntie M's to her. Two of the little ones are for the girls, and the other to complete the Ditty and G'ma order. I didn't think there should be two big ones in one house. You deal them out as best you can, and make the best disposition of the bronze one.

Now I must rush to AP0447. Very hot as per usual today.

Love,
E.

Fort Bragg, NC
June 19, 1944

Dear Marion,

I suppose you have a fairly good idea of my weekend, although all the various letters must be confusing. After I mailed the letter to you yesterday, we (the Foster boy from Nashville and I) went to the First Presbyterian for supper and their meeting afterwards. Then we sang in Virginia's

(Mrs. Fischer's) choir for the evening service.

We got the bus at the bus station at 9:30, and arrived back about 10:15. I bought a book of tickets (12 for \$1.20 or just half the cash of a one-way price).

I didn't get the pictures sent today because the man at the P.O. didn't think they were wrapped securely enough for insuring. So I guess I'll have to get some additional packing before mailing them.

We are in the middle of a hard thundershower, and the light went out just a few minutes ago.

My arm is very good. It was redressed yesterday morning and the doctor saw it at sick call today with my temp. normal both times. It was also taken tonight with ditto at the Dr.'s request.

The sun is coming out now, just setting (8:20) and very golden. It seems to be cooler, too. (Also a rainbow).

Write me who went to M.F.C. this week from our church. You'll notice that this was more than a non-interesting letter that you complain of, and I expect a little reciprocity.

Sat. nite I didn't come in till 12:15 on the 397th's convoy.

Love,
Emory
OOOOOXXXXX

Fort Bragg, NC
June 20, 1944

Dear Folks,

I have obtained just around supper tonight one of the two weekend passes for this week in our platoon. Therefore, I'll most probably be home sometime on Saturday. I hardly felt it worth the telegram or something like that. Connections and things are so uncertain, that one never knows when one will arrive, but I'm quite positive it'll be no later than the last time. Please notify Jane, as I'm not writing any more tonight.

It cooled off after the shower last night and today was warm but with a very comfortable low humidity. Tonight is really cool for a big change.

The clippings are from a letter from Auntie M. Among the various ones she requested I send these.

Hope to see you soon. Will let you know if I get stuck.

Love,
E.

Fort Bragg, NC
June 21, 1944
(in the field)

Dear Grandma,

Well here is today, the longest day of the year, and a beautiful one that "What is so rare as..." fits perfectly. As I wrote last evening, it's been definitely cooler since Monday's storm. Last night was definitely chilly and when I got in bed about 10:30 after writing, I put a sheet and blanket on right away. At 5:40 I was cold enough to put the other blanket on. They say that while I was home it was very chilly here, too, as it was there.

Our platoon is firing the light machine gun today, and very little of the time is spent in actual work of any kind. There is some kind of over night bivouac tonight, and we are to ride to the area on trucks, the rest of the company evidently spending part of the day getting ready and going out. So it looks as if being in the platoon gets us out of some of the old routine stuff.

Yesterday eight of our company fired the carbine (which we carry in lieu of rifles) for record and I got 174 out of 200 possible points, or one point below expert.

My plans for coming home aren't as definite as they were on the furlough and I'll probably resort to several means in various combinations.

It was only luck plus a little extra brain power that I thought to bring this paper and envelope along. When we go in the p.m., we'll be getting ready for the night, so I'll just drop this in the box.

One of the boys has some paper in his pack, so I'm going for it now and he'll give me some to write a few extra letters. I'm completely caught up, hearing only from Mother and Auntie M. since I got back. Hope to see you,

Love,
E.

June 23, 1944 - Fri.

We were out on platoon tactics work along Longstreet Road. At 2:00 those going on pass were excused to be marched into the company area by the ranking N.C.O. The shortest way by distance lay across a bad, swampy place, so two of us went out to the road with permission.

Shortly, we were picked up by a D-399 truck which took us as far as their area. We walked the rest of the way and got a cold drink at the mess hall. Then we hurried into the

barracks to get ready.

I was offered a ride into town with T/5 Strickland and we met him at the parking lot. The ride to town was fast and we arrived at 4:30. The only thing I had to do was buy my ticket and get in line for the train. I had notified the folks by special delivery during the week.

There was a huge mob as usual and constantly we had to back up, with the arrival of those with delays-en-route which are actually furloughs but technically special orders. The train arrived on time and I got a seat in a Pennsy coach which was empty before Fayetteville. The train lost about 15 minutes just loading passengers.

The trip was quite similar to the same run I'd made 3½ weeks before. We lost time gradually all the way, mostly through long station stops and one at the D.C. end of the bridge over the Potomac. We also waited some before backing into the upper level of Union Station, to arrive at 3:20 a.m. instead of 2:05. I washed and ate and again went to the U.S.O. lounge to sleep until 7:00.

June 24, 1944 - Sat.

On being awakened I got a bite to eat and went again to gate No. 17. The fellow who sat with me was stationed somewhere nearby in Virginia and was from Lairdsville, or one of those small towns in lower Lycoming Co. He got off at Muncy. I don't remember anything outstanding about this part of the trip either, and must have arrived home nearly on time. Jane was at the station with some of our family, and Pete Gstalder got off also.

Jane stayed for supper and we spent the evening at home looking at the boxes of pictures. I drove her home in our car!

June 25, 1944 - Sun.

The household was all a bustle since I was leaving on the 10:00 Edwards bus. I had a big lunch, this time packed in several small boxes rather than a huge paper bag as before. The family (except Grandma, who never went, and Marion who'd gone to Lungers' at Towanda with Mark, who was home on furlough from Camp Gordon, GA, for the weekend) drove down. Grandpa and Grandma Strait were there too. On the bus was cousin Allie's daughter. We left a little late and I was worried about my close connections. At Muncy, Uncle Bill and

Aunt Margaret were down to the bus.

The trip was slow and the bus became more and more crowded. At Milton there was trouble fastening the baggage compartment door and between Northumberland and Sunbury we lost more time when a woman fainted. However, the Greyhound connection was waiting at Sunbury and I got the last seat on the local section. We went down the east side of the river, which was new to me on the highway.

The schedule was lenient enough to allow us to reach Harrisburg by 1:30, and I hurried for the 1:50 Washington train. They opened the gate shortly and I got a window seat in an ordinary coach. The day had been cool and cloudy all along. At York the Red Cross distributed cookies. I dozed off before we reached Baltimore and on awaking found the sun shining. We arrived in Washington on time and found all the limiteds made up and ready to leave for the West.

I think I sent a telegram home, got a bite to eat and quickly got myself to the gate for the 6:40 p.m. (A.C.L., The Palmetto). This location at this time especially on Sunday is synonymous with a mob, all bent on one thing – to get a seat on that train. When the gate opened, a seething torrent poured forth trying to get through the narrow aperture. At last I got to track level and saw everyone trying to get on an old train of wooden coaches.

A conductor advised us not to get on because the other section would be in on the left-hand track shortly. This time I was also lucky and got a window seat in an air-conditioned car, which was hot, however. The first section left on time and we, the regular, five minutes later. Soon we were 20 minutes or so late and continued to lose. At Richmond the extra section was across the platform and we left first. Originally I wanted to be on the section arriving in Fayetteville first, and I'd been advised not to get on the one which carries mail. This is the regular one. Ours was diesel-powered from Richmond and arrived in Fayetteville at 3:35, only 45 minutes late. This is considered very good for a Monday morning. The detraining throng hastened to the bus station and I got one which left about 4:00. This was the only lap of the entire journey when I stood. As we passed the station, we noticed the extra, steam-powered train just in. I arrived back, less than 40 minutes late.

Over July 4th weekend a larger number of passes were given out for three days. Lee had decided to go to PA but when he saw the northbound line extending to the Prince Charles Hotel, he decided to visit Marshall _____ in Jacksonville.

During the summer after the church activities on Saturday evening we often went to Alexanders' for watermelon and listening to the phonograph. On Sunday evenings any of the soldier group present would leave for the choir for the evening service in the chapel. One night after the service, Mrs. Alexander invited me, plus such friend as I should choose, to dinner the next Sunday noon. Lee and I went in after chapel and arrived on time at 1:00. In the p.m. we talked and then we two and the girls went on a drive up the Raleigh road to the airport. I did the driving. We returned for a bite and then went to the church.

Fort Bragg, NC
June 26, 1944
(postcard)

Dear Folks,

We are just leaving Washington 5 min. late. There are two sections, and I guess we're on the regular or second one. The other with wooden coaches went just a few minutes ahead of us. The bus to Sunbury didn't get much later, and there were 2 Washington buses there to change to. I had a seat there, and we got to H'bg about 1:25. The train left at 2:09, or about 20 min. late, but we arrived in Baltimore only 3 min. behind and Washington on time. There was a huge crowd at the gate, and quite a few when I got to it, about 5:20 after wiring. This is an A.C. but not "good" car and the aisle is full.

E.

Fort Bragg, NC
June 26, 1944

Dear Folks,

Here I am writing while listening to the *Firestone Hour*. I have just showered, etc. after not dressing for retreat, due to coming in late from some squad tests.

No doubt you'd like to hear the details of my trip. We left home about 10 minutes late, with one or two standing. I saw Aunt M. and Uncle Bill at Muncy. At Milton a large crowd got on, and the place where they put the baggage under the bus seems to have caused a little delay, by failing to close properly.

Between Northumberland and Sunbury a woman sitting near the front fainted, and we had to stop til she was revived. Once more, this demonstrated the ways of the buses; one man driving and guiding the bus, besides selling and collecting

tickets, and being baggage and first aid man.

There were two Washington buses at Sunbury, and I got in the second, getting about the last seat. It went down the P.R.R. side of the river, and I went through Milesburg, etc. for the first time by highway. I think the Edwards' schedule shows the leaving time of the bus at H'bg (1:30), because I asked the Greyhound driver and he said it was to get to H'bg at 1:15. Then they announced a 15 minute rest stop for three passengers there. I think we actually arrived at 1:20 or 1:25.

They opened the gates for the 1:48 shortly, and we poured on. It's made up there and carries three cars of several trains from the west. Our coach was non-air-conditioned, but it was cool enough that we didn't need the windows open. We didn't leave until 2:09 because one of its connections was late. We were about 3 minutes late to Baltimore at 4:13, and Washington about 5:00. I sent the telegram and got some I.C. and immediately went to the gates (2) to wait the weary (?) time.

When the gates opened a perfect avalanche poured down the two gates and immediately filled the ram-shackle first section. They made up the other and much better regular one right away. I got a seat in an AC car not too modern, but quite clean. We left 5 minutes late right after the advance one, but in Richmond we preceded it. At Rocky Mt. we got a diesel-electric engine like when (?) came down before. I was advised not to come on the section with the mail, but it was ours that had it. We were very crowded to Richmond, but below we lost Marines, soldiers, etc. steadily. We arrived at F'ville at 3:45, 45 minutes late. I went to the bus station and caught the second bus for the area, having to stand for the only part of my trip on that lap of it.

The bus left about 4:05 and as we passed the station, the other section (steam) was just in. I surely managed that right. I arrived here about 4:40, a little late but the Sat. passes were made out for 5:00 this a.m., and ours were for 4 only because they didn't know when the early reveille would be for sure (I guess). We got up at 5:15 and I lay down for the few minutes until then. I dozed in my off times today and now will hit the hay, on time at least, if not early.

Please send this to Auntie M, and renew the *Sun*; it runs out the 25th. Happy anniversary to you!

Love,
E.

Fort Bragg, NC
June 28, 1944

Dear Marion,

I am writing this at the movies, the third show I've paid to see all this time, plus once more as theater guard at Benning.

This will be short because the light is poor, since the house lights are on before the first show at 6:30.

Tomorrow we have to get up at 5:00 to take some physical fitness test, representing our battalion for these darn things sponsored by our Corps. El capitán wants us to be in bed by 9:00 and not to drink any beer (!), so we'll be in the top and pink of things. We still have to roll full field packs by bedtime, getting out of here at 8:00.

I've had another boil up farther into my armpit. Lt. Richards sent me to Hospital #2 for a consultation with a major this p.m., but he simply advised opening it as before. By the time I was back to the reg't dispensary it was ready to open and already oozing. He finished it up and put a dressing on it so everything's fine again.

I had Mother's letter of Monday today and am still waiting for one from you. I'll stop for now and add anything I happen to think of.

9:05 -Nothing more, must to bed.

Love,
Emory

July 21, 1944 - Fri.

Appointed Pfc. with 39 others in Company.

August 1, 1944 - Tues.

Lee left on furlough in the teeth of our share of a hurricane. He went to PA to see his friends there.

August 2, 1944 - Wed.

We started a three day RCT problem.

August 12, 1944 - Sat.

I was invited down to Clio for the weekend, it being the tail end of Lee's furlough. Since

rifle platoon tests were scheduled for Sunday, it was just good fortune that I didn't get K.P., Prisoner-police detail, or the like. I think I had the only overnight pass in the Company. I went to town on the bus and found the 4:00 local marked late. I sent a telegram to Mother telling them of my plans and waited for the train in the Salvation Army U.S.O. across Hay St. from the station, thereby avoiding the crowds for the 4:10 and 5:30.

The local finally arrived and we pulled out about 5:20. I was in a half-empty, air-conditioned coach. The ride was quite interesting and slow, two hours being the schedule to Dillon, 57 miles down the line. (Lee had come down on the Champion from Wilmington, Delaware the previous evening and changed in Fayetteville to the Palmetto, which stops at Dillon.) He met me and showed me the town. We went inside the Main St. Methodist Church where he played a little. The substitute organist begged him to play for the next morning's service.

We went around to pick up Mrs. at her and Rachel's apartment and until she returned from shopping, talked with the next door neighbor, the father of a colonel in the same division with Col. McNair. We drove the 19 miles to Clio, arriving at dusk. We had supper and Mary came over. The evening was spent at home and on the porch, and we retired about midnight.

August 14, 1944 - Sun.

I slept until 9 a.m. and we had breakfast, followed by a shower. We decided not to go to church, but just rest, since church was in a way our business. We heard the service of the First Methodist Church, Charlotte, over WBT. We had a fine dinner and just as we were going out on a jaunt Mrs. Graham, wife of the M.D. next door, came over. She is a native of Shamokin, PA. We talked for sometime. Then with me driving, we went out to Mc_____ to see the gifts of the silver wedding anniversary. There were then 104 salt and pepper shakers. Driving into the field, we picked up several watermelons since Rachel wanted some to take along on her vacation to the mountains. We went sightseeing, picked up Mary, and returned for supper. We had to hurry because I was to get the 9 p.m. bus at Bennettsville. After supper I gathered my stuff and we made the 7 miles in a short time. I said goodbye, bought my ticket and waited for the bus to leave. I stood up all the way to Fayetteville and we arrived about midnight. I went a block to the suburban bus station and was soon back to the barracks

in bed. While visiting, Lee gave me the recording of "Pomp and Circumstance," No. 1, one of my favorites, which he bought in Wilmington, DE.

Shortly after this it appeared we would be leaving soon and I'd always wanted some of the family to come down. After much correspondence back and forth home, and many phone calls to town, it was decided that they would come down on the same schedule as I used coming back from furlough, leaving home at 1:38 a.m. Fri., Aug. 25, and arriving Fayetteville at 4:10 p.m. I made arrangements for them to stay at Mrs. Williams', a member of the First Presbyterian for Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights and at the Guest House, No. 2, for three more. As luck would have it, I got a weekend pass. They were supposed to begin at 6 a.m., but the one from our platoon couldn't go until we returned from our platoon test in the afternoon.

August 25, 1944 - Fri.

At 4:15 p.m. we returned from the test and I hurried to get ready. On my way to the bus I stopped at the chapel to see if Chap. Lecrone might be going in. He said he would be shortly, but had to wait a little while. However, this would still be faster than the bus. (It was hard to get a suitable time for the family's visit since I wanted to have as many as possible of my friends in town and camp around, and not on vacation or furlough).

I called Mrs. Williams from the chapel to see if the folks had arrived yet and she said no, although it was about 5:00. Just then she said there was a little girl coming up the lawn; it was Beth whom Ditty and Mother had sent out to reconnoiter. In just a few minutes I'd talked to all three. Soon the chaplain left for town and let me out a block from the house, at Hay St. and Bragg Blvd. We talked a while and they gave me my birthday presents. Then we proceeded to the U.S. Grill for supper. Then I showed them the First Presbyterian and tried to find a place to stay. After contacting Mrs. Lee Reese, who'd arrived three weeks before, she recommended one of her friends. I went out to this house but no one was at home. So Ditty went into the next room at Mrs. W's and Mrs. W. let me sleep on the cot.

August 26, 1944 - Sat.

We arose late and went to the U.S. Grill for brunch and while eating, Virginia came in. I made the introductions and then she joined us. Afterwards we went over to her office and

talked. The rest of the p.m. was spent in taking a city bus ride and calling on Lecrones; also visiting the Episcopal church. Then we went back for the supper and activities at the First Presbyterian. The folks met a lot of people and afterwards Mary Van Storey invited some of us up to her house. We stayed until late as usual and then went back to Mrs. W's where I had her daughter's room since she was away.

August 27, 1944 - Sun.

We had decided to go out to the chapel for the service, but at the time we'd intended to get up it was pouring, so they called it off. When it was really too late to start we got up and dashed down to the R.R. Station where we got a Pope field bus, since it went to the main control station anyway. It took forever to get our passes and we missed the next division area bus. We took one for the Main Post and transferred to one of the locals running from M.P. to D.A. Of course we were too late for church, so we walked around and I explained the layout. When we thought it would soon be letting out we returned to the chapel and they saw it all and met Chap. Tyler. Then Lee joined us and we walked up to the farthest bus stop where we waited about an hour until we got a Fayetteville bus. There had been a change in the routing and the buses just went up and down Butner Rd. We all had seats and rode clear to the bus station and went to the U.S. Grill again. Afterwards we spent some time on the First Presbyterian grounds and the folks went up to get dressed and see and I met them at the hymn sing at 5 p.m. in the Anderson St. YM-U.S.O. We were surprised to see Mrs. Reese and Lee (son) with several more from our platoon. That was a real circle to introduce. Foster was with us – I think he joined the party there. Following that we went back to the church for the Sunday program. I sang in the choir for the evening service. Then we went to a drug store for a snack, Lee and Foster accompanying. (All this time the Alexanders were not home, vacationing as usual at Prospect Hill Farm, Spotsylvania Co., VA. These were really the only folks gone at this time).

We returned to Mrs. W's for a while and we three returned to the post quite late.

August 28, 1944 - Mon.

The family came out to the guest house and I joined them for supper at the service club. Because of a queer Fourth Service Command order, I was forced to get a technically-worded

permit from the orderly room stating that I was allowed to eat there on such-and-such a date because of visitors. We spent the evening talking and Mrs. Reese and Lee, Jr. visited a while.

August 29, 1944 - Tues.

I ate with the folks again and we went to the chapel where Lee played for us and we talked further.

August 30, 1944 - Wed.

Again I joined them for dinner and about 8:00 we went to choir practice. We sang almost everything we ever used. Although these evenings hadn't much planned activity they were very full and we visited a lot.

August 31, 1944

Family returned to town about noon. Lee and I went in to join them for supper. They spent the p.m. shopping. Because everyone was taking boxes to town to mail, it took quite a while to get on a bus. We went to the church where Mother took some pictures, which didn't come out, and suppered at U.S. Grill. At the next table were Bill and Bessie West, Virginia and one or two others. We went back to the church after supper to pick up our things and talked to Virginia some more, since choir practice was just over.

We tried to contact Dr. Alexander by phone, who had preceded the rest of the family in returning from VA; I was very anxious for the folks to see him, but no answer.

Now we proceeded to the station at about 9:45 or 10 since I thought the crowd would be bad – Thursday night's 11:55 had a good many three day pass boys. Lee, Beth and I went up to Mrs. W's for the rest of the luggage which was stored. Soon after returning, we decided to get into the line which was already forming. The first section arrived almost on time and was steam-powered with old coaches. Trainmen said the regular section was right behind them at Florence. As many as could jammed that section, but we decided to wait. The diesel section came about 11:20. Before its arrival there were several false alarms caused by the passing of two northbound East Coast Champions, a freight or two, and the southbound West Coast Champion which stops. The folks got on as well as possible and got seats; Mother and Beth three in a seat with an air corps boy going home from Charleston, and Ditty

across the aisle. It left about 45 minutes late to arrive in Washington on time, while the extra section which preceded them never reached Washington until 11:00, as reported by one of our sergeants who was on it. Lee and I got the 1:05 bus which goes through Pope Field before reaching our area.

September 1, 1944 - Fri.

Family spent the day sightseeing in Washington and went to Mt. Vernon. They went home on No. 525 leaving Washington at 8:05 and arriving at 1:37 Saturday a.m.

September 3, 1944 - Sun.

Sistares were up for church and I ate dinner with them at Service Club No. 1, and then hurried away for supper at Mrs. Reese's. After this I again hurried to get to the First Presbyterian where our choir was singing for the evening service followed by a gathering at Van Storey's. This was another very full day.

September 10, 1944 - Sun.

Lee asked me to go home with him after church on the 3:14 bus. We picked up Foster. Just as a chance we decided to try the railroad to see if the often-late 11:03 Havana Special had gone yet. Originally we'd planned to eat somewhere before taking the bus. A train was in the station then, but it was just a mail and express local. However, on the bulletin board was posted "2-75," due about 1:50. It was then a little after 1:30. The colored fireman assured me that his was not the train we were awaiting, but that it was right behind them. After we bought our tickets we went over to the S.A-U.S.O. for a bite to eat. Our train arrived about 2:10 and was composed almost entirely of duty Pennsy coaches. Since it wasn't really scheduled, there were no MP's on duty, and that greatly simplified the problem of getting Foster on the train with only a Fayetteville pass. Although it wasn't necessary, we sat three in a seat in order to converse.

We arrived in Dillon about 3:15 and walked over near the high school where all Clion-bound traffic would pass and tried to get a ride. It began to sprinkle so we sent raincoat-less Foster under a tree while we used our thumbs. In a little while two men in a pickup truck stopped and we climbed into the back. Except for a brief stop when the fan belt broke, we

made good time and soon landed at Sistares'. I decided to call home for the only time at Bragg since it would be so convenient if I had to wait. The call went through in ten minutes or so. Afterwards we went over to the Methodist Church and picked up Mary for supper. After the evening was well gone we had to hurry to get back to Dillon for the 10:35. It's good it was a little late or we might have missed it. We had the regular section, diesel-powered and sat three in a seat in a nice air-conditioned car. There were a good number of our outfit on the train which arrived in Fayetteville on time about 11:50. We hurried down to the bus station and after some delay got back to the post and to bed.

September 16, 1944 - Sat.

I got off regiment guard shortly before 5 p.m. and returned to barracks to get ready to go to town as usual with Lee. I was all undressed when the first sergeant came in and said that I with four others had been recommended for three day passes and I should see if any of them were around the Company area. I found two others and told them. Meanwhile, Lee came in and helped me to get ready. I knew I couldn't get a thing before the 11:55 and so I took my time. We three made arrangements to meet at the station later in the evening. Lee and I got to town at 7:45 and he went on to meet his organ pupil at the First Presbyterian, meanwhile picking up the choir's Easter pictures and sending telegrams to Auntie M. and home for me. Both sections of the 5:30 had picked up so few that I thought it best not to leave the section. Luckily I had some apples and two boxes of brownies fresh from home in the food line with me.

While I was in the ticket line I saw Sam (Thaddeus Samorajski) and Bob Kramer in the other one and said I'd go out to get a place in the train line. This proved futile since the MP's weren't organizing things this early and a mob was near the head of the line. The other two came out and I suggested going down to Hope Mills, the next town down the line, for the train. The girl at the ticket window said it stopped there. We asked a policeman to make sure where the local bus stopped and were soon at that corner of Market Square. The next bus left at 8:40 so I hustled to a drug store to call Lee. He hurried down with the pictures which I was to take along, and his pupil. We got off the bus after a rough ride and received instructions about the location of the station. To our surprise on arriving there, we found about 30 already in line.

We bought one-way tickets back to Fayetteville and set down our luggage to reserve our place in line. The agent said the train was 10 minutes late and there were two sections, the first being the regular diesel one. By the time the train finally arrived at 12:30 there must have been 200 there. Taxi drivers, catching on and advertising, had charged passengers \$1 a piece. We paid 20 cents on the bus. Meanwhile, we visited a store across the tracks for cakes, soft drinks, etc. I think the agent said the most tickets he ever sold in one day before was 15 or 20, during the holiday rush. Due to some chiseling, the line wasn't exactly chronological.

When the train came we slowly piled on. There were no seats left so we sat on our bags in the aisle. The coach was very nice, though, and cool. They say not everyone got on the first section at Hope Mills. At Fayetteville I never saw such a crowd and few got on there. Later we heard that by the time three sections came through everyone got on by hook or crook. We were about an hour late. I dozed and slept all the way to Richmond, but remember hearing almost every stop called.

Sam had got a seat at Fayetteville and here at Richmond, Kramer and I along with T/Sgt. McD. sat three in a newly-captured seat. We ate apples and brownies for breakfast.

September 17, 1944 - Sun.

We arrived in Washington 45 minutes late at 9:15. I hurriedly called the Greyhound terminal to find when the next bus left for up our way and they said 10:30. I obtained directions for the terminal and soon arrived by city bus.

I bought a one-way ticket to Harrisburg (my railroad ticket was round trip from Fayetteville to Harrisburg). The bus loaded servicemen first and left about 10:45. We rolled along slowly but surely and at York we had to get a second section borrowed from a local company. Halfway between York and Harrisburg the air hose to the brakes broke and we almost got out of control. We sat there about an hour and I could see my Edwards' connection leaving Sunbury without me. The second section was going to report us in Harrisburg and a state policeman at the next phone back.

Soon a man drove up and stopped and volunteered to take several to Harrisburg. I, for one, gladly accepted. He took one girl right to the gate at New Cumberland Reception Center who was visiting her husband. I got off at the Lemoyne end of Market St. bridge and walked upstream to the far side of the Walnut St. one. Here a soldier on furlough from Camp

Stewart, GA picked me up and left me off at Duncannon. In not more than five minutes, two girls stopped who were bound part way up the river. Soon we picked up two sailors, V-12 boys on their way back to Bloomsburg from Baltimore. The girls decided to take us all the way to the traffic circle at Sunbury. We thanked them on getting out and said goodbye to the boys and walked around the circle to where I'd catch the Williamsport traffic. Almost immediately, a woman in a coupe stopped and asked where I was going. I replied, "Williamsport," and she said, "Get in, so am I." She took me to Market Square where the 6:45 buses were waiting. This was one ahead of the one I could have got coming on the 6:55 bus – if it were on time. Just as I was dashing across the square for the bus, someone called, "Yoo-hoo, Emory!" I looked, and it was Louise Stryker, on her way to church. She took me right to the door, and invited me to a surprise choir party for Flora McKean that evening.

When I got in the house, I found that Mother was down at the bus station. It seems to me that only Marion, Beth and Grandma were home. After I'd eaten a little and talked a lot to Marion, Mother and I went to McKeans. It surely was a swell chance to see a lot of church folks. We returned home quite late.

September 18, 1944 - Mon.

I arose and went down to Dr. Wurster's for x-ray on a boil and Dr. Hoffman looked at it. We got steak for dinner at Smithgall & Gings and when I got home I called up Witmans. Ed, who was home on furlough, dropped in and then took us to the station for the 2:48. Grandpa and Grandma were there. I got a seat in the Washington reclining slat coach and we were on time all the way. At Sunbury Mrs. Witman came down to see me. In Washington I got a bite, checked my stuff at the U.S.O. and took a walk around the Capitol. Then I read a little in the United Nations Service Center. On returning to the station I went to the lounge to sleep until 1:30 I think.

September 19, 1944 - Tues.

Already, part of the multitude that hoped to find seats on the 2:50 was beginning to gather. When the gate finally opened, we rushed down to find ourselves in a dirty, wooden coach; and although there were no signs of any other train, it turned out we were on the slower section of the Havana Special, all coaches. At Richmond, where I got off to get a little food,

we arrived a half hour late; and by leaving time this had increased to an hour. At Rocky Mount we waited for a lunch stop. It was 1:00 when we reached Fayetteville two hours late – we waited above the station while the 1:00, Advana Havana Special loaded.

I had to be back by noon that day since a dental appointment was scheduled for 3 p.m. The others didn't have to be back until midnight, which amounted to the next morning. The division also went into O.D.s that day. I went down to the bus station, stopping at Western Union on the way to let them know of my safe arrival and to request my dog tags, which I left hanging on the balcony Sunday night. There was no bus for quite a while and it must have been after two when I got to the area.

At the orderly room I explained about the train being late and they said my appointment was canceled. I asked why I had to return early if they were so easy to cancel. I went up to the dental clinic and was taken care of, having two teeth filled before supper. That was the last day I was to Fayetteville.

September 23, 1944, Sat.

We were kept occupied right up to suppertime and there were no passes. Lee told me that their company was over strength and he probably would be transferred to a new artillery outfit on the post, with the same job. I surely hated to see him go – or rather, us go without him, but I'm very glad he had the chance to keep up his music and stay out of this mess. We went to the 8:00 show at No. 4.

September 24, 1944, Sun.

We had to get permission to go to church almost. Lee's folks were up and they wanted Foster and me to eat dinner with them at the service club, but because of formation we were unable to. There was a second service in the late afternoon which was held in the choir loft. After it was officially over the choir sang some more, and that was our last get-together. Afterwards the thwarted dinner group had a picnic supper in the boiler room. This was kind of a climax to the lunches or snacks Lee and I had every night at the chapel with canned goods (done at the Dillon project which Rachel supervised) – applesauce and tomato juice plus something else from home on the PX. Sisters left about 8:30 and Lee sent a lot of stuff home with them. As he said, it was easier to send it home and bring it back than to try to

carry it from place to place with GI equipment until he was permanently fixed.

September 1944 – Camp Kilmer

September 25, 1944, Mon.

Lee and I had the last of the cans on the steps of our barracks, where I was on guard. That was the last I saw him up to now. Left about 6 p.m. using Cape Fear to Jct., Aberdeen & Rockfish to Aberdeen, southbound to Richmond – arrived about 6 a.m.

September 26, 1944 - Tues.

RF&P to Potomac Yd. (on this stretch my boil was opened), PRR to Mt. Joyce (Camp Kilmer).

During the next several days we were processed.

September 29, 1944 - Fri.

At 6 p.m. I got a pass, given out a little early, and took a bus to town. There I got the clocker which left NY at 6 p.m. and arrived Broad St. about 7:45. There I called Mother, Auntie M. and Jane, and they (Mother, Jane and Grandma) left for Auntie M.'s the next morning on the Susquehannock. I occupied myself for the evening and returned at 11:50 p.m. getting a bus immediately at the station.

Fri. Morn.
Sept. 29, 1944
Somewhere on the East Coast

Dear Auntie M,

Well, here we are and the [stationery] heading [“United States Army”] is as definite as I can tell you. I heard from rumor that our change of address cards were sent sometime ago and yesterday I got my first letter from Mother to the new address saying that my card arrived there Mon.

I wrote home Wed. and last evenings but have been so pressed for time that this is the first I've written except home. Also, the mail will take somewhat longer en route due to censoring.

Just now we are enveloped in a series of processing

acts, which, when completed, should allow us some free time. Therefore, I expect to drop in on you at anytime, but if we should be alerted, I couldn't let you know I'm not coming. I've told the family this, thinking that maybe Mother would go down to your place, but also stressed the indefiniteness of it and ended by saying that maybe their visit plus my last pass wouldn't warrant another trip; also that anything they decided would be OK by me, but I thought they should know.

Mother talked to Mr. Wilson right after she got the card and I received a letter from him with the c/o P.M. Also, I was pleased with four others with the old address.

I think now that I'll send a note to you at school because I doubt if either of these will arrive before Monday.

We are enjoying some beautiful weather by spells, which is very helpful. All of us are fine, but for the present busy. Yesterday I was on K.P., but even that ends sometime.

More later,

Love,

E.

P.S. - Maybe you should leave some arrangement so I could find you if you're not at home.

Oct. 1, 1944 - Sun. World Wide Communion

I attended Chap. Tyler's service in the mess hall. By finagling and trading I managed a noon to midnight pass - the best type for my schedule. I got the noon "clocker" and changed in N. Philadelphia to the 1:30 p.m. out of Broad St. and arrived in A.C. at 3:15 or so. Taking the trolley down I found they were at the Pat-Cla tea room. I went down and had dinner. Then we went to Longport and back and then gathered up our stuff and went back to the station. Jane and I both had to go back on the 6:35. At the station were two of our battalion medics with the parents of one. The one had gone to Auntie M.'s school and he recognized her. We left on time and got to Broad St. a little late about 8:15. The gates were already open for the 8:30, No. 581 and I rode with Jane to 30th St. Returning to Broad St., I got the 9:05 and arrived back OK.

Summary:

During this time I met fellows from all over the country and lost much of my

misunderstanding of sections and regions. The army transported me roughly 2200 miles in nine states: PA, MD, VA, NC, SC, GA, DE, NJ, NY, and D.C., besides being in sight of Alabama.

My total travel was 7,600 miles, as close as I can figure without maps or timetables, from the date of induction for the remaining time in the U.S. This does not include bus travel to and from camps or intra-city riding.

I used five railroads new to me: RF&P, Seaboard, Central of Georgia, ACL and Aberdeen & Rockfish.

En route to Europe, October 1944

Location unknown (APO 447, New York, NY)
October 2, 1944

Dear Folks,

Well, everything went fine and according to schedule, and I arrived back in plenty of time. This evening I've been over to the service club library, and had a really good time.

I don't know anything about my further plans, but remember if we have to move on I can't let you know.

Today wasn't very hard on us, but I do want to get to bed on time. I did get my haircut tonight, and what a hurry up job they do! Snip, snap, bang, next! But I do still look like myself.

Well, all of you have a good time, and stay as long as you can. I want to finish Lee's letter and then sign off.

Everything's fine.

Love,
E.

Location unknown (APO 447, New York, NY)
October 3, 1944

Dear Grandma,

Well, I have been around all day and I feel the situation in this respect will be unchanged.

Tonight after supper I cleaned myself and washed some clothes. During the day I got four letters off other than to the family, and just now hope to do this one, plus one to Belltown, and then have an hour to read before lights out.

Mother's letter of Friday just arrived this evening, and we all feel that it's (the mail) being held up in NY.

One of the boys bought "The Robe" in New York, and I've read twenty pages by now. I want to read some of that if it's available now.

More later,

Love,
E.

Location unknown (APO 447, New York, NY)
October 3, 1944

Dear Marion and all,

Well, I'd like to get a line from you, but since Mother's letter of Friday came only today, anything written after that probably wouldn't be here yet.

Everything is fine here but I've stuck around here pretty close this week. Today was fairly easy, and I've written six letters bring me up to date.

Now I expect to read for an hour before lights out for once, and enjoy *The Robe*, which I've borrowed from a fellow who bought it in NY.

Of course you know news is scarce, but I'll drop a line every day. See if you can do the same. I surely had a good time the occasions I've been out.

Love,
E.

Location unknown (APO 447, New York, NY)
October 4, 1944

Dear Folks,

Today has been quite normal in all respects and, of course, news is scarce. I have received no *Suns* or magazines yet.

The mail is not in yet for today, so I have nothing to report along that line.

I don't know if I stressed it enough before or not, but when the time comes that you do not hear from me for an extended period you will know the reason.

Once again I must ask you not to worry, but write as usual, and I'll do the same. Then they'll arrive all at once sometime.

We have a million and one things to do and I want to meet the deadline on the mail, so this is all.

Love to all,

E.

Location unknown (APO 447, New York, NY)
October 4, 1944

Dear Beth and all,

Well, I maintain my daily letter to you, even if there is very little to write.

I hope everything is going fine at school. One of you girls ought to let me know how WHS made out the last two Saturdays. I haven't seen a *Sun* for a long time. I remember we came out on top against Hazle Township the day before I was home on pass, but since then nothing has filtered through.

I have lots to do and should get this in the mail box shortly. Enclosed is a poem from *Yank* which I want you to keep and then show to Mother when she gets home.

Don't work too hard on your lessons.

Love to all,
Brother

Poem included in above letter, written by Pfc. Edward Blumenthal, Fort Knox, KY:

The Reconversion

When bugles sound their final notes
And bombs explode no more
And we return to what we did
Before we went to war,
The sudden shift of status
On the ladder of success
Will make some worthy gentlemen
Feel like an awful mess.

Just think of some poor captain
Minus all his silver bars
Standing up behind some counter
Selling peanuts and cigars;
And think of all the majors
With their oak leaf's [sic] far behind
And the uniform they're wearing
Is the Western Union kind.

Shed a tear for some poor colonel
If he doesn't feel himself;
Jerking sodas isn't easy
When your eagle's on the shelf.

'Tis a bitter pill to swallow,
'Tis a matter for despair;
Being messengers and clerks again's
A mighty cross to bear.

So be kind to working people
That you meet where'er you go,
For the guy who's washing dishes
May have been your old CO.

On the General William H. Gordon, October 1944 – End of American Installment

[Written in retrospect, 21 May 1945, Ludwigsburg, Germany]

Dear Folks,

Well, tonight I am going to write on both sides of the paper. For some time there has been an objection to doing it by some of the officers who censor mail, although some didn't mind. When we were at Kilmer and getting all the regulations spread out before us they said the only thing wrong was the danger of having something "cut-able" on one side and the other disappearing also. After we got accustomed to the proper things to write the officer, who was our platoon leader at the time, thought it was a good way to save paper and advocated our double use of the paper, but when this lieutenant left the censor for us changed also. How these so-called standardized rules can change so much and vary with the individual is beyond me. We always thought the controlling policy came from away on up.

I think I'll give you a general idea of where we've been so far. Each little place means something to me but you'd never be able to find some of them on the map. Your guess about the day we left (after my beating around the bush) was right. We got on our ship about midnight Thursday, October 5, 1944 at Staten Island part of New York Harbor. We went by train from Kilmer to Jersey City and took a ferry to S.I. There was a band at the dock and Red Cross women; boy! were we laden down! Our ship was a navy transport (which is manned by Navy or Coast Guard – the latter in our case) as contrasted to one run by the Army and manned by Merchant Marine.

The ship was the SS Gen. William H. Gordon, built by the Federal Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Co. in Kearny, NJ in 1944. The lifeboat equipment was dated April. Bringing us

over was only the second trip for the Gordon. It had gone to Le Havre before, getting back to NJ just ahead of that hurricane the middle of September.

They kept us below deck until we had sailed, about 11 am October 6, and because it was foggy we couldn't see any of the famous skyline. We had beautiful weather until the following Wednesday, when we experienced a storm for two days which reached 60 mph at times. I didn't get sick at all but was drenched by spray on deck. It was most interesting to me.

"Somewhere at sea"

(On General William H. Gordon en route NY to Marseilles)
Approximately October 15, 1944

Dear Mother,

I am writing this to you separately to explain some of the things I never got around to.

I've written 23 letters including this one in little more than a week and all have been V-mail up to now. This will test the comparative speed of air mail and V-mail. It all depends upon your location, of course, and probably no two letters will be the same, but someone told me that air mail is faster to the States and V-mail is faster from.

I suggest you try mailing two at the same time and trying it out in this direction.

At wherever-it-was-we-were I bought two sets of V-mail, one of sixteen sheets and the other of sixty. With the several sheets they've passed out through the company, I'm fairly well fixed. Also, I have a combination of several styles of regular stationery left, and I bought twenty 6-cent air mail stamped envelopes.

Remember if you have occasion to use air mail, the old 6-cent rate applies to any APO c/o Postmaster.

This morning I was to an Episcopalian Communion service with Chap. Tyler officiating. Our ritual follows the Book of Common Prayer very closely. I also went to the general service following, which Chap. Lecrone happened to have. They all take turns for the daily service.

Since I sent my address book home, I miss or forget some of the people in it. Please send me those of Lola Preston's mother, Louise Goldy's sister that was in M's class, also the little Stanzone girl. I hear from them so little that I've forgotten.

We are all fine.

Love,

E.

"Somewhere on the ocean"

Received by parents November 2, 1944

Dear Folks,

Well, I guess this is the first one of these I've ever written in this direction—in fact, I never wrote any before except to George Sharrow. I think you'll find V-mail the best way, usually.

This trip has proved quite interesting, and I'm storing a wealth of detail in my mind (already overcrowded?) for telling you when the proper day arrives. Today is the roughest it's been, and some of the boys don't feel as good, but thus far I'm fine.

All the letters we write on the trip will be censored as they are turned in, and then be mailed immediately when we get where we're going—which has already been announced to us. That will be proof of our safe arrival.

On the way I've been reading *The Robe*, and by now have only about a hundred more pages. I've surely liked it, and am making up for the winter we had it at home and I was too busy to read. It belongs to one of the boys who bought it in NY.

We had mail on the ship here twice and I heard from Mrs. Sears, Jane, Lee, and two of yours, one where you describe your trip to the Inlet, and the other about G'pa Strait's condition. We are all fine and happy. We get just two meals a day and they're very good. I'll write as much as possible.

Love,
E.

"Somewhere on shipboard"

Received by sister Beth November 2, 1944

Dear Beth,

This is the tenth letter I've written since the urge struck me, and when I get one off to Mrs. Sears I will be entirely caught up. All this mail I'm doing en route will suddenly descend upon all of you one of these days.

Last evening some of us were discussing our ancestors (their relative ages, etc.) and I remembered the time I tried to go way back before. I wish you would have Mother, Ditty, and Grandma Smith see what they could do about sending me my family tree as well as they can remember it. Also have them add their birthplaces and dates of birth. I don't know why this sudden urge has found me, but it would still be nice to have as complete a record as possible. I don't know when any of our people first came over or who

they were.

I hope your school work is coming along as usual and you are caught up from when you were sick.

Love to all,
E.

"Somewhere at sea"

Received by sister Marion November 6, 1944

Dear Marion,

Remembering your statements about some purchases you'd made when I was home on pass the last time, and observing my small private stock of chewing gum getting smaller day by day, I wish you would do a little bustling around and send me a box of BeechNut, preferably. Any of the standard kinds are very acceptable though. This letter will do for the proper authority and certificate, both for the dealer and the U.S. mail.

I don't know how supplies of knick-knacks will be where we're going, but according to magazine articles, things are taken care of pretty well. However, being in the army for the short (comparatively) time that I have, I know that things get well screwed up often, between Washington and the front, or even when you are participating in the Battle of New Cumberland, Benning or anywhere else. If you get a good chance any of the recommended things will be fine.

I've already written to Mr. & Mrs., Beth and Ditty in that order. G'ma will be next. We are all fine. "Having a fine time; wish you were here!"

Love,
E.

October 1944 – France

Tuesday, October, 17

We sighted land about the middle of the afternoon. The day after we sailed they said we were going to southern France; mostly we had thought of going to England first. This land proved to be Africa and about eight that night just at dusk we passed the Rock of Gibraltar. It seemed so strange to me to be seeing Africa. I imagined we saw a part of Spain also. On both sides there were mountain ranges paralleling the coast – the Atlas off the starboard bow (right side). The next day was Gpa and Gma's anniversary and I wrote home about the momentous occasions around that time. The Mediterranean was so calm—the ship didn't move a bit. However, we had a storm on Wed. or Thurs. and it was a little rougher.

Most of the time was very warm coming over but Friday, the day we docked, turned cool and windy and it's been like that ever since – that is until spring this year. We were down on the very bottom, three decks below “deck” as you know it. Our bunks were four tier and I was on the top one of these. The sailors had drill for anti-aircraft, etc. all the time and we had several lifeboat drills. By that time the submarine problem was well in hand and there wasn't much danger. I really enjoyed the trip.

Friday, October 20

About 3 or 4 in the afternoon, we came into the harbor at Marseilles. At the time we also thought it could be Toulon, where the French fleet was scuttled. It was beautiful, with rock formations and mountains along the coast. We really thought we were close to the war then.

Of course it took several hours to get the ship docked and us off. The harbor was really beaten up (the southern France invasion then only two months past) and we reached the dock over a sunken ship.

We then started a long hike up to a staging area about five or six miles back on the plateau near Septemes. It was a tough stop and go trip after two weeks on the ship. And how much junk! The first thing was an air raid alert and they shot some ack-ack up but it probably was ours or else Jerry reconnaissance. We finally got where we were going by midnight and they let us build fires. We didn't pitch tents but lay down right in the field. The next day was drizzling and I didn't think much of Europe! (I still don't!!!) There was lots of mud and they were decent enough to let us wear our shoe-pac-boots with rubber feet and leather tops. It was during this period we got our equipment and stuff.

“Somewhere in France”

Staging area at Septemes, between Marseilles and Aix-en-Provence

October 23, 1944

Dear Folks,

Well, I guess you see where we are. We knew about it on the way over, although no details were given. Since it is no longer a secret, the place I got the train when I came to see you and also went to Philadelphia was New Brunswick. Auntie M used to go to school there, you remember.

We are all fine, in general, and I am personally, too. Any stories of French rain and mud that came out of the last war weren't exaggerated though. However, it hasn't all been rain for us.

I will now give a few things I'd like to have: the scarf I sent home with you from F'ville, some more malted milk tablets, some Kleenex to make up for our small issue of handkerchiefs. Also have Ditty get another bottle of those things she got through Hopkins' and send it. I haven't used any of these yet. Anything concentrated is good. Just now before supper I can think of a million and one things I'd like. Raisins and dried fruit are recommended for good traveling. Our first mail came this noon but there was none for me. Another mail call later this eve. Of course I had some on the ship. I'll write as much as possible. This is my first chance.

Love,
E.

Septemes Staging Area
October 24, 1944

Dear Marion,

I'm writing this as one of those test letters, and imagine it will get there last. Enclosed is the church folder that G'ma gave me the Sunday I went to see them. Mother said that Tom Trout is collecting these folders, so I wish you'd take it to church or the bank and give it to him. I wanted to send it before, but they wouldn't pass it because it might reflect on our location.

Since it's raining I've caught up on my writing. So far today: Auntie M, Jane, Lee, Rachel Sistare, Ditty and you.

We've just had one mail call so far and I didn't get anything, but probably mine is in a different batch.

Love,
E.

From Septemes Staging Area (was going to Aix on pass)
October 24, 1944

Dear Beth,

I'm writing in pencil, like I did to Marion, because I want to save ink. It's better for v-mail where it has to be photographed. This is the last one of three test letters.

I had \$5 changed into francs. We speak of a franc as being worth 2 cents. Actually it is 2.0175 cents so I got 248 francs. It appears to be liberation money rather than the regular kind. The 100 franc notes are the same size as

our bills and the 10 and 2 franc notes are the same width, but half as long.

Ask Mother to type out all the addresses in my address book, except the ones she's sure I know and the ones of fellows with me here, which are mostly in ink. Send other military addresses complete, and then I'll cut out parts I know so a stranger couldn't use it against me. On other people's leave the city and state off.

I'm now going on pass (noon) and may have more to write in another letter when I get back.

If you need requests for me to get the *Sun*, *Grit*, *C&W*, and *Christian Advocate*, let this be it, because I want them. Also send me some real thin air mail stationery if you can find it.

Will get ready to go now.

Love,
E.

Septemes Staging Area
October 26, 1944

Dear Folks,

I am just ready to start for a town around here, and may not finish this before I start. I am waiting for one of my companions to get ready. It threatens rain, but it's looked that way all day.

We've had all our money changed into francs now, by order of someone. We can use French money for everything including postage, money orders, etc.

The boy I'm going with was there before and so he knows the things to do. No doubt we'll bum a ride from a GI truck or someone, although there is a tramway which is free to soldiers.

Once again, I'll have a chance to use a little French. The mail isn't in for today, yet so I have nothing to report along that line. News is scarce, but no doubt I'll have more to say when I get back.

It's warmer today and the wind is gone, too. You know how hard that is on me.

More later,

Love,
E.

"Somewhere in Southern France"
(On pass to Aix-en-Provence)
October 27, 1944

Dear Marion and all,

I am sending a regular letter this time because I want to enclose this little bit of French money. When I was in town last night I got some real pre-war money printed on paper like our currency is, except it is larger. I'll try to send some of that later. There is one each for you and Beth. Each one is two francs, worth slightly over four cents a piece.

I mailed the letter yesterday on my way to get my pass, and finally we did get started. We stood in the tram station deciding to get it or a truck ride—whichever came first.

The tram did arrive first and was very typical. I'd say it was twenty or thirty years old and was an inter-urban trolley with a trailer. It ground along until we arrived.

First we had three scoops of ice cream the size of a large marble for ten francs. Then a small candied apple for five, a kilogram of pears for fifteen, a sandwich made to order of thick bread with meat and onion filling for ten. One of the others bought some grapes. We also have post cards (which I'll send when censorship permits) and sulfur matches.

It was quite a good sized place and quite what we expected. We asked one man to help us find a bread shop or baker and after he trotted us several blocks to no avail (closed) I offered him the pack of four cigarettes which comes in rations. Here cigarettes are worth their weight in gold, especially American, and I was surprised when he said, "No, thank you, I don't smoke" in French. They'll ask you for them, and the kids ask for chewing gum.

We got a GI truck ride back and then went to bed. Oh yes, they have four theaters, I think, and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was playing at one.

Today is cold, clear and windy but I managed to wash myself for a change and at one time or another had all my clothes off. The wind is hard on my eyes and face just as when I was little.

Well, this is a good chance to answer Lee and Mrs. Reese. Mail very small yesterday and nothing for me. Not in yet today. Send more socks. Need camphorated ice.

Love to all,
E.

Oct. 29 - Nov. 1, 1944

Late in the afternoon, Sunday October 29, we got on 40 and 8 freight cars (only 27 to a car) and went back to Marseilles and started west along the coast to the Rhone estuary and eased

north up the Rhone River through Avignon, Lyon and Dijon to Epinal. We tried to sleep on top of duffel bags; next night we put them all in one end and slept in little "squares" on the floor. The regularity of the stopping schedule didn't exist. When the train would start, those outside would grab cooking C-rations and pass them in.

During the next (last in October) week I went back to Marseilles as part of the supervising detail for French stevedores. No doubt the story is clearer if you refer to the letters I wrote at that time. I was on one pass at this time going to Aix-en-Provence, back away from the coast. We went on the tram and got a ride back.

We got off the train at a nearby town of Thaon (where the replacement depot was when I came back from the hospital). From there we trucked to a rear assembly area and stopped from Wed., November 1 to Sunday afternoon, November 5 when we took our place on line. That was just exactly a month after we got on the ship.

"Somewhere in France"
Septemes Staging Area
October 30, 1944

Dear Marion,

Well yesterday I was surely pleased to get two letters, my total now is four. The two latest were one from Tillie Alexander mailed Oct. ? and Mother's of Oct. 8 from Atlantic City. There must be one or so between that one and the last I got on the boat just after we left, which was written the previous Tues. I think. There are some references made to things which I don't recall in any I received before.

I was much interested to hear about all the activities in A.C. and trust that those of you who were there to see me have gone home long since. I still am looking forward to a letter from the family postmarked Billtown.

Yesterday I was to church (I led the hastily formed choir) and seven of us including two who didn't sing in the choir before got together to sing a special number and lead the hymns. We sang "O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee" as the anthem and then did three or four hymns alone during the serving of communion. Finally we closed with the three-fold Amen. Chap. L's first cousin was there. She is a nurse and he accidentally found her. Col. Fooks commented on his enjoyment of the music to us.

Love,
E.

"Somewhere in Southern France"
(From rear area near Rambervillers, near Epinal)
November 4, 1944

Dear Folks,

Well, it is just eight in the a.m. and I'm writing this while waiting to eat breakfast. This morning was the first we could mail letters for several days, and I had five from the beginning of the week, not having written for the last several days.

The five were to Marion, G'ma, Mrs. Reese, and one to each of the Alexander girls.

We had a day or so of rain, but yesterday was fine enough to enable us to get dried out.

We've had no more mail since I last wrote, but I feel that once it gets started this time, things will come in quite regularly. It makes us laugh to think of the way mail used to reach us—the second day for me from home and the next day if it caught the p.m. mail.

This morning at breakfast (which is now over—I've been interrupted continually) we were issued matches, cigarettes, a stick of gum, and a small chocolate bar; they also did this last week.

I've seen several boxes of canned rations made by Chef-Boy-ar-dee, Milton, PA. Quite something way over here.

We can say now that we visited Marseilles recently. However, I visited a smaller town also. Someone said we could send the picture post cards we bought but I'll have to check.

Mother: I changed my allotment to \$40 a month last week. I understand that my former \$35 one will not take effect this payroll (Nov. 1) although I remember making mine out among the first. So the first time or so it does come through, it may be the smaller amount. After that add the five extra to wherever the residue is going as per my letter from the ship. Meanwhile, I'll send the amount by money order.

Sometimes I've written V-mail with pencil if I've run out of ink. Let me know how it shows up. Today I did refill my pen though. Wonder who WHS is playing today and how we're making out.

Love to all,
E.

P.S. - Finished this at 1:30
How about some cookies or donuts?

[Written in retrospect, 23 May 1945, Ludwigsburg, Germany]

Sun., Nov. 5

I may as well add a little itinerary now: we came on line the early evening of Sun., Nov. 5, having passed through Rambervillers. We were in the heart of the Vosges, some distance from a good highway. We stayed about the same place with minor changes until Saturday the 11th, when we reached the Meurthe River on a hill overlooking Etival.

Election night, Tues., the 7th

I spent the most miserable one ever due just to weather. It was cold and windy, and rained almost all afternoon and night. We had only raincoats and weren't wearing our shoe-pac (boots) yet. The next morning, there was just a touch of snow on the ground).

We moved from above Etival Wed. night and came back to where we'd spent the night of the 5th, which by then was slightly rear. We thought we were to have a rest before being organized as a division again.

From hole above Meurthe River, overlooking Etival
November 11, 1944

Dear Folks,

It is nearly dark and this will be poor. This is the first I've written since last Sat. Last Sun. and twice since I've got a lot of back mail from early Oct. My latest are number 7 air mail of Oct. 31 and one v-mail from Auntie M dated Nov. 1 which I got yesterday. I've heard from Auntie R, both girls and a card from *Reader's Digest* saying that the church is sending it to me for a year. This postal was also the 31st!

Please thank them for me. I get little time to write now but will try to enumerate your letters. I am very well. I have v-mails from one to four and I think number five. Heard from G'ma Smith too. Keep writing.

Love,
E.

From hill overlooking Etival
November 13, 1944

Dear Marion and all,

Again I have a few minutes to write and I'll try to enumerate the letters in full. Beginning with last Sun. (Nov. 5) I received the following: a card from Lee mailed the 5th of Oct. in Washington when he was on pass; Mother's of Oct. fifth, sixth, seventh, ninth and tenth; Ditty's of the fifth; Jane's of the fifth and ninth; the Oct. *Messenger*; and an air mail from Lucille Antes of the sixteenth.

The other two mail calls last week brought the following: Mother's numbered one to four plus number seven and back regular ones written the eighth, twelfth, fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth; Auntie M's of fifth and twenty-ninth; G'ma Smith's of the thirtieth; Beth's of the fifteenth; and Aunt Marg's of Oct. ninth.

We are supposed to write all figures out. It's quite a job. We are all fine.

Love,
E.

From hill above Etival
November 13, 1944

Dear Mother,

I'm writing this following the one to Marion. Please go ahead and be my agency for Christmas shopping, including for yourself and your birthday. Most folks have some idea of what they want or you know something they need.

Take whatever you spend out of my allotment when it ever arrives, always taking out the tithe first. Of course there will be some left over anyway.

You remember what I've given Jane before so you can go ahead on that, too. I think last year we got that pin at Rudnitski's.

I mean to reread the letters more carefully and eventually answer any questions in them.

We're getting along OK.

Wed., Nov. 15th

That night we pulled back we had the first hot meal for over a week.

Thurs., 16th Nov.

The next a.m., we got on trucks, went clear around and downstream to cross the Meurthe at

Baccarat. Next we were in the woods near Raon L'Étape. Spending Thurs. and Fri. nights in the woods.

Sat., Nov. 18th

In the morning we started on La Trouche, which would cut the supply line of the Jerries to R.L.E. It was the day we had our baptism; we were just getting formed up on the road when, bang!, one or two shells landed in us. Just our platoon had nine casualties (one killed, one died later, and seven more wounded). Of the wounded, one didn't require medical attention, one came back the middle of Jan. and was put in regimental M.P.'s, one was Lee Reese, one Ogie, two we've never heard from, one is back home with a discharge and in school. That was enough for then and caused some change in plans.

That night we spent in La Trouche – the first house I'd been in to spend the night since we left the ship. All the time we had to carry K-rations, usually for some distance.

Sun., Nov. 19, 1944

We started for the hill beyond La Trouche. There was quite heavy opposition but dead-tired, and by going around, we made it. Lt. William Henson and I were alone relieving ourselves when a German walked down through the woods without seeing us.

Nov. 20

Then next morning, we went down the other side and stayed all day and all night.

Tues, Nov. 21, 1944

The next day I started back to Battalion Aid with my infected leg. There were two who went with me. In the aid station were a lot of medics who used to live on the second floor of our barracks at Bragg. By noon they'd sent me by ambulance to collecting company (Raon L'Étape) of the division medical battalion and from there I went by GI truck to the division medics clearing company field hospital (just outside Rambervillers). I enjoyed good meals, my first hot ones in almost a week, and tried to get back to normal a bit. We had roaring fires and were the ward boys ever solicitous! (My first night in real heat since the ship. My feet burned a great deal from what I grandly call "incipient" trenchfoot. They warned us not to

sleep with our feet to the fire.) They brought us extra food at night and everything. My leg hurt me about the worst there. I was really thankful to be alive but I wished so much I could have brought the whole platoon – yes, whole bn., regt., and division with me. We really received an initiation.

95th Evac. Hospital – November 1944

[Written in retrospect, 27 May 1945, Ludwigsburg, Germany]

Dear Grandma,

This is going to be one of my diary letters and I should like you to give it to Mother to file with the rest so my history will be complete.

Wed., Nov. 22

After spending the night of Tues., Nov. 21st at the division clearing station (field hospital) and being fed pills, etc., I was put in the evacuation tent after dinner on Wednesday and after leaving my shoe-pacs and combat-type field jacket there (not to be taken away from division). I was put in an ambulance with eight or so other ambulatory cases and driven back to Epinal. There we were admitted to the 95th Evac. Hospital and I washed and shaved for the first time in two weeks and a half. We even brushed our teeth. This hospital was quartered in a former French garrison.

Here I saw my first army nurses and, just as at New Cumberland, they had all types of personalities. In the bed next to me was a 397th boy from Shamokin who had played in the high school band; he was several years older than I and had been transferred in from the air corps.

I received my first treatment here: they put a chemical heat pad over a wet dressing on my leg. After about 36 hours, my leg was all but well and the infection had been reduced without making an incision. I tried to catch up on my correspondence and reading a little and enjoyed having so much free time. I saw a movie or two in the Red Cross building.

95th Evac. Hospital

November 22, 1944

Dear Folks,

This is the first I've written since the 11th or 13th and I just mailed them this a.m. They are in pencil and on very hard-looking V-mail sheets. The last I mailed I believe was Nov. 5. The reason I had this opportunity is that I have a cellulitis in the right thigh—or in other words an infected sore. I think the way I got it was by having something in my trouser pocket cut or scratch me during the night while lying down and then my not-too-clean clothing did the rest. I came back through the channels to a field hospital (with tents) and then today I've just arrived (2:30 p.m.) at an evacuation hospital which is the next higher echelon. I started this at the field hospital and am continuing it at the receiving room of this evac. Yesterday morning was the time I left the company. I feel fine and no doubt after some soaking and then opening it will be good as ever. It is quite painful, but this will be a little rest for me.

I've received more mail that I've not enumerated yet. We all forgot tomorrow was T'giving. No one knew which date until we saw a *Stars & Stripes* this a.m. So no doubt I'll have a good dinner here. I am a "walking" patient.

Love,
E.

Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 23rd

I enjoyed a good dinner.

95th Evac. Hosp., Epinal
Thanksgiving Day, November 23, 1944
Number 2

Dear Folks,

Beginning with this letter I'm numbering the letters to 752 and 754 [Arch Street]. The one from yesterday can be number one but I didn't mark it.

I imagine it is about 8:30 a.m. and we've breakfasted and I've gone up the hall to get washed. Since I finished that V-mail yesterday I've been escorted to another building and am now in a ward. We had supper just after we arrived and then got undressed, washed and into our pajamas. As treatment I'm getting sulfadiazine and something else and have hot packs on my leg. I spent a very comfortable night.

It's surprising how one gets tired doing almost nothing after being used to all the strenuous parts of the army life.

Incidentally, this is the first place back where they have nurses. They say we're to have quite a dinner. I surely have a good appetite; again something of a surprise after being used to so much exercise.

The boy next to me, of all things is from Shamokin and he knows a few people up our way including Mr. Rothfuss, the insurance man, who we know through Aunt Margaret. I think he is a year older than I since he's been in the army two years; his birthday is Aug. 20.

I suppose you remember I was inducted a year ago last Sunday. Also that last year I went into the hospital the day before Christmas and this time the day before T'giving. This is the first real hospital—the others were preliminary.

I'll enclose a map someone got of Marseilles. This is all the paper I have just now. No doubt I'll get more later. Will add another sheet maybe. I feel fine and don't worry. This is better than where I was.

Love,
E.

P.S. Two of us just about had all the extra of a 6-lb. can of pineapple at breakfast this a.m.

95th Evac. Hospital
November 25, 1944

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU

Best wishes and lots of love to the best Mother in the world.

Emory

95th Evac. Hospital, Epinal
November 25, 1944
Number 4

Dear Marion and all,

Well, I've picked up some paper to go with the envelopes I got at the Red Cross building the other day. During the course of events—mostly rain—my air mail stamps are somewhat stuck and battered, but I've resurrected most of them, and do like to see a regular letter going out from me once in a while—usually determined by materials and time.

I have eaten but until things get cleared out like trays, etc. I stay in bed. Then we get medicine at 8:00 and the day shift comes on, so I usually get a few lines in between. The menu for this a.m. was fruit (canned cocktail plus stewed apricots), oatmeal, creamed fowl (turkey, I suppose), bread and coffee.

As to my condition: fine. My place is draining with just a dressing on it plus the chemical heat pack which is continuous. It's never been cut or pushed at. It also is past the painful stage which was the style at first.

As a climax, yesterday I found that in the other end of my ward is the medic (one of the two attached to our company) who sent me to the aid station and then back through the channels.

The boy from Shamokin is 22, I found out last night. Wouldn't that make him a day younger than Jack Fisher? He played in SHS band and was telling me all about its organization, etc.—very interesting. Since he couldn't see his way clear for a straight education in medicine, he took male nursing—tell Ditty—at Penna. Hospital, 8th and Spruce, Philadelphia, and also at the 44th and Market and 49th and Market branches and the "farm."

In case this might arrive before the others, "I wish to state" (how was she last Wed. night?) that I'm in the hospital with an infection on my right thigh.

I never have commented before, but I surely am glad that Mother took it for WSCS Pres. She surely has the contacts with the Dist. and Conf. to keep our local one on the ball. As usual, the letter which gave me the first inclination of it was just a matter of fact word or so, and later came one telling of Mrs. Lehman's conversation.

Here in the ward we have a little rabbit—a nice pet, but not to compare with Spacky, Boss or Twirp (are there any more?) Next door is the residence of his sister.

I was very glad for the word about the Swan-Seetzinger entertainment. You know it's the tidbits that I expect you to keep me up on.

Yesterday I wrote to Auntie M, informing her of the situation. I guess I'll close now and wash. If I think of anything else in the process I'll add it.

Nothing else I guess until tomorrow.

Love to all,

E.

Saturday afternoon, Nov. 25

About 2:00, I was put into another ambulance with four litter cases and, riding with the driver, and taken down the Moselle Valley to Bayon, about 12 miles south of Nancy. This

stop was a railhead for a hospital train, one leaving each afternoon. The organization was the 514th clearing station. Patients were brought in from all the various evac hospitals and the auditorium-like building soon filled up. I spent my time reading *The Apostle*. This was in keeping with my good reading policy since I read both *The Robe* and *Green Light* on the way over on the ship.

Sun. morning, Nov. 26

By way of activity, there was a church service and the chaplain was a former Methodist Protestant minister from the Pittsburgh Conference. After dinner, they began to load us on the hospital train. I didn't get on until about 5:00 when it was almost dark. Naturally, the train was all blacked out and we just crawled along and stopped at intervals.

The cars were American built by Pullman with fluorescent lighting and every facility arranged with maximum utilization of space in mind. Each car held sixteen patients in double-deck beds – two on each level at each side and each end.

Nov. 27

We arrived in Dijon about daybreak and waited for ambulances to arrive. In the meantime, medical officers marked the tags of some of the patients “air evac” or “UK,” which meant they would be flown to England most likely.

The most of the rest of us were taken to the 36th General Hospital in Dijon where we had sheets on the beds and the nurses wore brown and white-striped uniforms, something like the women's marine summer ones. In the evac they had O.D.'s and combat boots.

They really didn't treat my leg since it was on its way to healing. I stayed in the hospital itself for three nights.

36th General Hospital, Dijon, France – November 1944

36th General Hospital, Dijon
November 27, 1944
Number 6

Dear Beth,

Well it is just after dinner and here I am in a general

hospital in one of the larger French cities. We spent all night on the train, and had the usual wait in the receiving room. This is the first time I've seen sheets in two months, the last time being just before we left Bragg.

I understand there are more facilities here for everything. For one, there is a patients' PX; the things are rationed, and we are issued a card for a certain day. I don't know much about the routine here yet, but no doubt it will be similar to the other places I've been.

It is typical November weather here, but once in a while it clears up beautifully. Last night the moon was bright.

I suppose you and Marion returned to your toil today after a "brief rest." Well, it won't be long until Christmas vacation now, although with it coming at the beginning of the week you won't have as much time. How is TRJHS? Also why was Miss Taylor taken away from Marion's history class?

Love (to Spacky too)

E.

36th General Hospital, Dijon
November 28, 1944
Number 7

Dear Folks,

At home you are still in bed since it's only 4:30 but here we are up and around, breakfasted, and washed and I'm beginning some of my literary pursuits. On this corresponding day last year G'ma and I were going down to A.C. on the Susquehannock. You remember Auntie M was up for Thanksgiving returning Sunday and then we went the following Tues. a.m. That was what might be called my final fling before I went to New Cumberland. How many miles I've come and gone since then!

I am also tackling another pocket book edition, *Mrs. Miniver*, which so far is just a series of incidental chapters and not at all like the movie. It seems to be written quite humorously, and I've found it quite interesting.

Our day ward boy is the only Pennsylvanian I found here yet, and he comes from Uniontown, the same as Gen. Marshall. Yesterday afternoon I slept quite a bit, but now I'm wide awake and hope to write a good deal.

Love to all,

E.

Wed., Nov. 29

I moved into a ward tent, having been given my clothes. Wed. and Thurs. (30th) nights I spent in this tent and made good use of the Red Cross facilities.

After supper on Fri. evening (Dec. 1), a group of us were moved by ambulance to the 51st station hospital at Auxonne, about 15 miles away. This was another French garrison and Lafayette spent time there, and they told us that Napoleon had received his commission there. The 51st was really and principally operated for psychoneurotic patients and it was just a temporary measure to have medical and surgical convalescents there. I really enjoyed the Red Cross there and read *Storm Over the Land* by Carl Sandburg and *Action at Aquila*, both about the Civil War. I also wrote a diary-like group of letters containing the pertinent facts of my army life from induction to P.O.E.

About a week after my arrival I was interviewed by a captain in charge of our ward, a psychiatrist, and he said I'd soon be going back to my outfit as a Return To Unit. He assured me it is SOP* to send men back to their own old company. (*SOP means "Standard Operating Procedure" – freely used to mean "the regular thing.")

36th General Hospital, Dijon
November 30, 1944
Number 9

Dear Marion,

This number seems too high, yet I distinctly remember the air mail one I wrote you last Sat. was Number 4. Writing one every day I should have my days come out OK, especially since my letters are in rotation of fives.

Yesterday just before noon we were moved into tents, big enough for twenty cots a piece. Last night I looked up the Red Cross building (where I'm writing now) and found a very nice place with a small library, facilities for games and writing, etc. They have a discussion group on Wed. nights and afterwards they had cocoa and cake with jelly on it.

Nowadays I eat in the patients' mess hall, a la cafeteria, and the meals are very good. I expect to stay here most of the afternoon, reading and maybe getting a line or so off to some folks I should. This morning was beautiful—no doubt *the* clear day for this month.

It's between 7:00 and 8 at home now—suppose you're struggling out of bed. Ho-hum!!

Love,
E.

36th General Hospital, Dijon
November 30, 1944
(sent to parents and sisters)

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Love,
E.

51st Station Hospital, Auxonne, France – December 1944

51st Station Hospital, Auxonne
December 3, 1944

Dear Folks,

Well, I am up here in our ward waiting for the doctor to come around on his daily visit. At 10:00 is the Protestant church service in the theater followed by a communion service at 10:45. Well today is quite an anniversary. Mr. Wilson begins his second year with us, and on this Sunday last year I appeared in church in civilian clothes for the last time.

Friday night I went to the movies—*Maisie Goes to Reno*. It was a very light, entertaining picture and the type I like as a rule. Sometimes they have these heavier dramatic ones, but I think these are better.

By the way, when my 1945 driver's license application comes, send it on to me by airmail and I'll send it back to you. Then you can put the money in and send it to Harrisburg signed. I know there's a moratorium on these in PA, but someone once said (and I believe it more every day I see the ways of administration) that it's better to keep them going in order to save getting things mixed up after the war. If this doesn't seem OK it'll be all right just to let it go. Well, more later. I am fine.

Love to all,
E.

51st Station Hospital, Auxonne
December 5, 1944
Number 14

Dear Sis,

Yesterday was quite a one for me as I look back on it. First of all I took my first shower since I was on the ship. Of course there had been infrequent opportunities to wash since and this was true in the various hospitals. Then yesterday afternoon I attended the class at the Red Cross for beginners at bridge. Since midsummer we've had eight or nine in my platoon who played a lot. I guess I could've learned then, but with the choir and my large correspondence I never had time. It's much like 500 except much more complicated. In the evening I joined in the Bingo which they have twice a week. They vary the patterns with "straight" games (the only way we ever played before), with t's, x's, e's filling the four corners and the complete card. They play until the prizes run out. On the last game I had just one to be filled complete, "G-56," or something close and someone yelled, "Bingo!" We held our cards and on checking it was found an error. The next one, of all things, was the one I needed. Two of us won, the cards being duplicates. They must have 75 or 100 cards. My prize was a bag of M&M's, those candy coated chocolates. Ever since the ship, when that was all we could get, these haven't been a special favorite of mine, but with the little candy we get, I gobbled them up. Now I'm reading Carl Sandburg's "Storm Over the Land," the story of the Civil War which is very interesting to me after being down South.

Love,
E.

51st Station Hospital, Auxonne
December 7, 1944 (Mother's birthday)
Number 16

Dear Beth,

I have just come down to the Red Cross building now that the daily chores are over. Yesterday afternoon just after I had decided to go back to the ward for my meal ticket, I was suddenly drawn to the rear room where the radio is. Some pianist (recorded or otherwise) was giving forth with a condensed version of "Pomp and Circumstance," March No. 1. You know how much a favorite this is with me. It isn't on any of the records around here, and I'd just

been hoping to hear it. In case you don't remember it by that name, they sing the theme at high school with the words "Land of Hope and Glory." Every time we went to Alexanders' on Sat. or Sun. last summer we used to play it. Vicky always counted it high on her list, too. As a birthday present Lee on furlough bought the recording for me in Wilmington, Del. last August which I accepted when I went down to Clio overnight. On the reverse is the Grand March to "Aida." The record is still there with another article of mine. Last night I went to the rehearsal. There were several doctors there and three nurses. How strange to hear women's voices in an army chorus. Afterwards I played over an hour on the field organ. The chaplain is a Methodist. I suspected it from the communion ritual and seeing a hymnal in the office, so I asked. He is from N.C.

Love,
E.

51st Station Hospital, Auxonne
December 8, 1944
Number 17

Dear Folks,

Yesterday afternoon I went to the second rehearsal of the choir, held this time in the officers' club "Chez Napoleon" because it was thought the piano would have a more vigorous effect than the organ. There were quite a few more nurses present this time. I hardly think I'll be here much longer, since I was called in by the captain this a.m., and we agree that my leg is pretty well healed.

Later yesterday afternoon on the radio I heard *The Voice of Firestone* with Richard Crooks. Of course it wasn't sponsored and was a recorded special broadcast, but with the theme and all it sounded like the Mon. 8:30 p.m. program.

I recently came from the mail room where I wanted to get the receipt for a registered letter I gave them the other day containing some U.S. money. However, it can't be sent home that way, so they advised me to go to the patients' detachment commander who changed it to francs for me. I've decided to wait and send it after I get another full pay for the month my allotment didn't go into effect. Have any allotments arrived? If so please let me know the amounts and the time they came through. I am sending home in installments a record of my army experiences in the U.S. They are numbered (the pages) and the end is marked. They are coming "free" which will be ?

Love,
E.

51st Station Hospital, Auxonne
December 10, 1944
Number 20

Dear Marion,

This is my second letter home today, the other being to Ditty. Of course I don't have much to say in this second one except that I am being discharged tomorrow morning; so I was told just after dinner. For that reason I may not be writing much for awhile, or at least it will be irregular. However, as usual, I'll write as often as possible.

No doubt you are just arising about now (8:30 at home), and I'll be mentally following all of you around until I go to bed.

I don't know how long it will be until I join the Company, but my discharge from the hospital is the beginning of my journey back to join them. Somewhere on the way I hope to meet up with my mail including the several packages that should be awaiting me. But maybe I still will have to wait some more for them.

Let me hear about WHS and MYF; that is your department of the correspondences.

Love to all,
E.

2nd Replacement Depot – December 1944

Monday, Dec. 11, 1944

At 9 a.m., we boarded ambulances again to be taken to the train in Dijon. It was raining some and quite chilly. We got in second class French cars and were next to the engine in a mixed train – bound for the second replacement depot at Thaon-les-Vosges, the place where we'd all detrained only a month and a half before.

The train left Dijon a little after noon and took until 6 pm the next night (12th) (30 hours) for the 125 mile trip from Dijon to Epinal. Arriving in the yards there, we waited for the trucks which would take us to suburban Thaon. On the trip we were eating old style C-rations (canned). The trucks dumped us off at this huge depot which served all the 7th Army, I guess. It is quartered in the buildings of a ? mill – cold and clammy. We had a little lunch at the kitchen, received blankets, and went to bed – interrupted once by an air alert. “Bed check Charlie,” I guess.

Wed., Dec. 13

We received new equipment and monkeyed around. It was a glorified overseas reception center.

Thurs., Dec.14

We test-fired our weapons and heard we were alerted to move on to the next step. I neglected to say that the battalion we were attached to had four companies [regiments]: 397th, 398th, 399th, and one (which I was in) in the 500's. Also, it was at a service Tuesday night that I met Steve Eckstein.

Having eaten an early supper, we piled into trucks for the next lap to Saarburg, about dusk Thurs. evening. It was quite a cold ride for the 80 mile journey via Luneville. Reaching Saarburg, we were in the forward battalion of the 2nd Repple Depple (as they are called) [replacement depot] in deepest Alsace-Lorraine. The streets were no longer "rue," but "Strasse," and we saw such names as Hoffman. I felt almost at home. We stayed with this outfit for two days.

2nd Replacement Depot
December 14, 1944
Number 22

Dear Beth,

Well, another day is here. Today is more pleasant than many in the past. This is my second letter, and my last I guess. Reading will be next on the program.

I have a fair start on *Action at Aquila* and find a good bit of local interest. It is a Civil War story, and this colonel from Kennett Square, PA, is visiting friends on furlough. He rides to Philadelphia, then to Lancaster; and then he and his horse go to Harrisburg by train. On the way he skips over the war news (of which he is tired) and reads trivial local items. One says, "Remarkable Occurrence at Shamokin" and relates that the Northumberland County correspondent has informed them by electric telegraph something about a freak frog. All this is in the paper, the *Harrisburg Telegraph*, which is still going. Now I'm to the place where he's going up the Cumberland Valley through Carlisle and Chambersburg.

It's quite an interesting volume, when one is forced to

read of one's own state in order to sharpen the memory. News is scarce since I wrote just before bedtime last night. Will write when I can.

Love,
E.

2nd Replacement Depot, Sarrebourg
December 15, 1944
Number 23

Dear Folks,

Well, I moved yesterday as expected and am now at a similar place closer "home." At present I'm writing this in the day room and will read some and listen to the radio when I finish this. So far, the only person I've seen that I knew before is a boy from B Co. who got sick when we were still very new here in France.

Today we spent, among other things, going through the processing this new place has to offer. This afternoon I was able to heat water and clean up a bit.

The food is quite good here; at noon we had two sugared donuts for dessert. Ever since I've been hospitalized and having regular meals all the time, I find that I'm a great liker of hot cereal. Until we got here it was really summer where we were, even on the ship and didn't have it. They have all kinds in rotation—oats, wheat, cream of wheat, etc. Send me a Jan.-Feb.-Mar *Upper Room*.

Love to all,
E.

2nd Replacement Depot, Sarrebourg
December 16, 1944
Number 24

Dear Mother,

This morning I was able to send some money home to you. After I failed to send the U.S. currency by registered mail, I had decided to wait until I was paid and send it all at once. But here we used a system whereby the money goes through the channels of the finance dept. The combined lists are radioed from Paris to NY and a check is then mailed. This is for \$15. I suggest you take ten of it and divide it among the church obligations as I gave them before. Probably the regular allotment checks have just barely begun to come through (if they have at all yet). Since my allotment didn't start when I wanted it to, I'll someday be paid in full for that time when it wasn't in effect. So, when I do get it and send it home, just double up with the allotment check for

that month in making the various disbursements.

Let me know when the allotment checks arrive and what the amounts are, since I increased it a little after I had it originally.

I am going back to the outfit today so my mail is that much closer. It's a month today since I had any.

Love,

E.

Saturday afternoon, Dec. 16

We walked to another part of town where the division rear was located. It stayed there all winter. Naturally, I was on the lookout for anyone I might know. The first I saw was an assistant to the company clerk who gave me some very shocking news.

It seems that not quite two weeks before, almost our whole company including every officer but Lt. Henson, had been captured in that mountainous territory at a good-sized town called Wingen which I read about later (not in this connection) in our *Sun*.

The last of our company was scurrying to get inside when the Germans counterattacked...They started throwing potato-masher hand grenades through the window....The grenade went off on top of Norman and Pebley....Shortly, a German soldier with a pistol came down, and we knew we were prisoners—at least those of us who were not dead or comatose did.

- From *First Class Privates*, by William C. Watson, Jr.

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Well, I was just crushed; in the first place, I couldn't believe it. Besides, seeing the boys again was the only thing I had to look forward to. Everyone was officially listed "MIA" but most of them were presumably captured, although some turned up later. I still have never fully recovered, but from time to time we've heard from some.

Tumbled out of the houses to the adjacent yards and roads, the Company, stunned in disbelief, hands clasped on tops of heads in the universal sign of surrender, stood apprehensively as their captors, machine pistols and rifles at

the ready, swarmed around them.

- From *Whatever Happened to Company A?*, by Caldon R. Norman

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Mrs. Reese writes to the mothers of the boys she's entertained and knew about eight or so, but I doubt if she had the complete picture. She wrote me that she wouldn't say anything about it to Mother. Just today I heard from her, and augmenting previous news she says that the ones who were in Stalag (P.O.W. camp) IV-B were liberated April 21. She mentioned six who were in our platoon but I don't know if she means they were all together. The mothers expected word by May 19, the day after she wrote. She promises to keep me posted so I have that to sweat out now.

About 110 were captured and the company wasn't up to full strength when it happened. To replenish us they got so many from each of the other companies and that's why the names are probably unfamiliar to you. Besides that, we received one bunch of replacements, the first of numbers to follow.

Smitty was an original A Company man, having joined it in March. I was up the street, not too far away in F Company.....maybe 150 yards from Emory, but, of course, we never knew each other until December of '44, at which time A Company was captured and it had to be what the Army called "reconstituted" from within the 398th regiment. I was one of the unlucky guys in F company—13 of us who were sent down from each company in the regiment—to help reform A Company. At the time, I thought it was the gloomiest days of my life and I suppose it really was but it's a good lesson that there's a silver lining in every cloud. The experiences I had with A Company I never would have had in the F Company environment and it made quite a difference in my life. So A Company was captured on the 4th of December and on the 8th of December, all these guys appeared and joined A Company and at that point Roscoe Emory Smith, Jr. and Robert R. Huffman met each other.

- As recorded by Robert R. Huffman, May 20, 1998

I spent Sat. (16th) night at this division rear and went to Chap. (Maj.) Katt's service. He used a Christmas theme which I enjoyed very much. After a delicious dinner of C-rations, we left for the 398th, got on a truck to be dropped off at our kitchens, some 30 miles away. The first battalion's were in Lemburg and the company was up on the hill near Bitche following the capturing of the forts around the city. After getting my mail and my first box (from Jane), I went up a bit farther to Reyersviller where the jeep drivers stayed in a house. I stayed there Sun. (17th) and Mon. (18th) nights and actually got back to the company in holes down off the hill on Tues. afternoon, Dec. 19th.

In Lemburg I saw Harry Wannamaker who was under the weather with his stomach. At that time he was the only one actually in our platoon and still there. It was a low time in my life.

Dec. 19th, 1944

During the time just after I rejoined the company, I was in a hole with a fellow named Goodman (?) from Virginia. We were keeping one awake in each hole. In the middle of the night I was asleep and he called out, "There he is, get him!" I sat up and, unwilling to climb out into the unknown, I fired my carbine through the opening. After this was done and we waited, Goodman informed me that he was hit. Sitting up in "bed," our feet would point up. We couldn't tell which one had done it. On Dec. 31, I went to battalion to talk about it with Capt. Light, Bn. S-1

After rejoining the company Tues., Dec. 19, 1944 on the rear side of hill near Bitche, we stayed in the vicinity until moving up on top of the hill overlooking the city. At this time, the forts surrounding the place were all taken and patrols were in the city. However, because of the Belgian Bulge we were officially on the defensive and not advancing.

Bitche, France – December 1944

Rear side of hill near Bitche
December 20, 1944
Number 26

Dear Marion,

Just a line to let you know I'm back with the company again. I have received no mail since I last wrote, but then it isn't time for it yet, and they don't get it every day, I believe. I got used to not receiving it when I was flying around from place to place for four weeks, but now I wonder what you all have been doing since Nov. 6 which was the date of the last letter.

News is quite scarce and I don't seem to have the inclination to ramble on about this and that like the times when I could just sit and think.

I suppose WHS is having a lot of programs this week—I'll be thinking about the program on Fri. Hope you all have a Merry Christmas.

Love to all,
E.

Sat., Dec. 23

We remained on the hill for two more nights and after dark, Sat. Dec 23, came back down and were supposed to be going back to Lemburg. However, we turned the other way and went parallel to the front to Sierstahl, where we spent the night in a cold barn. Three hours of this time was spent up on another hill watching for possible infiltration by paratroopers behind our lines – all part of the counter action.

Sun., Dec. 24

We left the town and went up an adjoining hill to spend the night in some Maginot Line pillboxes. When I came back I was number 10 in the platoon and very few had definite permanent jobs. We had one mortar and two machine guns and because there was no room for me in the machine gunners' small pillbox, I went with the others to the large one (one of the six-story underground jobs) where we spent Christmas Eve.

Mon., Dec. 25

In the morning (25th), Pfc. George T. Hamner, Jr. (later Sgt., S/Sgt., and now 2nd Lt. In C co., 12th Infantry, 12th Div.) read poems from a book. On Christmas we had a good dinner, as I described when it happened, and received new winter clothes. This all occurred about a half mile from our pillbox near the company CP on a little road leading into Sierstahl. I received four packages that day besides two the previous one. That night we moved into a pillbox

occupied by the first platoon.

Tues., Dec. 26th

I went on a composite reconnaissance patrol with Lt. Blaha (our new platoon leader since Lt. Henson was Co. Exec. Off.). Huff, Brodsky and ten or so others. Our purpose was to find defensive positions. In the afternoon after our return, twelve of us went to a point near town to set up a check point for all vehicles at an intersection. One of the companies had lost three jeeps and it was feared that disguised Jerries would be trying something.

We did this for two days and on Thurs. evening after supper moved obliquely to the front to a hill overlooking the town of Urbach. This was only two or three miles from the German border. This was our home in pretty good holes until the following Friday, Jan. 6th, 1945.

Sierstahl (check point)
December 27, 1944
Number 28

Dear Beth and all,

Since I wrote last Friday I have received several packages and more mail. On Sunday came mail from Auntie M (which she thought would arrive "about Christmas Eve"), Jane, home, Eleanor Young, etc. Also I got Sears' package and Auntie M's from Huylers. Sears had cheese triscuits, Vienna sausages, etc. Then I got the *Sun* of Nov. 20th, two more Christian Advocates, and Marion's gift of the Bob Hope book. All were much enjoyed.

On Christmas itself I got four more packages: two from home with Ditty as sender, each with a pair of socks plus scarf, fruitcake, dates, etc.; Auntie M's containing mostly chocolate, and G'ma's with hankies, tea bags, etc. Of course we all are getting them at the same time and there is much exchanging. I surely needed the scarf, [inhaler], and chapstick because it's quite crisp here. Also that day came several *Yanks* and 13 *Suns* ranging from Sept. 27 to Nov. 15. Three of these are still unread.

There was no letter mailed yesterday or Christmas but today including a few which had gone to one of the hospitals I received: from Mother the air mail of Dec. 4th telling of the "Crusade for Christ" pledges, and the Dec. 5th air mail plus a V-mail of Nov. 20. Coming this way V-mail must be faster since none of these air mails had been forwarded; an

air mail Christmas greeting from Janice Huffman; letter from Tilly A.; greeting from Vernon (who has been Pfc. a long time, tell Mother); and a V-mail from Mrs. Reese written on one of the Thanksgiving Days.

There are a few more things I need: one is a knit hood to fit under my helmet. At present I'm making out fine with a heavy towel which I tuck in my neck and wear like those knit affairs all the women wore last year. I can't think of the term. Another is a pair of gloves or mittens in some shade of brown, green, or something army-like. The Kleenex such as was in the boxes from Jane, Sears and G'ma is fine. All the boxes carried fine—a tribute to your packing experience. The Christmas cookies and juice will be soon forthcoming, I hope.

Please have this letter serve as acknowledgement to the family for the things; however, I will write to Auntie M. As is usual, we really have too much right now, but we all find places to tuck it away.

I read the Post Offices' advice not to send food. We who carry everything we own can use very little else except for the articles requested. I suppose they mean things that would spoil.

Also I'll request something to eat for the future. Although I have plenty and to spare now, by the time something I request now arrives it will be weeks hence.

Do raisin-filled cookies carry OK?

It's time to eat now, so I'll close. Do you remember two years ago on Wed. of the holidays we were out to Cases' and the tea wagon broke?

Love to all,
E.

P.S. Send some good quality, slow-burning candles. If they're good we get more light for less space and weight.

Sierstahl (check point)
December 28, 1944
Number 29

Dear Folks,

Well, another day when I'm in a position to write two days consecutively. Today I got a good number of regular and air mail letters. I received Christmas greetings from Miss Hill (with a note enclosed), Ditty, Marion (how true the verse is!), Gladys Marks, Mr. & Mrs. Quay Moore, Ken and Betty, Marcia, and Sherry (signed herself), a letter from Tilly Alexander and the *Classmate* for Nov. 26.

Finally I have read all the *Suns* and hope to get

started on the *Christian Advocates* and the Bob Hope book. I wrote Miss Hill a note since hers was more than a greeting, and I wish you'd thank the others for me please.

Today I had my second haircut since we were at POE. Most of our relatives would have complained long ago at our musicians' length hair.

We had a regular Christmas dinner—turkey, potatoes, gravy, filling, creamed carrots, cranberry sauce, mince pie, coffee, cigar, candy bar, canned beer, salted peanuts—plus all our boxes. I still have quite a bit of that stuff left, but at present it can be accommodated very well.

We try to give the civilians some of our things, and over this period of superfluity they make out extra well. It certainly makes a person sit up and take notice when we see how these people have got just living at home and having their wars every once in awhile, when we can carry on a two-front war and get all this regular food (GI) plus the extras in these packages. They probably wonder how we do it. I think our friendly acts toward the civilians do more towards a good neighbor policy than any long-windedness in Washington; although that is of course necessary. However, this is the practical work that comes after the theories.

News is scarce but I like to ramble when I have a regular letter in progress. I can't think of anything in the papers to mention especially. It took awhile to wade through thirteen of them. The local news takes priority, but it's interesting to see the way they write up what's happening here.

Well I must close now and I'll write when I can.

Love to all,

E.

31 Dec., New Year's Eve

During this time, on New Year's Eve (31st) I had gone to battalion rear at Petit Rederching to see Capt. Light, bn S-1 (personnel). After my business was over I saw Chap. Lecrone and we talked an hour or so before taking in the movie *Hail the Conquering Hero*. I also met Bn. Exec. Officer Maj. Ralph McCrum. He is now (11 June 1945) C.O. and Lt. Col. After the picture, Chap. L. and I talked some more for two hours, discussing the past six weeks and our mutual friends. I slept with him in the Bn. CP building that night. That was the night the Germans counter-attacked to our left but failed to dislodge one of our other regiments in position there.

Monday morning, Jan. 1, 1945

I had breakfast with Bn. Headquarter company and started out to find our supply room. After receiving the latest mail and doing some talking, I rode on the supply room's truck to Enchenberg, where I was supposed to be picked up with the other returnees by jeep. When the time came to go, there were too many for the one trip so we stayed at the kitchen over night.

Co. A supply room (Bn rear) Petit-Rederching or
Co. A kitchen, Enchenberg
Number 30
Jan. 1, 1945

Dear Folks,

Well, although I've been in the army just over a year as the date in the heading. Today I rec'd a lot of mail including some Christmas cards. Pop's came with the driver's license application. I signed it and answered "no" in the two places checked. I've enclosed it herewith.

Last night when I was on business at battalion hdq., I saw Chap. Lecrone and since I was to spend the night in that area, we talked a long time. It had been eight weeks since I'd seen him. It surely did me good and I guess he enjoyed it too.

He said he'd just heard that Mrs. J.C. Reed, Milton, whom I called when I was home on furlough, had died.

Also we went to the movie together—*Hail the Conquering Hero*, which I saw before but enjoyed nevertheless. We exchanged lots of news about mutual friends here and back home.

I am still hale and hardy and making out OK. Since I wrote I heard from Lee, Witmans, Lance and a whole flock more. Jay and Hazel sent me a \$2.00 money order. Dear knows when I'll get everything answered. I suppose Auntie M is going back at 2:48 this p.m.

Love to all,
E.

Tues. afternoon, Jan. 2

I started back to the company via Petit Rederching and Sierstahl. I got off the jeep at the company CP after a very slippery trip. We stayed at the same place until Fri. night, Jan. 5. That night part of the 63rd (Blood & Fire) division was supposed to relieve us around 9:00. We were all ready to go even before then but they didn't show up until the early hours of the morning. (We heard that after we left, they built fires and suffered beaucoup casualties

because of the artillery fire they drew). We never left until after it was beginning to get light (6th), about 6 am. After walking several miles back toward Sierstahl, we got on trucks which took us to Edding. We walked on the highway (after being fed) for some distance, then took to the hills. After a lot of puffing and waiting, followed by trying to dig in, we came into the town of Edding where we ate once more and got houses for two nights.

In the draw near Urbach
Jan. 5, 1945
Number 32

Dear Sis,

This is some of the stationery that the Lloyd Goods sent me. I have obtained some Skrip V-mail black ink and so am foregoing the regular light pencil.

I received no mail yesterday but finished reading the *Suns* and *C.A.* [*Christian Advocate*]. Circumstances prevented my writing anything yesterday. Today, though, I already have one V-mail polished off to Tilly A. to repay in part the four she'd written me from the middle of November. In almost all of them she repeatedly asks me to send a request so they can send me something. I also have heard twice from Vicky. By now I think I could spend several days just writing to catch up—not counting Christmas greetings.

I heard from Bill B. the other day. It was written before he moved and he could tell me his location-to-be. Not so with any changes I've ever made.

You'll have to excuse the writing because this nippy weather is hard on both pen and hands.

I see in one of the ancient papers that Marcia Rudinski and Bob Vanderlin were married. That was the first inkling. Also in the batch I rec'd Christmas, I see M_____ 's picture with a notice of his promotion. This was borne out with the postmark on their greeting being Muncy.

I suppose by the time you get this all WHS will have mid-year fever. "Ugh!" as Tilly says. I trust you will do as well and better on this last bunch as required for you by Dr. Weaver and party as you have the other eight seasons. Let this go for Beth on her first ones "up on the hill," also.

I am fine and things are OK. News itself is scarce. The Williamsport *Sun* 4,000 miles away does far better than I.

Let me hear a little dirt once in awhile from school. Glad to see Bob Unger (a Roosevelt boy) got a S.C.[student council] office.

I forgot and wrote on both sides. This folded paper is

what did it. I guess I've said nothing censurable.
More later,

Love, E.

Edding
Jan. 7, 1945

Dear Beth,

I received no mail today. I imagine since mine from the hospital is largely caught up, that I'll be getting mostly current stuff from here on.

Enclosed is the note from Aunt Kate which Mother sent me and suggested that she wanted it sent back. I've already written Aunt Kate today thanking her. Since I addressed it to Mrs. Homer Smith, Linden R.D. #1, I hope she still lives there. I don't know since Beulah died if she would or not.

This morning I was able to attend the service which Chap. Tyler held. There were a good number present, and he used a Christmas theme—no doubt because we had so little opportunity at the time of the season itself. Several of us went together.

This afternoon I took steps to get my money order from Hazel cashed. It is done through the mail clerk. Today we had a chance to use GI showers and get all clean clothes. Some of mine I'd been wearing since the ship.

Well, I'd like to answer almost every back letter so will close this one.

Lots of love to all,
E.

Sun., Jan. 7

We had services with Chap. Sam Tyler in the 3rd Bn. Aid Station. That night we had luxury rations and I was on outpost guard with Harding from 3 to 6 am Monday (8th) in some pretty bad weather. Monday afternoon we walked in a blinding snowstorm to a group of Maginot Line pillboxes near Rohrbach, where we ate and stayed all night. It was this day (8 Jan.) that my combat infantry pay is dated from.

Tues., 9 Jan.

We walked to Geising, a fairly battered town from whence we were to push through and relieve 3rd Bn. 397th who had been counter-attacked in their stand to hold Rimling. In order to draw fire and get the imperiled units out of danger, 1st Bn. 398th was required to advance

across bald, naked ground in about a foot of snow.

A and C companies were on line with B in reserve. Heavy casualties were sustained by all companies. Capt. Strickler (A) was shell-shocked and Capt. Holmes (Co. C) was killed. Beaucoup artillery and direct fire from tanks and 88's came in to us and, despite the lack of holes, we found the ground good protection. After staying in a pillbox with the mortar section for some time, as it grew dark I went up to Lt. Henson, now in command of the company with a message from Lt. Blaha.

After I came back we learned that A and C would withdraw back to Rohrbach and occupy the same pillboxes again. B company stayed defensively in our 1st Bn sector. Sgt. Stanley Brodsky and I stayed with the 4th platoon weapons until a company vehicle could pick them up. We shortly got a ride with the 3rd Bn 397th jeep and trailer almost to the door of the CP at Rohrbach. After supper we went to our pillbox with bedrolls and returned for our mortars.

We stayed in the same location until Thurs. night, the 11th, when we left for Bettviller, on the right of Geising. Here the mortar section occupied a house with our weapons in the back yard. It was in the town that we ate so good with pie, ham, french fries, etc., in the houses of the nearly abandoned town. My main contribution to the work in the kitchen was the constant washing of the dishes and pans.

It was in this place that T/Sgt. Neal, our platoon sgt was shot by a 2nd Bn man while he was leading a patrol in search of a signaling light behind our lines.

Award of Bronze Star Medal – Citation from 100th Infantry Division Headquarters

Roscoe E. Smith, Jr., 33872802, Private First Class, 398th Infantry Regiment, for meritorious achievement in action during the period 21 December 1944 to 23 April 1945, in France and Germany. Private Smith has distinguished himself by his conduct as a rifleman throughout this period of combat operations. He participated in the many bitterly fought actions in which his company took part during this period, and on 9 January, in the vicinity of Rimling, France, braved direct enemy fire from tanks, artillery, and mortars in order to deliver a vital message to his company commander. Entered military service from Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

Bettviller
Jan. 13, 1945
Number 35

Dear Folks,

I am in position to do a little writing again, and I hope to get a few of my obligations met.

First of all, yesterday I got several air mail letters that had returned to the hospital. This included two from Miss Hill, one from Rachael Sistare, a three-center from June Diehl from Oct. 26th (!), etc. Then in the evening came Mother's V-mails of the 29th and 30th. Also two from Jane and an air mail postmarked Jan 4th—just eight days. That's the fastest I ever received any mail. At the same time came one to someone else also air mail of the same date clear from California.

We've had a chance recently to be in town and scavenge around a bit for food. One day for the main meal we had fried chicken, raw fried potatoes, canned carrots and peas, browned gravy (rich and thick), with apple pie with cream pudding for dessert, coffee, C ration crackers. There are cows handy for milking and we also made snow ice cream with canned cherries or huckleberries. It was surely no more grainy than wartime ice cream back home. We have also got jam and jelly.

The next morning two of the older boys made pancakes that were delicious! We used sour milk and baking powder for the leavening and a syrup of sugar, water and corn starch I guess. Then I made coffee (C ration instant) and we had bacon, too. Four pancakes was my limit. However, I'd already eaten breakfast early with the company.

The meal that followed was ham, mashed potatoes, creamed gravy, two kinds of pie—cherry and elderberry. The elderberry was exceptional. We also had pudding which was very thin. Afterwards some of us made tea with G'ma's teaballs.

Enclosed is that list of people I heard from in the greeting line.

Now a few requests: some jam or jelly from home. Please don't send orange marmalade because the kitchen here seems to specialize in it. Also a few soda pills—could they be used as soda if we had a chance for more pancakes? I believe I mentioned a good grade of candles before. Now I'm using a glass with the melted wax scraps in it. I suppose it could be called a hurricane lamp.

I am very well and everything is OK. I guess I repeat

that every time. I must sign off and retire.

Love to all, E.

Bettvilles
Jan. 15, 1945

Dear Auntie M,

Again I have a little chance to write a line. I received your letter from home plus the note on that family Christmas one. Lately we've had a chance to live in a house and prepare some food. As a rule we had just two meals a day. One day for dinner was fried chicken, fried potatoes, canned peas and carrots, C-ration crackers, coffee, apple pie with pudding. We also had snow ice cream. Another day we had ham and pancakes for breakfast with a syrup of milk, sugar and butter. What meals! One of the dinner meals was ham and mashed potatoes with cream gravy and pie again. Besides the apple we had cherry, elderberry, cream and chocolate (made from C-ration cocoa and our PX ration chocolate bars). Another breakfast was ham and biscuits and oatmeal. Few of us were sent to chow. I am hoping to get several letters off for a change. Oh yes! I forgot the meal with delicious French fries. Occasionally I make a cup of tea from those bags Grandma sent me.

I am fine and things are OK. I surely enjoyed hearing about the holidays. Send me something to eat.

Love,
E.

Bettvilles
Jan. 17, 1945

Dear Marion,

Ask G'ma if she remembers where she and I were either fourteen or fifteen years ago. It was Ben Franklin's birthday and a Saturday; we were on our way to A.C. and saw the celebration in Phila.

Today was the most beautiful and varied mail call I ever had in the army. There were 32 pieces in all, including Ditty's package of towel, wash cloth, tea, salted nuts, fruit cake, etc. three *Suns*, a *Yank*, a *Messenger* (Nov.) and the rest letters, mostly from Mother and Jane plus several from Auntie M and G'ma. Practically everything was from November, but one of the papers was Dec. 2. There were two *Classmates*, too.

Last evening I had the Dec. *Messenger* with the reprint of the article about the Crusade and Christmas greetings

from Ed & Suzie and the Andrews'. Please thank the last two for me.

I hope to answer several more letters tonight. While I think of it, I'll request some cookies or something. Space them out though. I suppose you're reviewing for mid-years now.

Love,
E.

Bettviller
Jan. 19, 1945
Number 39

Dear Beth,

I finally am getting enough time to write today—mainly by just taking it. We've been enjoying the tea bags and today someone found a whole package. It's been quite a welcome change from the already-sweetened-and-creamed coffee.

The package was swell and came at a fine time. By the look of the outside, it had followed me for quite some time. If the Christmas cookies one doesn't come pretty soon, I'll have to ask you to send me some more of the same kind. Also, could raisin-filled cookies be sent? I'd like to have some of them.

I really caught up fine on my letters and have to write only to Louise and choir, John Harvey, and Miss Hill. This is true if you thank the senders of greetings for me. John Harvey is the tall boy on the back row of the choir photo—in one he is partially covered up. He was in Jack Houser's hut at Benning.

Love to all,
E.

Fri., 19 Jan.

We left Bettviller Fri. night, 19 Jan., and walked back to Rohrbach where we got on trucks for a ride to Montbronn. The whole 4th platoon stayed in a small house the remainder of the night, with only a chimney fire to bother us.

Saturday morning (20 Jan.) the mortar section moved into a better house around the corner. Here we stayed Saturday (20th) and Sunday (21st) nights. There was church Sun. a.m. and in the evening I went to see *See Here Private Hargrove*.

Montbronn
Jan. 21, 1945
Number 40

Dear Folks,

Today I received some more Christmas greetings. These were from Spacky, Harriet, "Miriam et al," Gpa & Gma, Ditty, Cowdens. Please thank them for me. Also arrived Ditty's air mail with the candlelight program and the plan for the new office. My only question is, and I quote, "Where is the new place?" It seems to me that someone wrote about the location being in some inherited (?) property. Probably the letter that explains it all is out of order.

I see that you are very stylish, not having the typewriter on the main desk. Also I recall something about "Dr. Hoffman's girl," but it all merges into mental haze.

Last night I finished all my correspondences and wrote one to Jack Houser, too. I had his Benning address but Jane writes he was to be in the 71st Div. Maybe he's c/o P.M. now.

I need some extra thin Eversharp lead for this pencil. Also some baking soda (just a small amount at a time) for any future occasions we have for cooking. Also a little toot of baking powder. Well, this is all for now.

Love and kisses,
E.

Monday a.m., 22 Jan.

We walked through fallen snow to St. Louis (Münzthal) where we stayed in a factory until dark. We were told that the corps (XV) commander might be inspecting so we had to get everything lined up in our best spit-and-polish fashion.

When it was dusk we started up the hill on the 2 km walk to Götzenbruck, where we relieved part of the 36th Division. Because the m.g. section was shorthanded, several of us had to help them carry their equipment out to the edge of town where they were to occupy holes. This part of the road led thru an open field and we hurried as fast as possible over this several hundred yards to avoid sniper fire from the opposite hill. Then we returned to our house in town where our mortars were set up.

For the two nights and days that we stayed in Götzenbruck the mortar section was continually called upon for fire since the town was a "hot spot." Every conceivable route of

approach for the enemy was zeroed in and each time a member of a rifle platoon heard a suspicious noise several rounds were dropped in that area.

At this time I was an ammo bearer in Hamner's squad (now Lt. Geo. T. Hamner, Jr., Co. C, 12th Inf., 4th Div.) having been in the section since Christmas when I stayed in the mortar section's pillbox due to lack of room.

Götzenbruck
Jan. 23, 1945

Dear Auntie M,

On Sunday we had an opportunity to attend Chap. Lecrone's service. There was a good crowd there, but I think that there were representatives present of units that he usually doesn't serve. We sang a large number of hymns and he asked me to sing the second verse of two three-verse hymns as a solo. It seems to me that that was the first Sunday I attended Chap. Lecrone's service since early in November.

That evening there was a movie available—*See Here, Private Hargrove*. I guess almost every one in the family saw it at one time or another. I remember it was at Benning last winter just before we left. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Monday morning at breakfast we had fresh oranges for the first time since we left the ship. There was quite an abundance and I had my share. Until last night's mail call I was caught up on letter writing for two days. I am hoping to be likewise soon again.

Love,
E.

Wed. Eve., Jan. 24, 1945

Part of the 35th Div relieved us and by midnight we were on our way down to St. Louis again from where we went up the other side of the valley to Enchenberg where we arrived about 4 am, Thurs. Jan. 25th. After much looking around, we finally found a house for the platoon. We slept in two rooms on the floor, and were crowded. It wasn't quite as bad as it sounds because we were under-strength and a complete platoon was not present. That day we cleaned ourselves and our weapons.

Enchenberg
Jan. 25, 1945
(No number)

Dear Mother,

I originally meant to send these folder by regular mail "free," but today I got ten air mail stamps and decided to make a real letter by adding a sheet of onion skin [paper].

In the last several days I had no mail from home but heard from a number of others. I have additional greetings from the Morris family, Nezzie (Inez Chamness), Baldwins, Peggy Ivins, Rollers, Shirley Leidhecker Collins, and a New Year's one from G'ma and G'pa. Please thank those at home for me.

I had my first air mail from Auntie M, and she enclosed a sheet of paper and air mail envelope. I think that's a good idea. Occasionally if you send a stamped air mail envelope with paper it saves the stamp sticking.

Also I heard from Lee twice and several from Jane. It was Tilly Alexander that sent me these folders.

I enjoyed the two envelopes of clippings you mailed at one time.

I can think of nothing else for now.

Love and kisses,
E.

Friday, Jan. 26th

We received the largest group of replacements up to that time or since. I believe nine came to the platoon, most of them just out of the rep'l depot and basic training with six months in the army. It was really a shot in the arm, and from that time on we worked by the TO (table of organization). One of the things we welcomed most was the added members for pulling our own security guard at night. Of course, Lt. Blaha had to have guard all day, too, even if we were off line and in reserve. These boys had come from 24th Rep'l Depot at Caserta, Italy, brought around to the West because of the Ardennes counter-offensive and Bitche salient. This was the time when we really needed and appreciated candles, the electric system being "kaput."

Saturday, Jan. 27

We fired our personal and crew-served weapons on the outside of town by the railroad

station, the purpose being to give us all a chance to “zero in” many that hadn’t been fired previously. This also gave the new boys a chance to see how our own methods worked. That night we found it too crowded and had a number of us equal to the number of new men go into one of the second platoon houses down the street so the new men could be around their officer and non-coms for breaking in. That night I saw *Once Upon a Time* at the 1st Bn show in the schoolhouse. Here we were in the German part of Alsace but we lived with the civilians still in the houses because it’s really France. They have German names and speak mainly German although they understand some French words as well.

(Enchenberg)
Jan. 27, 1945
Number 42

Dear Sis,

Yesterday I was greatly edified to receive a letter from each of my sisters in the same time. Beth's came first and I remarked that I was wishing I'd get one from you. Also came Mother's 73, 74, and 79. Today besides yours I had Mother's 72, 80, 81, 82, 83 plus several from Jane. As you see, I'd been thinking about midyears.

Right now, I'm going to request a flashlight with batteries. I have one somewhere around the house. All the officers and most of the non-coms are supposed to have them, but hardly anyone does. The little extra weight won't bother me and it's bothersome to use five or six matches to hunt something in the dark.

Today I had a shower and clean clothes. Rather than waiting for the provided transportation, some of us started back from the "shower town" ourselves and I caught a ride with Chap. Tyler. Last night I saw *Once Upon a Time*. More later.

Love,
E.

Don't put the batteries in the flashlight.

Enchenberg
Jan. 28, 1945

Dear Grandma,

This morning at 11 Chap. Lecrone preached same theme Mr. Christian used at our baccalaureate service—"Ye cannot serve God and things." Specifically he meant that if we over

here, being deprived of many physical comforts, think only of obtaining them when we get home, we will feel satisfied at that time. Instead we must look beyond so that when we come home we shall still feel determined to do our utmost to prevent another war. Again I sang several verses as a solo. I reminded Chap. L. that just 8 months ago today (also Sunday) his family, Lee, and I were down to Clio and Little Rock where he preached. Then on Tues. I started home on furlough.

Please tell Mother that they went thru some of our duffel bags that were stored and sent personal effects home. One of the fellows working on the job said he thought they did mine. So don't be scared if a box of stuff comes. I spent hours figuring what I wanted in my 7 lbs. to bring over and now it's been indiscriminately sent home.

Also I signed the payroll the other day and will be paid shortly.

Sun., Jan. 28

We went to church at the anti-aircraft battery CP, which was in some sort of a hall with a stage and balcony. I think Chaplain Lecrone shared the leadership of the service. Anyway he asked me to sing part of several hymns as solos. That night I saw in this same hall the best movie I've seen in Europe. It was *Rhapsody in Blue*, the story of the life of George Gershwin and five reels long.

Mon., Jan. 29th

We hung around, and just before dark we headed out for Lemberg to relieve part of the 35th Div. Since we were in three different positions around Lemberg, I call this part Lemberg Heights. We were in the higher part of town, in a house and the mortar section was in a house. Hardly before we got settled I went as a potential mortar observer with several riflemen out the road to an outpost, where for three hours we were to watch for Jerry patrols or something. We had a phone back to the company. There were two holes for protection and it was very cold and crisp with the moonlight. The companies were holding battalion fronts (by the book) and contact patrols went out at intervals between the companies. We thought something was coming at us from across the valley and road in another woods once, but the CP said it was some other company. When the new relief came, Lt. Henson, acting company commander, came along personally to check the situation. When we came up we

had to wear white sheets over our heads so we wouldn't be good snipers' targets. Lt. H. took us back through the woods all the way and we found it a much better route.

(Enchenberg)
Jan. 29, 1945

Dear Beth,

Well, here I go again. To reminisce a little, it was four months ago tonight I called from Phila. I noted with interest that Ditty had copied about thirty pages. That was the only news I'd received of my history arriving. There were about ninety altogether.

Last night the projector was broken at the movie we expected to attend so we went to another and saw *Rhapsody in Blue*, the story of the life of George Gershwin. It was very good and five reels long as compared to the customary three. There was lots of good music, including "Love Walked In" which Kenny Baker sang in *Goldwyn Follies*. Do you remember? It was Charlie McCarthy's first picture, where he teased the accordionist about the bug on his collar and said the girls were "better; much, much better." Remember we saw it again on the Steel Pier?

I had no mail yesterday and none yet today. Ask Pop if he knows Pat McDonald from the Bernice-Dushore area? His son has been in our company for some time and says he probably does. Well, I guess this is all for now. Enjoyed your letter.

Lots of love,
E.

Wed., Jan. 31

We stayed there until Wed. night, Jan. 31 when we moved around to the right, clear through town to the other edge, along the St. Louis road. Here we established ourselves in dugouts. They were very good holes compared to some I've stayed in, but since this was a thawing spell they were cold, wet and messy. We put up a shelter half under the roof to catch the water. There were six of us in this hole and our feet got wet. There were some nice days when we were able to get dried out, and we made the best of things to get clothes and bedding aired.

Sun., Feb. 4

The best break I had in this situation came on Sun., Feb. 4, when my turn arrived to go to division rest at Sarre-Union. I was to be at the glorified CP dugout at 7 a.m. From there Warda took me to St. Louis where battalion rear was located. The bn's collective representatives then got on a 2½ ton truck to go to Sarre-Union. During my four days there I ate and slept, read, wrote, and went to the movies and church and got caught up on almost everything. The most memorable experience was seeing our old mess sergeant from 2nd Co., 5th Regt., ASTP, Ft. Benning, now in G Co. as a rifle squad leader, I guess.

Division Rest
Sarre-Union
Feb. 5, 1945

Dear Folks,

I seem to have quite a bit to say for once. In the first place I haven't written a word since last Monday. I really should have ripped a few off Tues. or Wed., considering rather favorable circumstances, but on occasions when we move it always takes a day or two to become adjusted to a new set up. Later things weren't as convenient so time has slipped by.

Yesterday I arrived here at the Division Rest Center for four days. Since my period of travel and settling down occupied the morning, I didn't get to church. However I did the following: shaved, ate dinner, showered and put on clean clothes (for the second time in eight days!), attended the tail end of the dance orchestra's matinee, saw a movie, ate supper, and in the evening attended the home talent show, "Sons of Bitch" and retired.

A limited number from each company saw this show a week ago Saturday night. The title should not be considered so much from its cuss value as the geographic significance, although I'll admit there's a pun involved. If you read the papers clear to the end of the column on the European Theater you may find this place mentioned. I know Auntie M has seen it as have I even on maps in the *Sun*.

The person Ed(wina) Hines who seems to be so prominent on the program was in our choir at Bragg. He was the slight-built boy who sat on the front row and sang first tenor.

I expect to write again today but wanted to get something off early since I didn't write yesterday. On the program R.S.O. means Regimental Supply Office. Sinclair is Chap. Lecrone's assistant.

The other day I received a box from Jane with candy bars, Kleenex, etc. and a box of Nestlé's prepared cocoa. We

all prize that very highly. That would be something to send. Also came a number of *Suns* (up to Dec. 22), the *Readers' Digest* from Jan., several *C.A.'s*. I'll go into the letter mail later.

If they are still available, I need a new pen and pencil set. I think this one that Jay & Hazel presented was about \$8.50 total. It is Eversharp, you know. The pen is among the missing and the pencil's had hard usage. Also send some lead (for an automatic) first class if you haven't already.

Love,
E.

Div. Rest
Sarre-Union
Feb. 6, 1945
Number 47

Dear Sis,

Well, by now I hope you've recovered from the horrible experience of mid-years for the last time as such. And poor Beth just getting started you might say. As you might guess I've been doing a good bit of writing. Yesterday I wrote home twice and to Jane, Harriet Caldwell, Stephen Eckstein (a boy in another division whom I met at the replacement depot on my way back from the hospital, and from Kansas City), Chet Frantz (from near Tamaqua, in 397th, whom the folks met down at Fayetteville), Ida, and one more I can't remember just now. Today I did Martins and Auntie M already. (Let's hear about the prom.)

Are my \$7.50 bonds coming regularly? I know they started and no matter when you get paid, etc., they should continue without a hitch. I believe today the company will get paid. So maybe I'll go another month without. Tell Mother I can read her typed V-mails swell. She asks occasionally. I guess I'll make this a request for something to eat. I'm looking thru old letters for points to comment on. That Grieg concerto you heard at Louise's I'm sure Uncle Carl played last winter when I called on him my last trip home from New C. Also Lee has it and I heard almost the whole thing down at Clio. Do we have banty chickens now? What happened to Big Boss and Twirp? What did Mrs. Reese say about Lee?? *Stars & Stripes* also says this is worst winter for PA, etc., since 1919-20.

Division Rest, Sarre-Union
Feb. 7, 1945
Number 49

Dear Beth,

Writing twice today like this, I don't have much to say, but I did want to get a cycle completed to the family while I am here. The movie for tonight has been changed from *Sweet and Lowdown* to *Follow the Boys*. It's about an hour until it starts. Today I wrote to Mrs. Swartz, G'pa & ma, Aunt Margaret and Uncle Bill, Uncle Carl's Uncle William and Aunt Lulu and Sherry Lynne.

Today I mailed another *Stars and Stripes* home. I hope very shortly to be hearing the results of your mid-years. When we're at the rest center we don't get mail although the regimental mail section is here in the same town. So I'll probably have a little to read when I get back to the company tomorrow.

Tonight they had the overseas version of *Waltz Time* on the radio which I liked very much. Well, until the next time.

Lots of love,
E.

Thurs., Feb. 8

I returned to the company, going by truck to Montbronn, where the kitchen was and coming on up to the company with Nick. During this time Hamner, the mortar section leader, went to Paris as our first representative following the discontinuance during the Ardennes counter-offensive. Sometime during our stay in this situation we put on a mock attack around 5 am one morning. We fired illuminating shells from the mortars and following that used HE (high explosive) shells in battery from the other two guns – one round every 20 seconds for ten minutes. During this time we were getting the regular meal system of hot ones morning and evening with C- or K-rations for noontime.

Lemberg, France – February 1945

Sunday, Feb. 11

We traded positions with B company and went back into Lemberg, this time to the town proper. C company was farther up in town and our two companies really were the ones in town. The whole company was in town including the rifle platoons. Many times the CP and mortar section had been in towns while the riflemen were set in out-lying holes. Our

particular establishment was on the road that led to St. Louis – Enchenberg in one direction and Reyersviller - Bitche in the other, right at the railroad station. It was known as Restaurant Joseph Berg. Our stay here for over a month was quite regular and the whole period is best treated as a whole. The building was entered from the back by going up five or six steps to the first floor. The kitchen was on the left and the passageway straight ahead led through to the bar, with the steps doubling back on the right. Underneath these were the cellar steps. To the right, across from the kitchen door was the door to the ex-dining room now filled with chairs, tables, equipment, ammunition, etc. Practically every house in Lemberg was somewhat damaged, and ours was no exception. All the windows were out and we found them already barricaded against trouble. The 399th had a hard time taking Lemberg originally in December, and it was almost recaptured by the Jerries in the Bitche salient drive at New Year's time. Ever since the Belgian Bulge began, the 6th Army Group had been on the defensive and Lemberg had been "on line" all along. (According to billheads we found in the office, we were living on Adolf Hitler Strasse). Naturally it was a very beaten-up place.

Just previous to our coming here, while the Bn was still in Enchenberg, they had formed a raider platoon for each Bn. Evidently higher headquarters knew that we would be on the defensive until the line straightened out up north and they wanted to make use of the theory that "the best defense is a good defense," and were going to keep the Jerries on their own side of the fence by our constant heckling. They took four from our platoon, and I'm glad I wasn't one of them. Besides, they took Lt. Blaha, our platoon leader, as one of the two officers. The raiders lived in St. Louis at Bn rear CP and made "raids" once or twice a week. I believe we lost just one in the Bn during the six weeks of operation.

So Huff had the platoon once more until Lt. Jelinik, acting executive officer, came to us. Combining friendliness, non GI-ity, intelligence, and a pleasing personality, he is one of the best platoon leaders I've had. Being an ex-AA officer, he knew figures and their application to things similar enough to mortar firing to be very useful.

Emory was not a natural infantryman. He really belonged where he ultimately ended up, as a chaplain's assistant, yet you don't choose—particularly in the Army—where you're going to be and what you're going to do.... We were in the 4th platoon, which was a weapons platoon of A Company. We had three

mortars, which is where Emory was; he was first gunner in one of the mortar squads...Without a doubt, Smitty, as he was called by everyone, was the morale leader of the 4th platoon. He had a simply marvelous, buoyant spirit. Everything was just always fine with him and if something wasn't fine, he made a joke of it. He didn't grouse, and as we used to say in the Army, he didn't "bitch and moan" about a bad situation; he made it out to be a funny situation. Everybody in the platoon and in the company had a great deal of respect and affection for Emory.

Today I run into A Company men frequently by phone and in person and, invariably, they will mention Smitty. For instance, just a year ago I visited our old first sergeant...he was the first sergeant who came in after A Company had been captured and he mentioned "Roscoe" Smith. He didn't call him Smitty but he called him Roscoe. I think I used to kid Smitty now and then and call him Roscoe 'cause I knew he didn't like the name but I also knew he would take it in very good graces and he would laugh about it.

- As recorded by Robert R. Huffman, May 20, 1998

From here Hamner went to a three-week OCS and ended up in Co. C, 12th Inf., 4th Div., having discouraged Huff from going himself. For a time, we also had Lt. Short, formerly of C company, after Jelinik went to the 2nd platoon.

We had an OP (observation post) across both the RR and road in a house that looked across the field and RR spur (?) to the woods in Jerryland. We used to go over there two hours every other day to watch for potential targets like smoke, etc. We often threw in rounds just for harassing effect because we thought we knew when they ate, for one thing. It gave both the observers and gun crews good practice, especially while we worked out "concentration" for use in front of the separate rifle platoons.

The town was considered an important place and "hot spot." Since the 4th platoon doesn't normally have patrols we strung beaucoup barbed wire so that all gaps on both sides of this main street could be blocked off.

Several times the Heinies sent out patrols also. At these times we got ready with ammo and flares on our guns. Towards the end we had two guards at night instead of just

one. The corner room on the street and away from the RR was fixed up as a guard room with chicken wire over the windows as anti-grenade protection. One interesting thing was the use of “artificial” moonlight, light reflected from the clouds by former anti-aircraft searchlights. They worked very well on dark nights. They were used on an irregular schedule so the Jerries wouldn’t know just when to do their dirty work.

During this time we frequently went down to St. Louis for showers, to fire weapons and to the show, and actually went through the gas chamber set up in Lemberg, to test gas masks. Our mortars in the back yard were set on just 800 yards or less, so you know how disrespectful of danger we were.

Dave Wagner came to us here and he and one or two others slept in the dining room. Except for the Lt., Huff, Hamner and the runners, the rest of us slept in the cellar. It was quite a dusty old place but we had mattresses and our GI bedding on them and a coal stove, and used candles and gasoline lights. That was the place (with such a stable situation) where we could really have used more candles.

We had to clean up the back yard, full of wreckage and trash, mostly mortar round boxes and the larger “thuds” (of a “cloverleaf”) that six rounds are packed in. Besides this was the natural accumulation of junk either non-burnable or just not burned. The stuff was actually shoveled into a jeep trailer and dumped over a bank on the St. Louis road (I guess by now you know I don’t mean the Missouri one). As is ever true when we weren’t in the worst situation possible, the higher brass, usually Bn or regiment, constantly brow-beat us into doing extra things like this as though keeping the Jerries away from our necks and making their (the brass’) own situation in St. Louis or Montbronn more comfortable and safe wasn’t enough!!! Stringing of the wire was for our potential benefit, but the junk was just for the brass’ sake. Several of them did venture up, only because the front was so inactive and quite quiet. One time Maj. McCrum came to inspect the houses and someone just rubbed a chalked sign “The Boys” off the cellar door in time as he passed into another room. A minute later he was heard to remark, “Oh well, I don’t want to go down the cellar, I guess; they’re always so dirty.” There was enough bedding upstairs (some of us always brought it up in the morning for show) for a token force, and he didn’t know exactly how many were there. They were so fussy about minor things – we can’t understand it. They even tried to enforce not using native mattresses (thought it was connected with jaundice maybe!!) but we

flatly disobeyed that and protected ourselves by airing our bedding and using DDT powder liberally.

Here at Lemberg I was a second gunner, then first gunner in the 3rd squad with the squad leader being acting. When Sgt. Dave Wagner came that meant that either everyone in the squad would have to back down one position or the acting squad leader would be moved, which he was. This gave us three squads for the first time in my memory since La Trouche, and I continued as 1st gunner in the third squad.

At this time the squad leaders in order were Brodsky, Hart, and Wagner. Brodsky got jaundice and went to the hospital Sun., March 4. Hamner went to get his commission, so that left us with two positions open in the mortar section. However none of the present incumbents could hope for advancement because our two mortar “raiders” (who went as 1st gunners) came back and expected something for their efforts. Both King and Kimmey were acting squad leaders at the time and the latter had said when the drafting of the raider platoon was in progress that he wasn’t “going down there and then come back to pack ammo for one of the boys that used to be in my squad.”

Well, none of them “packed” ammo. Kimmey raised a rumpus about what he wanted, and since Lt. Short was just in fresh from C company as our platoon leader, he didn’t realize all the underlying factors. So Kimmey got the section and soon jumped from Pfc to S/Sgt and King got the first squad. Not everyone was happy, but those offended swallowed their pride – to keep alive if nothing else. Is it a wonder that the few of us left from “the old company” (as the expression becomes worn) used to wistfully reminisce? An almost constant turnover made us wonder which old company was meant. When I joined the outfit in March, 1944, the “old outfit” referred to Ft. Jackson, SC, and the Tennessee maneuvers bunch.

Restaurant Joseph Berg
Lemberg
First night
Number 50

Dear Folks,

I returned from the rest center Thursday and this is my first opportunity to write since. Tonight I was playing a

piano for the first time since we left the States. Quite a few of us were singing too. I had since Thursday quite a bit of mail from home and Jane—about eight consecutive letters from each. Also I heard from Bob Holland (on the way back) and Bill Bachman. An air mail from Mr. Wilson and an air mail Valentine from G'ma Strait in eight days. Then yesterday came an air mail from Auntie M with a stamped envelope and stationery enclosed plus an extra 6 cent stamp. I think that's a good way to do it occasionally.

Jane wrote me about Ruth and the Houser's going to NY to see Jack. I hope you'll keep me posted on his address. She said they stayed already a few days and must have seen him because they planned not to stay unless they saw him. We had no church today due to our conditions, but as is usual on Sunday, I've been following you thru the day. Please send me some jam and jelly and comb honey, prepared cocoa powder (like Jane sent) and some little cans of milk (evaporated).

Love,
E.

Restaurant Joseph Berg
Lemberg
Feb. 14, 1945
Number 52

Dear Marion,

Well, this is another day and now it's almost suppertime—we eat rather early. Since the mail comes with supper, I guess, we'll get it a little later. I hope you've already written to me about the lunch period affair plus some more choice tidbits.

Today is one when some folks might get spring fever if you get what I mean. Supper is now over. We had meat balls, macaroni, peaches, bread and coffee.

The day's mail call brought a general "greeting to you in the service" card, a Valentine from Jane and Ditty's clippings, *Classmate*, etc. mailed Jan. 23. Nothing from home in the letter line however. I expect to do a little more writing this evening. Also I'll mail one of the four cards part of this greeting, which was from Helen TenBroeck by the way. Each of them is different. So you'll have a little collection, I'll make a request for something to eat.

Love to all,
E.

Restaurant Joseph Berg
Lemberg
Feb. 14, 1945
("fill in the blank" style postcard)

Dear Beth,

I'm sending this to say "Hello," and add these lines to let you know—
I saw Lee Reese this a.m. and sent his mother a letter with a request she asked me to send.
I heard that Mother sent me a timetable and I hope it's the latest Pennsy one.
I went to sleep last night as usual but haven't done much wandering otherwise.
I think that it'll be a swell thing when we come home.
E.

R.J.B.
Lemberg
Feb. 14, 1945
(postcard: "check the messages you want to send")

Dear Marion,

I'm feeling fine and dandy.
I hope you feel fine, too!
I'd like to hear from you.
I haven't time to write much.
There's not much news to say.
The fellows all are swell guys.
I hope you'll write again soon.
I send you my regards.

From,
E.

Restaurant J. Berg
Lemberg
Feb. 16, 1945
Number 54

Dear Beth,

There was no mail today so I have nothing to report on that line. I am very tired and hardly feel I can fill this whole page.

I am next in line to look at a *Century Sentinel*, which has an article and picture about our company. We can't send the paper home since it contains restricted material, or I most surely will.

Today was very pleasant and I played the piano. We had both chocolate and blueberry pie today—very good.

I wrote Milt Williamson today more or less about Glenn leaving. I noted with interest in the *Sun* the article about the bad winter—worst in 50 years in Western PA. The amounts of snowfall were almost unbelievable.

Well, more tomorrow. We're all fine.

Love,
E.

Rest. Joseph Berg
Lemberg
Feb. 17, 1945

Dear Auntie M,

I don't owe you a letter but I'm well caught up on mail, and I like to write to you more or less regularly like I do home.

It was just five months ago tonight, Sun., Sept. 17, that I arrived home on my last pass from Bragg after that very unusual trip on the 11:55 p.m. to Washington plus the Greyhound bus and five automobile rides. That was just after the hurricane with Heinz Pier and the boardwalk half gone.

We are making out very well and I am fine. How many times have I used that phrase? Grandma's toque (?) came day before yesterday, but at present I haven't been wearing it because it's been mild and beautiful.

I hear there are plans tomorrow for us to go to church tomorrow. I was to a weekday service at Div. Rest, but it was three weeks ago since I attended on Sunday.

Well, good night.

Love,
E.

Restaurant Joseph Berg
Lemberg
Feb. 19, 1945
Number 57

Dear Marion,

Last night's mail consisted of a V-mail from Auntie Ceel, and today's brought 101 and 102 from Mother. Before I forget, there is one thing I'd like you to do. I have no more recent snapshots of home than those taken when I was on furlough in June. Of course all that group are very representative, but I'd like some more to see how you've all changed. Be sure to include Spacky.

I'd like to hear more about the folks who attended the

Jurisdictional meeting, who they were, how they got together with Auntie M, etc. The letter of Feb. 2 was the first news I'd had from anybody except for the invitation from Auntie M to Mother and Ditty earlier.

Another thing, you mention about Mark's outfit being at Bastogne. The Armored division mentioned in all the reports wasn't the same he was in, in the States. Did he come over with that outfit, or was he a general replacement, going through replacement depots, etc.?

When I was at one of the services yesterday I saw the boy from Bellefonte who slept across the aisle from me on the ship. I knew he was handy to home but couldn't remember the exact place. Well this is all for tonight. Until later,

Lots of love,
E.

Lemberg
Feb. 19, 1945

Dear Auntie M,

Just a line to tell you that yesterday three boxes arrived for me. One from home, the one from G'ma you mailed when you went back after Christmas, and one from Hep. They were all mailed in the neighborhood of a month and a week ago, the latest date being Jan. 11. We all thought that was very good. You might let Hep know that I've commented favorably on her ingredients of cookies, hard and chocolate candy although I have of course written her.

Yesterday I was to church at which Chap. Lecrone presided. I led the singing at his request and then accompanied him to another service and did the same. This week he hopes to have communion for the individual companies or even smaller units.

Last night I heard from Auntie Ceel Evans and today had two from Mother. It's just five months ago yesterday I left home the last time—but I did write that before, I remember. To keep you supplied with requests, please send me something to eat.

Love,
E.

Restaurant Joseph Berg
Lemberg
Feb. 21, 1945
Number 59

Dear Beth,

I wonder if you remember what we did ten years ago tonight. As you no doubt remember, it was the day before Washington's birthday in 1935 when I was in fourth grade at Jackson. Mother, Ditty, and we three kids went down [to Atlantic City]. You and Mother stayed for several weeks and Mr. Beale "decapitated" Mother in that picture. When we got off the train about 5:30 Sat. a.m., the 23rd it was snowing very hard, and I tumbled into a drift dashing down to Campbell & 3rd for the bus.

I enclose the letter to Lance to which I referred yesterday. Please pass it on to Mrs. Kenny for proper addressing and mailing.

Tonight I've been tickling the ivories a bit, offering Rubenstein's "Spring Song" and Schubert's "Serenade." Of course I like P. & C. ["Pomp and Circumstance"] and manage to get that in.

Our platoon received very little mail tonight and there was none for me. As any of the boys would tell you, that is most unusual. I hope for better luck tomorrow.

We surely have enjoyed the packages that came on Sunday and it was very good selection.

Well, until I get some mail to comment on, I guess this is all.

Love to all,
E.

P.S. Please thank Helen Weaver for the Valentine.

RJB, Lemberg
Feb. 22, 1945
Number 60

Dear Folks,

The evening's scant mail call brought me an air mail from Auntie M of Feb. 9. As is usual with her real letters, stationery was enclosed for a reply.

One of the fellows in our platoon is from Mechanicsburg and he received a clipping from either the local or Harrisburg paper about the hard winter, giving those awful figures for Erie Co., and substantial ones for the West Branch.

This evening we had luxury rations consisting of beer cigars, candy bars, peanuts, etc. These come every once in a while, but the interval is irregular.

Don't forget to send us jam and jelly please. Oh yes, Auntie M did enclose a clipping about our division which interested me. I haven't had any *Suns* for about a week now, nor have I seen us mentioned in any I did receive.

Well, now to bed and love to all,

E.

RJB, Lemberg
Feb. 23, 1945
No number

Dear Mother,

There are some post cards I bought near Marseilles. They were in my little hand bag I picked up at Bragg just before we left, which in turn was in my duffle bag. Battalion picked up small articles for us. They brought the whole bag although I asked only for these picture, my timetables (!) and some air mail envelopes. However the soap which I found and Unicap vitamins are very useful.

I found some old letters, some yours, which I rec'd at POE and on the ship and enjoyed rereading them.

Well I'll keep up the continuity and write to the regular person for today now.

Love to all,
E.

RJB, Lemberg
Feb. 25, 1945
Number 63

Dear Marion,

I wrote to you last night enclosing a *Stars and Stripes* but when it was being censored, they thought it was too heavy for air mail. So our platoon Sgt., Bob Huffman, whom we know as "Huff," readdressed another envelope "free" and saved the original in which I'm sending this one. Huff was at Benning in 1st Co. when I was in 2nd last winter.

I had about five or six letters from Mother today and about the same number from Jane. Also I heard from June and Auntie M. The box that was mailed Jan. 17 came today making the trip in just one day longer than the one that arrived last week (mailed Jan. 11). The cookies surely are fine.

Tonight I wrote Auntie M, Aunt M & Uncle B, Steve Eckstein (103rd Div) and a S&S to Beth.

Well, time for bed. I'm on guard last and I might as well get some sleep.

Love,
E.

RJB, Lemberg
Feb. 27, 1945
Number 65

Dear Beth,

Tonight I got the package sent Jan. 17; it was the one with socks, (?), Hershey bar and other chocolate, Kleenex, etc. The candles were certainly fine; in fact I am using one of them to write by now. I think you should put a couple in each box. Also came a C.A, *Yanks* and *Suns*. The letter mail was limited to two: from Gladys Marks and Vicky Alexander (going to school at Agnes Scott, Decatur, GA).

It's quite late as I write this and my guard for the night is over. I feel tired and doubt if I'll write more than this one. This morning besides washing and shaving I was able to polish two off.

Yesterday I had a shower again; I really soaked up for once since there was a small crowd. One of the *Suns* told about Pat Madenfort and Bill Steumpfle—quite nice I thought.

I might as well make another request for something to eat. Try to put in some things that could be spread on bread like jam, honey, etc. I guess you know all about it.

Love to all,
E.

RJB, Lemberg
Feb. 28, 1945
Number 66

Dear Folks,

Tonight's mail brought a V-mail from Jane and Mother's 109 & 110, Mother's clipping of Jan. 30 & Feb. 5, and Ditty's same of Jan. 31 and Feb. 5. When I ask for clippings about us I mean just about the division as it's mentioned. We have good coverage with the eight-page Nancy edition of "Stars and Stripes," and our platoon is going to get the Paris edition of NY *Herald-Tribune*.

Auntie M sent me that clipping about the AC boys in 398th. I haven't been to Paris yet, but a few of our boys have been. They say you'd never know there is a war on, so how can we blame the home folks too much clear across the ocean?

Things are the same with us and we are fine. Today I really had spring fever. Tonight I've already written Gladys, Vicky A., Glenn, and Jane. I'm entirely caught up. We sure have enjoyed the boxes as received by everyone

collectively. More later. Love, E.

RJB, Lemberg
March 4, 1945
Number 70

Dear Beth,

Tonight I had only Mother's letter of Feb. 13, No. 112. Today and this evening I wrote to Red Witman, Jane and Mr. Wilson before this. I also had the bulletin from Mr. W. that he promised to send previously and a magazine from Mrs. Reese.

I wonder how much of my letter to Foster was actually cut. The reason that my letters home are rarely if ever snipped is that we know the regulation and they change infrequently. However, you know how much I moved around during my tour at the hospital, and each place had different rules. So it goes.

Please send me something to eat. Today and very lately I haven't been bothered with putting sunburn lotion on. Still I think spring is just around the corner.

Tell Marion I want to hear all about the activities from now on to commencement, which will be many. Also I'd like all the C&W's [*Cherry & White*] of this year.

Love to all,
E.

(RJB, Lemberg)
March 5, 1945
Number 71

Dear Folks,

Today was quite momentous for once. I was paid for the first time in Europe. In spite of not being paid since Kilmer the Friday before I saw you the last time, I haven't become pressed for funds until very recently—even with the occasional small financial demands. It represented five months (Oct.-Feb.) with 20% overseas the whole time and \$10 per month extra for combat infantryman's badge since early January (While I'm talking, I also got a good conduct medal—one year's post-Pearl Harbor service—late in Jan.) and with two months complete with no Class E allotment subtracted. By PTA I sent \$80 to Mother, the equivalent of two regular allotment checks. Divide it up according to the regular plan. I also laid aside \$20 in the soldiers' deposit which can be easily obtained in emergency (since it's held over here). I am keeping most of the rest since I am supposed to be the next man to get a trip to Paris. One can stand a

little cash there. My total amount was 7452 francs, a little over \$150.

Love to all,
E.

Restaurant Joseph Berg
Lemberg
March 7, 1945
Number 73

Dear Sis,

Tonight mail call was well worthwhile. I had just finished writing to Betty B. Field and Carl Strub and mentioned Jack Houser to the latter. Here the first letter on my stack was from Jack. His address is the same as at Benning except for c/o PM instead of Ft. Benning. I also heard from Jane and the following from Mother: No. 114, 116, 122, 123, 124, 125. So I have a reply on one I wrote Feb. 15 with Feb. a short month too. Also I heard from Barbara Strole's sister, Cleona Thompson (she was in the class whose baccalaureate service we sang at) and Red Witman.

Lee Reese was gone almost three months. He came back the day before I returned from Division Rest. In the last issue of *Life* for January there is a good article on evacuation of wounded. If you'll refer to my letters and read the article they'll be identical except that I didn't go to England from the evac and the time elements are different.

All our food I mention like pies is extra-curricular, just what we're able to scavenge. Happy Birthday on the 30th. We have three birthdays in March in our platoon—11th, 17th and 23rd. I can't imagine you being eighteen.

In the future please put stamps on the airmail envelopes you send. This is all for now.

Love and kisses,
E.

RJB
Lemberg
March 9, 1945
Number 75

Dear Beth,

This evening's mail for me consisted of letters from Jane and Chet Frantz, so there is nothing to report on arriving from home. I have answered Blanche Schleh's letter and am enclosing it herewith.

Today I noticed buds on trees so spring must be slowly

but surely on the way. Today Huff(man) and I visited L Co. to see friends in the same platoon. I was going to see John Harvey, choir member from Jenkintown, whom I hadn't seen since the ship. Lo and behold both are hospitalized medically—nothing serious—so I guess we'll have to try again.

Last week when I was in a neighboring town for a shower I saw a boy (now in B Co.) who was in my platoon at Benning last winter. His brother had come to see him and I also met him. So far, personally I haven't even seen the folks I know in outfits close by.

I seemed to be quite busy today and this is just my third letter. Not many more tonight, I can promise. I am fine as are we all. Please send something to eat and send candles, quite a few, each time.

Love to all,
E.

Sun., March 11, 1945

We knew we wouldn't stay in Lemberg forever and around Sun., March 11, 1945, it began to appear that the time would be soon. All of us dreaded advancing again, but we knew that the sector we were in still had a bit of France to liberate and we weren't in Germany yet (although it was only about 10 miles away), even if we were as far east as the 3rd, 1st and 9th armies. Lee Reese came back to the machine gun section sometime in February – the 7th I believe.

The division had been on line since Nov. 1st except for brief periods when separate battalions were in reserve. Rumor had it that we were going back near Sarre-Union for a week's rest. As I said all winter, "I'll never believe it until it happens."

Mon. night, March 12

The mortar section leader from L company, 14th Infantry, 71st Div., came up to see how our situation was since they were to relieve us the next day. We showed him everything and he was very full of questions. That night I was on guard in the "guard room" when I heard some firing out front. Soon the phone rang and someone wanted Lt. Short. It turned out the raiders thought they saw something that would give them trouble so they called for a few rounds. I called Stahly whose gun was laid on the approximate location and I acted as his assistant gunner. We "zeroed" in with two, three, and five rounds, and then used ten rounds for effect.

We were complimented on having only one “died” out of the 20 rounds and many nice tree bursts. Of course, this wasn’t really anything we could control anyway.

Location unknown
March 12, 1945
Number 78

Dear Sis,

We had no mail again tonight—I understand that some of the mail personnel is under the weather, and we won’t have any for several days. Consequently I have nothing to report and comment on.

I wrote three other letters late this afternoon and consider myself, as always, up to date. This period since I was at division rest I’ve kept up everyday. However, you know I won’t be able to do that indefinitely. Although I won’t be able to see him, I’m quite sure, I think that Jack is in our vicinity. Being in the artillery and in a headquarters battery at that, he’d never be “next door” to us.

As always once more, I’ll make a request. Keep the candles coming six or so at a time. Everyone is willing to help carry them if there are too many for me.

I hope to turn in early tonight, schedule-permitting. We’ve all felt a little tired over this weekend. Tell me about school.

Love to all,
E.

Tues. Mar 13

There was heavy traffic all day – everything from jeeps to 2½-ton trucks came flying past the house. We found that the Jerries had something over on the hill besides a couple mortar barrages a day and an occasional 88 to throw. The new boys from the 71st had a loud initiation, but they brought it on themselves. Incidentally, it was while the 71st and 100th were in the relieving process that Jack Houser saw our kitchen in Montbronn.

That evening as it grew dusk the company began to withdraw and move down the St. Louis road. The new boys were thoroughly oriented – Kimmey had seen to that. He said during the course of the afternoon, “Now I and Smitty, we was in the old outfit, etc....” Of course he referred only to the mortar section, but since he was never in the company with Reese until Reese came back from the hospital (and then Kimmey was at St. Louis in the

raiders) he always thought of himself and me as the sole survivors. He was in the pre-Wingen company a few days but came as a replacement via Camps Roberts, Meade, Standish and the rep'l depot chain. Reese and I went from Benning to Bragg on the same train although I didn't know him until we entered the 3rd platoon together 23 March 1944; in May we were put in the 4th with a group.

Well, anyway, we left town and went down the road keeping twenty yards interval between us, the situation had seemed so "hot." We passed some 71st boys coming up all laden down with some new kind of pack (I'm glad we escaped them) and going in a column of two's, just like a road march.

I forgot to mention the last final excitement. In the afternoon our lines were strafed by planes and both mortar sections herded into the cellar. Several tankers or someone were killed in Enchenberg or Montbronn.

At St. Louis we waited for some of the rest of the bn and then moved up the other hill to Montbronn, where our kitchen and supply room had been for almost two months. We went past the town and stayed in open holes, perfunctorily dug as a precaution against counter-battery fire at our artillery nearby. It was the first night since I left the company Nov. 21 that I hadn't been in a covered hole at least. The weather was clear and mild – in fact unseasonable – so we didn't mind.

[Written in retrospect, 31 Oct. 1945 Mannheim, Germany]

March 13, 1945

After our month at Lemberg the battalion pulled back to the woods outside of Montbronn, having been relieved during the afternoon and early evening of Tues., Mar. 13 by the 3rd Bn (I believe) of one of the regiments of the 71st Div. Jack Houser was in Hq Btry of their 564th FA Bn and wrote home he'd seen our kitchen in Montbronn. After a very quiet time during most of our stay in Lemberg, it took only the convoys of 2 ½ ton trucks and jeeps going back and forth to show us what the Jerries had behind them on their side of the fence. We left after supper just about dusk and Lt. Short made sure we were well-spaced (20 yd. between men) and quiet. The platoons walked separately down to St. Louis-les-Bitche where we joined as a company and went up the other side of the gully to Montbronn. The rumor was that we were going back for rest, indeed the kitchen was already moving back near Sarre-Union.

Undoubtedly this was all done for security reasons; the civilians in Lemberg knew what was happening in Bitche and there's no reason to doubt that the information passing was reciprocal. After living in houses or pillboxes since Jan. 6 it wasn't fun to dig slit trenches again.

Wed., Mar. 14

The next morning, we learned that we weren't simply going to back up the 71st as a safety measure for a day or so, but we were going to be used as one of the experienced – if not veteran – divisions to reopen the suspended offensive on the southern sector the next day; the immediate objective was the previously (Dec.) bloody and costly Maginot fortress of Bitche. Bitche had never been taken since being used for military purposes beginning in medieval times. In 1870 it stood and surrendered only after Vichy France signed the Armistice in 1940.

Thus in less than 24 hours the defensive phase that the 6th Army Group had maintained for three months would end. The Saga of Lemberg was history!

I always said that I'd never believe the 100th would be off line until I saw it happen. In general they said this wasn't going to be like Bitche the first time; this would be concerted and all out. After we were through the Maginot line the 3rd Division and the 45th were to take the lead in pressing toward the Rhine. The goal of getting to the Rhine by Easter seemed very idealistic. We thought the 7th Army would never go farther than the Rhine, believing the Germans would give up to the northern armies.

That afternoon we got on trucks and went through Enchenberg to Petit Rederching, where we detrucked. During the day we had got rid of our unnecessary stuff and traded shoe-pacs for combat boots. Our feet just seemed to glide along. Anyone could tell the magnitude of the offensive by the amount of traffic, equipment, parked tanks, etc. We walked down the hill into Sierstahl, near which we waited until dusk. Then up the other side through Holbach to a point behind Ft. Freudenberg, a French garrison. It was quite a tough grind with the sleeping bags and Hart passed out, but we made it and dug our holes to the left of the road and finally got to sleep. I was with Schoewe, and the 4th platoon was mixed in with everyone else.

We got up about 3:00 or 3:30 and went to the edge of the woods to eat breakfast and

pick up three K-rations. I'd decided I couldn't carry a mortar and a pack, so I filled my pockets and shirt front and left the pack behind. We went to one of the buildings on the edge to pick up our weapons & ammo; I think each ammo bearer had 10 rounds of HE (high explosive) and 2 of WP (white phosphorus smoke). The plan called for 2nd Bn to go out toward Freudenberg Farms while we waited in an administration building. We thought we'd be leaving any time but it was about 1 p.m. until our departure. By this time the 2nd Bn had its objective with very few casualties and the 1st was to go to some high ground to their left, on the left flank of the regiment with the 397th on our left. Largely due to Lt. Henson's efforts, we went around a long way and stayed in the woods out of observation. The weather was clear and warm for March. We were going up one long, steep, open hill (at the top of which we were supposed to stop for the night) and some shells from a tank or self-propelled artillery were coming in at a very comfortable distance. All of a sudden one really began to whine, sounding very close and I hit the ground with mortar and all. There was a dull thud to my left and I realized a dud or timed shell had landed. Despite my fatigue, Ted Kleinhaus (who was even closer, between me and the dud) and I pressed on with renewed vigor for two reasons: (1) the shell already landed might be timed to explode any second; and (2) the gun might fire one in the same spot. We were almost the last ones up the hill (except Si and John Perales who thought their last day had come), and at the top the whole platoon was sprawled exhausted.

Battalion told us to keep moving and we plodded along. There were holes dug by GI's from the first time at Bitche in December and some of them were still in them. I was glad I didn't look. By this time we as individuals didn't know where we were. They said Bn wanted us to proceed as far as a certain road junction. It was growing dark and we could see our shells hitting down in Bitche. Because the Jerries had had three months to fortify the place, there were lots of mines around. During the afternoon we'd passed various booby traps marked with white tape (dear knows why it wasn't red!) and as dusk grew the column continued intermittently while the scouts in the lead platoon found, marked, and guided us past various shu-mines and trip wires. It must have been a comical sight to see us come to one of these places. The guide would say, "See my hand? Well, about six inches under it is a wire; step over it." Then we'd lift our feet ridiculously high and proceed.

Finally A & B Co's, which had been "on line," stopped at an edge of woods for the

night. Our artillery kept up its firing and occasionally we'd hear a barrage of *nebelwerfers*. All of these went nowhere near us, but at the beginning of the grinding, tearing, terrifying sound we all hit the dirt. Si, Schoewe and I had been working on a hole together, doing the digging mostly by feel. The roots were very bothersome and progress was slow. The day before Huff had told me I was to go on pass to Brussels, and I wondered if I ever would make it. However, the day passed unbelievably quiet for "Bitche" and except for numerous enemy barrages received while we were still in Ft. F., very little stuff came in at us. They thought I'd leave early in the morning, but about 2200 or 2230 about five of us left with Lt. Hamelin. I was surely glad to have someone as responsible as he to lead us back to the Co. CP (Command Post) of that morning. We went over a much more direct route and arrived about midnight.

[Written in retrospect, 31 Oct. 1945, Mannheim, Germany]

Friday, March 16

After three months of no forward motion and even some lost ground, it seemed mostly strange to hear that the kitchen was moving up to the place we had left that morning. Those of us going on leave stayed in the CP all night, our sleep hardly disturbed by the distant firing of artillery and 4.2 inch mortars just outside. We got up early (about 0600) the next morning Friday, March 16 and Warda drove Lt. Hamelin, Barlow, and me back to Sv. (Service) Co. at Sarre-Union (via Sierstahl, Petit Rederching, Enchenberg, Montbronn). All along the road was beaucoup artillery, tanks etc.; it surely looked good. The fine weather, we knew, would continue to give the air corps its chance. Here we spent the day getting clean clothes, sleeping, eating, visiting, and going to the show in the evening.

Sat., 17 March

After a very democratic night of sleeping on the floor by Lt. Hamelin, I got up for breakfast the next morning, (Sat. 17 March) and we left for Division Rest at Sarrebourg at about 1000. First came registration and securing meal tickets, followed by dinner and getting an Ike jacket. At about 1900 that evening the convoy for Brussels left. We went through Metz, Briey, Longuyon, Montmedy, Sedan, Phillipeville, Charleroi, and Waterloo, arriving in

Brussels at 0600 Sun. am (18 March). It took almost 2 hours for the one truck to find its way while the rest of us waited on the outskirts.

18 March

About 9:00 we got ourselves settled in the Shoef leave center at Hotel Metropole, a really classy joint with beautiful rooms. There were three of us in single beds with a bath adjoining and plenty of closet space. The food was fine and we capitalized on the snack and refreshment times. Next door to us was Barlow from the 3rd platoon. After bathing and eating a fine dinner we went out for a walk, to get ourselves oriented to the town. Before returning, we had a streetcar ride and bought some pears. In the evening we went to a NSAF1 movie of all news reels and then to bed.

Brussels was for the British what Paris was for the Americans. I was very glad to get this inter-allied atmosphere. Every morning, afternoon and evening they had tea or its equivalent in the Winter Garden of the Metropole and I had numerous interesting conversations with the residents of the UK. A lot of people think they are so reserved and stuffed shirtish, but we should try to overlook it if it is their national characteristic.

Monday, 19 March

We went to an American film with English soundtrack and French and Dutch texts (subtitles). Also we got our rations at GI Joe's and did some shopping there besides buying ice cream. The food continued good. In the morning we went to the place that serves as center for tickets for the operas, plays, and concerts. I wanted to see an opera; but since they are usually sold out a week ahead we got tickets for an all Beethoven concert at the Palace du Beaux Arts. I did more shopping in the afternoon.

Hotel Metropole
Brussels, Belgium
March 19, 1945
Number 80

Dear Beth,

I'll give my schedule for the day.
I arose this morning at 8:45 and proceeded to get

dressed. Next came my photo appointment at 9:15. The pictures were taken in a flash and we then went to the Army Welfare Center to try to purchase some tickets for "Faust" this evening. Well, the operas are sold out several days in advance, and we were unsuccessful.

However, we were able to get tickets for a Beethoven concert tomorrow night. On the program is his Fifth Symphony and I surely look forward to that. Then we returned to the hotel for "morning tea" and found it was almost time for dinner which was consumed without delay.

Afterwards we thought of going to "GI Joe's," a place run solely for us on pass where gifts may be purchased, PX rations also—and upstairs is a dance floor with refreshments. On our way we passed an ice cream and pastry shop and indulged in each of those items. We heard that Joe's didn't open until 2:00 which gave us 50 minutes. So we got on the train for just a ride and passed and visited the station. After that we rode several more cars until we returned to Joe's. We made the rounds using each of the facilities mentioned above.

The next step was returning to the hotel for supper, preceded by a bit of cleaning up. Following dinner in the dining room we attended the Palladium to see *Music in My Heart*. It was the regular American film in English with French and Dutch captions. By the way, all signs and notices are in both of the latter languages.

Returning to the Metropole, we had the evening snack and were joined at our table by two Britishers, one a Londoner with a king's English type of accent, and the other from S.W. England with hardly more than a Harvard manner of speaking. We had a most interesting conversation.

Of course here we have all Allied nationals, but most all the ones that aren't French, American or British (and possessions) are a minority group of an occupied country belonging to one of the larger forces. One sees so many British because the northern part is their sector. It is my first experience and very interesting, too. This one fellow tonight has been in six years—heaven forbid!!

After we left them I obtained this stationery and came up to my room to polish a few off. I think I'll bathe before retiring shortly.

I have enclosed a few things.

Love to all,
E.

Tuesday, 20 March

I got my gifts packed and sent home and we did our last bit of looking around. In the

morning there was a walking guided tour of the central city points of interest. I got a haircut, shampoo, and shave in the hotel and we dressed for the concert in the evening. It was all-Beethoven, and the number I enjoyed best was our old favorite, Symphony No. 5. We walked back afterwards in the dimmed-out streets.

Wed., 21 March

The next morning, Wed. 21 March, we breakfasted and checked out, congregating on the plaza outside to wait for the trucks. When they came it was late morning and we were already chilly from waiting so long. The weather proved to be absolutely beautiful and we were prepared to enjoy the ride back. We saw the man-made hill which stands as a monument at Waterloo and passed through Sedan, where every generation sees the town shelled. Farther on were Maginot Line pillboxes; our route seemed to be the same as going and we arrived at the Division Rest at Sarrebourg by 9pm. We went to bed and got up for breakfast in the morning. We turned in our Ike jackets and waited to start back to our co's.

22 March

About 0900 Thursday a.m., we left for "the front." Service Co. was gone from Sarre-Union, so we headed toward Bitche, going through Enchenberg to Lemberg right around the formally-mined corner where Bill Stoddard's 3rd platoon CP was. The town was quiet, but we saw lots of armor waiting around. We went straight up the road and into the town via College de Bitche, not turning left to go to Reyersviller, as we did in December. The town was fairly well torn up, but still there. We had a hard time finding the various kitchens, but turned in our overseas cafes at regimental rest, "Heroes Haven." Finally, the three from A Co. were deposited at Fort Freudenberg in a building with the remainder of the 1st Bn kitchens. Someone had mislaid all my stuff, including my carbine, so I started out with an M-1. Barney Rhodes and Strickland did their best as far as equipment was concerned, so when we started out with supper for the co. (after I'd eaten early chow) I looked like my usual laden-down self. The co. was found in a rather undecisive condition in a place known then only as "Ghost-town," later determined to be Dallenbach. At the time of our arrival they were trying to get the Co. fed in time to depart by truck for parts unknown, although

“Germany” seemed a likely destination. We went over the rolling country and through part of the Siegfried Line. Great craters proved the work of the Air Corps there. Many times blown bridges forced us to use roundabout routes. We detrucked at one town and walked to the next, Reichswiller, my first “home” in Deutschland. All the time tanks were moving up the road between the foot columns. One house was assigned to the fourth platoon and I’d discovered that Lt. Blaha was again the 4th platoon leader. Inside we found some civilians fearfully cringing in an upstairs closet, whom we quickly routed. The full moon was beautiful, but most of us went to sleep “tout d' suite” (toot sweet). The bedrolls weren't there when we arrived & I believe I didn't disturb myself when they came.

Fri., March 23

The next morning (Fri. March 23) about 4 a.m. we were awakened and told to get ready to leave and that breakfast would be served shortly, the kitchen having moved up quickly. After the usual hurry-up-and-wait story we got on trucks at dawn; we were just loaded when Blaha and Haffner were taken off to go to Paris. The ride was cold until the sun came up, and just sitting in the vehicles didn't help things. Again, blown bridges made much of our way to lie over back trails and woods, but we passed near Zweibrücken, Pirmasens, and Kaiserslautern. Finally we descended to the Rhine plain at Bad Dürkheim and continued along the road toward Ludwigshafen. About 11:00 the convoy stopped at a crossroads and we unloaded. We proceeded forward and to the right across some fields, and deployed until our future action was decided. Some of our artillery was ahead of us and the Jerries were throwing counter-battery at it. Most of us just lay in the sun and I for one went to sleep. After about an hour we proceeded, with an occasional shell still coming in, to the edge of town and in to houses. Here we were in Oggersheim, a suburb of Ludwigshafen, and the streets ran straight and parallel for the first time in Europe. We waited outside until the people got some of their things moved out, and then we really took over. I was on guard first, and I remember the hate and hostile look in the people's eyes, and I kept my carbine casually across my lap. We slept and wrote letters in the afternoon, taking turns on the bathing and shaving. That night the moon was bright again, and we kept ourselves in the shadows while on guard as protection against potential sniping. Supper was late that night, but we had hot chow.

Somewhere in Germany
(Oggersheim)
March 23, 1945
Number 81

Dear Folks,

Well, this week I added two countries to my European list. Just a year ago today I arrived in A Co. having come to the division the day before. Also as per Marion's letter of the 6th which I received yesterday (not getting any the six days I was en route to and from and in Brussels) I see today is class day. It's just about noon at home and I imagine the kids will soon be streaming theater-ward. We had beautiful weather the whole time in Brussels and since. We left Wed. noon and arrived at Div. Rest at 9:30 that eve. Next morning I came back to the kitchen and eventually to the company. I should like to describe all the activities but the Sun will do as well.

Yesterday I got the box of jam, jelly, and candles. Very good. You might send some more and keep the candles rolling. I also had a box from Auntie M mailed Feb. 23 and it may have been there several days. Most excellent. Right on hand I have Ditty's of Mar. 3, one from Aunt Lula, Mother's 130-133, her clippings of Feb. 15 and folder and Classmate of Feb. 18. More later.

Love to all,
E.

Oggersheim
3/23/45

(written on back of a menu from "Huyler's")

Auntie M. sent this to me and I'm just using it to write on. Enclosed is a Siege edition of the S&S. See bottom of col. 4, p. 3. Imagine my surprise reading it in Brussels. Also a Belgian 10 franc note. We had to change our money. 88 Belgian fr = 100 French ones; a meal ticket left from late sleeping one morning, my pass with endorsements as I partook of various activities, and my room check.

E.

Somewhere in Germany
(Oggersheim)
March 23, 1945

Dear Auntie M,

We returned from Brussels Wed. afternoon and evening,

and here I've added another country besides Belgium to my list. When I came back to the company I received your package of Feb. 23. That was less than four weeks and must have come sometime while I was away. It carried very well and I'm enjoying the contents. Let me know what you read in the papers from last week on. We have had some interesting experiences since I got back.

Just a year ago today I joined "A" Co. How many miles since then by everything but airplane, I guess! Come the week after Easter and we'll have earned our first "Hershey Bar," a gold overseas bar representing six months over, worn on lower left sleeve. I see many with five or six of them. Heaven forbid! Well, Happy Easter, a little late.

Love and kisses,
E.

Sat. morning, 24 March

It was another nice day and we began the move to Schifferstadt about 10 a.m. It was a Bn deal and we started down the street to the corner and then right, where we'd watched Jerry prisoners being taken the day before. The day grew warm, and we with it. Dave Wagner had gone on the quartering party, so I had 3rd squad. The route was very roundabout and we still had to go 5 km when we left Iggelheim, which had been the original destination. A lot of the boys fell out and D Co's jeeps earned their keep that day picking them up and letting them ride. We found ourselves in very nice houses and Si rejoined us, having done some of the ordering around. He and I had a bed in the basement, which was level with the ground. It was a very nice deal. Here one of the women asked Si, "Haben Sie eine Mutter?" and Stahly was told that five families were living in one house, to which he replied, "Last winter five soldiers lived in one foxhole."

Palm Sunday, March 25

The next morning, we had to search the town for Jerries and weapons. It was divided up among the companies and by the companies into platoon area. This was really our biggest time for souvenir hunting. Many pistols, swords, and uniforms were found, and in the basement of the Rathaus we found dozens of swastika flags and banners. In the evening Chap. Lecrone had a service in the theatre which we enjoyed. Monday the 26th found them tightening down on us with petty regulations by the wastebasket full. They even wanted us to call the non-coms by title! We had to take weapons, belts and gas masks to chow, two

houses away, and we always had so much junk that once Dave Wagner forgot his mess gear! Bn was in the same block and Papa Strickler always had the latest dope, rumors, and intimations hot off the wire from regiment. We went to the movies once or twice and of course “enjoyed” a training schedule of close order drill in the streets and the worst old classes. We were foolish enough to believe that exemplary behavior might keep us in occupation duty while others pressed on. “What fools we morons be!” (One day while I was sitting on my bed, I took advantage of the opportunity to change the ammo in my pistol magazine. Some new, non-corroded rounds had come in to the supply sgt. It seemed to be the easiest to get the old rounds out by running the slide back and forth. Then I deliberately aimed the pistol toward the potato bin and pulled the trigger to let it forward. Luckily I had remembered the old rule, “Never point a weapon at anyone unless you intend to kill him.” Bob Schoewe was sitting or lounging on the bed near me, and if the rule hadn't stuck in my mind, he could easily have been a dead duck. There was a terrible roar that filled the whole cellar, and the round that remained in the magazine went plunging into the potato bin. That was quite a scare.) The electricity, of course, was not on, and the water only occasionally. During the week, in fact on Good Friday, Marlena Dietrich appeared not too far from us. It was there she gave a famous rendition of the more and more popular “Lili Marlene.”

Somewhere in Germany
(Schifferstadt)
March 26, 1945
Number 83

Dear Sis,

I have already written home that I received your letter of March 6. However, I usually write home in the regular sequence. When I saw the envelope, I guessed that your abbreviations referred to the Cadet Nurse Corps. I hadn't really thought much about your activities beyond the middle of June. Indeed it really didn't seem necessary because we who are used to measuring time in our progressing school year have a feeling almost that time is standing still. A person wouldn't put “C.N.” or “N.C.” (which is it?) on your name yet, would he? Don't we wait until Sept.? It's been beautiful lately for us and I just finished shaking some of our blankets. We all feel it's too nice a day for a war.

I had quite a bit of mail today—from Lee, the Feb.

Messenger, Jane, Mother's clippings, and Ditty's Classmate besides the Alexanders' cookies, Auntie M's donuts and your very nice picture. I've received many compliments on it. Thanks a lot. I am sending a box home with some stuff I want the folks to send on to some of the boys' folks. More explanation later.

Love,
E.

Somewhere in Germany
(Schifferstadt)
March 27, 1945

Dear Auntie M,

Well, your box of donuts and sugar came yesterday along with a box from the Alexanders in Fayetteville. Today brought a package from home and one from Jane. They are doubly welcome when we are able to consume them at our leisure. Because of the Brussels trip and the causes of my new heading, I haven't done much writing lately, but tonight already this is my third and I intend to keep going. The donuts were a bit hard, but we all enjoyed them very much. I also have your letters of Feb. 28 and March 12 if I haven't already written that.

I'll put a request in for some candles although I had six big fat ones come today. Your dozen are still on the way. Everyone should enclose several in each box. I'll just let this paragraph be a regular request though. We are making out fine, and everything is bursting forth with green.

Love,
E.

Schifferstadt
March 28, 1945
Number 85

Dear Beth,

This is my seventh and last letter for today. Tonight I was to a special Holy Week service about 6:00 and then at 8:30 we went to see *Here Come the Waves*. Today I had Mother's number 140. Tell Mother that my term "PTA" means "personal transfer account." It concerns these checks and things that are handled by the army finance dept. without actually touching the money. Also tell her that she has followed my instructions very well.

I heard from Auntie Ceel today also. There are supposed to be services tomorrow and Friday also. They're trying to

get something a little extra for Easter. I can't know just what will be possible.

I'm expecting to get some gloves and things (in a box Auntie M. sent) sent home because we don't need them now. Today the box with canned milk, Borden's cocoa powder, etc. came. The flashlight from yesterday works fine—how bright.

Love to all,
E.

Schifferstadt
March 29, 1945
Number 86

Dear Folks,

Today there was no mail for me and I've spent the letter writing time catching up and talking. (Where do I get the latter ability from?) So I've already dropped V-mails to Jane and Auntie Ceel making this my seventeenth letter in three nights.

Also today I felt very something or other when I heard the division band play "In der Fuhrer's Face" right here in the fatherland.

This morning at 11 Chap. Lecrone had his Holy Thursday communion service. Since his assistant was gone after supplies and the hymnals were in the jeep (except for 3 or 4) I played the piano, picking hymns I could play, and a group of the better singers with the books helped those singing from memory.

I think we'll have a bite to eat and drink shortly and then to bed.

Love to all,
E.

Thurs., March 29

Chap. L. had a communion service on Thurs., March 29, and a Good Friday one the 30th.

Towards the end of the week the rumor that we were going to move on grew stronger.

Finally it appeared Sat. would be the day. We waited all afternoon and into the dusk before the trucks arrived and we got on. Of course there weren't enough and we were really jammed in. I guess with the whole division on the move we had our share. Huff and I, with several others, were sitting on the tailgate of a 2½ ton and two or three finally climbed up onto the roof. We went up to Ludwigshafen to cross the Rhine just upstream from the kaput railroad bridge. I think the moon was shining and there were searchlights which together with the

wreckage made a very eerie scene. It seemed almost symbolic for us to be crossing the Rhine, the undisputed western natural German boundary and the theme of so much literature. The goal for us back at Bitche had been “the Rhine by Easter” and here we were, crossing about ten minutes before twelve the night before. Ludwigshafen and Mannheim were the first really wasted cities we'd ever seen. In fact, they were the largest places the division had ever gone through tactically. Some buildings were still burning, and one could see nothing but desolation from the back of the truck in the dark.

Easter morning, April 1

About 12:30 a.m., the convoy stopped at Edingen, just south of Mannheim and on the west bank of the Neckar. We piled out of the trucks and into the already procured houses. I think I was on guard about 7:00 and slept with Haffner on the floor while two others had the bed. In the morning I saw we were right on the edge of the Neckar River with fair-sized mountains reaching up from the plain on the other side. It was announced that Protestant services would be held at 10:00, as I remember, so a group of us took off shortly beforehand. We went back up the street from the river and turned left; as we continued a main road seemed to come in from our right rear and the church was straight ahead on it, on the right side. When we got there it was already fairly full and our group went to the left front. Except for broken glass and fallen plaster, the church was in pretty good condition. Civilians had previously cleaned up the pews for us. Of course, we had our weapons and it was surely a modern version of the Pilgrims going to church. A number of civilians came to stand in the back and Chap. L., fearful of wolves in sheep's clothing, had one or two of the boys stay at the door in case any of the SSers, suddenly transformed, should start something. We were still rear echelon at this point, and a good many of the congregation were engineers and members of the other outfits. The organ even played with Sinc presiding and I remember how good it sounded. We sang “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today” twice because of the scarcity of Easter hymns in the field hymnal. The war wasn't over yet (Heilbronn began the 3rd and lasted to the 12th), but the victory of Easter seemed to fit in very well with the current frame of mind.

Right after dinner we moved by truck a town or two southwest, crossing over the railroad and autobahn and ending up closer to the Rhine. This kuh-dorf (cow town) was Plankstadt. Once more we did some “rousing” and got ourselves settled in houses. We were

on very short notice, but as evening approached, the tension dropped, and we prepared to spend the night.

Sun. Eve., April 1, 1945
Easter
Somewhere in Germany

Dear Auntie M,

Your letter of March 24 came yesterday in just seven days. I had four letters last week in just seven days. That's the best time I've ever had mail in from home.

I want to tell you about our Easter. All last week we had appropriate services for Holy Week despite a rather liquid situation. Today Chap. Lecrone secured permission to hold the service in a Lutheran church. This is the first time we have run into Protestant areas. If they only have a Catholic church, regulations don't let us use the opposite faith's buildings. So this is my first time to be in a church at all in Europe.

There is only one Easter hymn, "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" in the small field hymnal; so we did a very unusual thing by singing that both at the beginning and end. Incidentally, we had an organ, which the chap's asst. played while two boys pumped. We sang a number of other hymns during the service also.

Today was quite typical of A.C.; Easter wasn't especially nice but very spring-like. I didn't see much in the clipping about our division but Jane sent me a paragraph about us at Bitche. It also took care of us very well in the *Stars and Stripes*.

I suppose the papers are still very interesting and no doubt will continue to be until the end.

Well, now to bed. I seem to be quite tired and plan to go shortly.

Love,
E.

Mon. Apr. 2

Next morning, we saw more evidence of our progress when we turned our watches ahead an hour to be on Cent. Eur. Summer Time. Up to this day we'd been on Shoef time, the same as London. Of course no one told the 4th platoon, and we got to breakfast an hour late. That morning we had more close order drill and while they were playing baseball, Wilkie

sprained his ankle. The remainder of the day was fairly commonplace and the night was quiet.

Tues., Apr. 3

After breakfast, we began to move somewhere; the destination was entirely unknown to us, and one wonders in what echelon knowledge began. We went south through Waldorf (where I noticed the Astona Hotel) and stopped at the town of Dielheim. No more were we half settled in our houses when Blaha's famous "Saddle up, we're moving out!" struck us, and we got onto trucks once again. The convoy had wheeled vehicles and tanks both; once one of the tanks became disabled on a narrow road (we were already using the back ones to find bridges) so the whole procession went cross-country until it found a likely spot to get on the road. This was Baden province, and it was very pretty as we left the Rhine plain; we were reminded (we Easterners who live in part of the Appalachians) of home. Except for the high rate of cultivation resulting in terraced hillsides, the mountains were much more our type than the French ones. We went through Bad Rappenau and stopped at Bad Wempfen. The mortar section had a nice house on the edge of town and we once more got settled. During the evening we began our guard on three Jerry-occupied hospitals filled with PW's. At first I was on the one near the blown Neckar bridge, surely a dismal, cold and detached spot. We unofficially designated them by numbers, but I forget them by now. It seems we had three hours on and six off. The closest one was large, and we had the usual linguistic difficulties. The one I spent the most time at was on a bluff overlooking the river and the valley spreading out around the loops of the stream. The view was wonderful from here and a nearby tower was used as a Bn OP (Observation point). We saw many examples of the mixed-up situation that prevailed from Easter to V.E. One time our shells would be exploding out to the front and we'd see vehicles including jeeps on the highway nearby. The new national emblem of Germany, the white cloth without decorations, was very much in evidence. The personnel in these hospitals were all PW's including both patients and staff and we had trouble making some of the stubborn Teutonic doctors listen to us. We didn't have anything but mental battles with them and I don't believe they put anything over on us.

Bad Wimpfen

April 5, 1945

Dear Beth,

Well, it was six months ago Sunday that I saw any of you and that surpasses the length of time I was at Benning and Bragg before my furlough. As Auntie M says, we are eligible for a "Hershey Bar" (6 mos. Overseas stripe). Several times lately, in fact all the time, we have "peated and repeated" incidents that have happened and places we've been. In some ways it seems a long time and other ways not. Being on the move so much besides the traveling around to the hospital and Brussels makes one stop and think to get things in order mentally once in awhile.

Today I had the folder and Roosevelt play folder from Ditty, Easter card from the folks, Mother's soap leaves with your algebra paper, which was very nice (I went to Mrs. Waggoner for that subject), Mother's envelope with the clipping about me and vesper services program, and a letter from Mark. Reassure Marion that I shall remember her admonitions when answering it. He commented about receiving her picture.. Tell Mother the only person she met that is in my platoon is Lee Reese. Today I got Ida's salt water taffy. Keep sending candles.

Love to all,
E.

Bad Wimpfen I
April 6, 1945
Number 91

Dear Folks,

Today we had a pretty good mail call. It was all "envelope" type of mail. I had Mother's regular with Beth's marks and the clipping about me from G&B, Ditty's envelope of Foundry Facts and soap leaves, Marion's air mail all about class day, air mails from Jane, Tillie A. (with the enclosed clipping), and Auntie M. Tillie marked the paragraph about Lee. I also had G'pa and Ma's Easter greeting. I seem to have a lot of writing to catch up on, because I haven't done too much in the last week or so.

I haven't looked at "Contact" yet, but it seems like a very good idea. Besides what I've already mentioned, two C.A's and a *Sun* came today. Likewise I haven't read them yet.

There is nothing to report in the general line of news. Of course this is quite a usual statement from me.

Both Beth and Marion's report cards looked very good to me—also the various activities. I'll make a request for something to eat. Until later,

Love to all,
E.

Friday, Apr. 6

During the evening, we were told that our bn. would cross the Neckar the next morning. We got all ready to leave and went to bed.

Saturday, Apr. 7

I think we got up about 4:00 Sat. morning, and after the usual hemming and hawing, the Bn. walked through town and down the winding road that led to the pontoon foot bridge. Just as it was getting light we crossed the river; B & C Co's were in front and A was in reserve. The town on the other side was Offenau and we went through it and up a dirt road that finally put us on a paved road leading into Obergriesheim. After some waiting here we went down into the valley and across the Jagst River, doubling back into the town of Untergriesheim. After another wait we went to the edge of town and dug in for the night. All day, of course, I'd been carrying our mortar. Just after we'd secured straw for our holes and plasterboard to cover them, and lost Hart to battle fatigue, we were told to move to help B & C Co's who had finally run into trouble after a fairly quiet day. Just before this we'd observed two Jerry jet-propelled fighter planes drop several bombs despite our curtain of ack-ack fire. I thought we were going to run into something (the Krauts had fired at light tanks that were up over the hill), but since the rest of the Bn. was told to hold, we did the same. We'd moved only a couple hundred yards, but we had to dig new holes. While the excitement was still on I had set up our mortar along the edge of the road, being much bothered by John Perales' admonitions to hurry and do thus-and-so. Schoewe got a case of battle fatigue and he was sent back to Bn aid station. During the night the Jerries kept throwing in time fire which burst over the road back towards town. It was cold at night when we had only raincoats and the clothes we were wearing to keep us warm. They brought sandwiches and coffee up during the night.

Apr. 8

The next morning, we got up from our newly-dug holes about dawn and learned that A Co. would be leading. That day we went several hundred yards farther from the town, parallel to the road, river and railroad. After we made a left turn we went up the hill and emerged in rolling fields. The company ran into trouble and we hurried along the edges, being troubled mostly by a small arms fire. We fired some smoke rounds and received fire from artillery including *nebelwerfers* (rocket mortar, screamin' meemies). The rifle platoons were really catching it, and it wasn't long until we heard that eight were killed and several more in each platoon wounded. It was a beautiful day, April 8, and we spent the whole time improving our "homes." I was with Dave Wagner, with the mortar about 10 yds. away. Tanks and TD's came up to fire during the morning; one of these was hit with a panzerfaust (German bazooka). It didn't knock the tank out; but one of the crew was killed. It seems that we went back some distance for supper and bedrolls that night and one man had to stay awake all night in each hole because of the ticklishness of the situation. It was established later that the day before C Co. had been facing an SS Regiment, and this whole period was the 1st Bn's contribution to Heilbronn. (This was the day that Pfc Mike Colallilo of C Co. got the CMH.) [Congressional Medal of Honor]

Mon., Apr. 9

The next morning, we had breakfast and stayed in the same places. While some of us stayed by the guns the others went back to a draw to dig alternate positions. Later the same day the whole mortar section moved back one knoll and put the guns in battery. Either that night or the next, or both, we fixed one gun on a crossroads to the front, using a pre-arranged but irregular schedule both as to interval between and number of rounds in concentrations.

Tues., Apr. 10

We took turns going back to Untergriesheim to wash at the house maintained for the purpose by Bn Hq Co's A & P platoon. It was quite warm weather and we benefited by it. Si had to escort Maj. McCrum to T. Sgt. Bill Stoddard's 3rd platoon CP so he could view the situation.

Wed. morning, April 11

We were to start out over the hill toward Odheim. No one expected to find anything, and sure enough we got clear to the crossroads we'd been firing on and turned left before the company stopped. Some of the time 88's came in but we had holes pretty well fixed and no one got hurt. There were tanks or TD's with us and about noon we walked on down the road and found other positions fairly close to the river. About dusk, after we'd dug other holes and Blaha had shot the lock off a concrete shelter that had a depth of less than a foot, we were relieved by the 2nd Bn, 398th. Our Bn walked back up the road, straight past the crossroads and to a castle-like group of buildings where we ate supper. Then onto trucks and back to Bad Wimpfen. The route was through Untergriesheim to Offenau, where we walked across the footbridge and back up the hill to Bad Wimpfen. After some waiting we finally were put in our same houses as the previous week and got settled down. This time I was on the first floor instead of the second, into the room to the right where there was a piano and desk, etc. I lived with Crocken (*Nelson-sing-to-me, hit-the-high-note*), Chichester, Dave Wagner, and maybe some others. It was so late when we got in that we all went to sleep right away.

Thursday, April 12

We cleaned ourselves, our personal weapons and the mortar. Dave Wagner helped us as usual, although it wasn't his job especially. Haffner, who was my asst. gunner, took the tube to a nearby ordnance place to get the base cap off: it was full of carbon from so much firing. That evening we went to see the movie *Thin Man Comes Home* in the local theater and got back about 9:00. That night Schoewe, who was helping in the kitchen until he felt better, slept with us and the house was back to usual strength. The weather during this period was often damp and chilly but not really cold. The machine gunners were living with us because their former house wasn't any good, so it was really quite full.

(We had church in the Protestant church built in 1354.)

Bad Wimpfen II
April 12, 1945

Number 93

Dear Sis,

As I've already written to someone else I had your grand long letter of March 26 telling all about Class Day. Except for the enclosure I'd hardly write an air mail because I am so far behind in my writing. Already this morning I've written to Sears, Ida (thanking for the salt water taffy I received a week ago), Auntie M, and Jane. I expect to keep going as long as possible.

I guess I just naturally thought you'd be going out to Williamsport Hospital. Did Strong Memorial have some sort of special offer? We've had no letter mail since night before last and there may be some soon. The folders I enclose were sent to me by Steve Eckstein, whom I mentioned yesterday. I sent him several of ours, including the one telling about Mother being WSCS pres. I heard from Mark again recently—maybe I did tell you.

I also have Mother's of 150, 151 and 152. Tell Mother that Lee's sister Rachael and his mother remember me with a card every holiday and I wish she'd do the same. Who was Betty Klinger before she married Jack?? I've been away long enough that I forget some of these things.

Well, I guess this is all for now. I did get the Feb. 9 Sun today. Thinking about conference.

Love to all,
E.

Friday, April 13, 1945

The next day, which was our second Friday the 13th since leaving the States, we got paid about mid-morning and learned of the death of Pres. Roosevelt for the first time. It was absolutely unbelievable that a man who had planned the war as much as he should not live to see the end. Everyone began speculating about Vice Pres. Truman about whom, as a very new man in the job, we knew very little. After dinner many went to the matinee, but I stayed in to write letters. It wasn't long until they told us we'd been alerted to move again, and the movie-goers returned. The whole thing happened so fast that we were moving down the street before we knew it. This time regiment was going with the battalion and we walked to the footbridge once more while the vehicles lined up to wait their turn for a ferry ride. This time we turned right, going upstream along the right bank of the Neckar. Our route was through the same area we'd surveyed from the hospital OP the previous week and we passed through Offenau, Jagstfeld, Bad Friedrichshall and Rochendorf. It was a very tiring walk, but

everyone made it. We finally stopped for the night in the very much pounded town of Neckarsulm, just downstream from Heilbronn. The latter city had been declared cleared, and the division was pushing on after nine days of room-to-room fighting. We slept in a fair apartment-house-like building after being fed in front of the company CP.

Sat., April 14

We were up before dawn and began by eating breakfast and taking our bedding rolls to the co. CP. We loaded onto trucks and “ducks” and rode to Wernsberg, where we dismounted. There were many by-passes where the road was blocked by mines or fallen trees. We passed one Kaserne [barracks] on the right side which was quite shot up. We got our weapons off the jeeps and started out through the town and walked through Ellhofen. Just before coming into Wellsbach our battalion was stopped with small arms fire. Shortly afterwards, several barrages of *nebelwerfers* landed across the valley, at least scaring us. Andy Porter and I dived in the same available hole at once and after that we moved slowly up toward the town, stopping quite often. For a time we rested by the Bn CP which was in a school house or the Rathaus. Our company had been in the Bn reserve all day and vehicles had been passing us all day from both bn. and regt. We moved on through most of the town and waited for a time on the edge at the side of a lane. The D Co. mortar platoon had one of their radios very near our platoon and we heard the calls for barrages going back and forth. B Co. seemed to be in a little trouble so we used the back alleys and lanes until we were right on the outskirts of town. Here someone hollered back that there were some boiled eggs in a house for anyone who would rescue them from the hot water. We were on a wide lane with a building at intervals along it. All of a sudden a Jerry machine gun opened up from across the field and a spent ricochet hit me on the back. King's mortar squad was called to fire on a spot across this field and about the same time tanks, firing both automatic weapons and .90mm went across in one of the few examples of book-like coordination I ever saw. Most of the Krauts gave up and our company moved on up the road which entered a draw. We were pulling our weapons in hand carts. This draw made an almost right angle with the main road and route of advance. Soon a left fork was reached which paralleled the main road. Across a sort of clearing was another draw leading to the left. The two draws were the equal sides of an isosceles triangle, the main road being the base and the path across the clearing subtending the triangle to make

a triangle. We were into the second draw, really just gullies with lanes in them when a *nebelwerfer* barrage came sailing in. The rockets all landed in town and set fire to a building near the bn. aid station. We stopped soon and the mortar section went back to the first draw to set up the guns and dig in for the night. Chow and rolls finally came up, and it was plenty cool. Next morning, early, we were up and the things started again.

Sun., April 15

I ate chow with the second group and we moved over to draw No. 2 to await movement. One of the rifle platoons sent out a patrol to see if there was anything ahead in the woods and they found nothing. We had dug holes again meanwhile, feeling that if the Jerries had anything to use, they'd put it on draw and be zeroed in. Finally the Bn started to move. We went back up No. 2 draw to the upper base of the trapezoid and turned left down a winding trail and then left again parallel to woods. Soon we entered these woods and started climbing the hill ahead. We still had our wagons with us and were determined to hang on to them. It was a tough grind, but with Martin's upper strength we made it. There was a break at the top before we descended through orchards quite steeply into the village of Hossensuls. There were dugouts along the road and co. hqs. group picked up several prisoners after all the rest had passed. We stopped temporarily in a house and fixed something to eat—eggs and bread with jam, a very common lunch during this period. A little later we were assigned to other houses supposedly for somewhat of a stay (anything over a half-hour it seemed). We did get a little rested and Si was giving the lady of the house a lecture on politics when we moved again. Several more barrages of *nebelwerfers* had landed within earshot during this time. Instead of moving toward Lowenstein, as had been planned, we turned left, parallel to the front to relieve the 3rd Bn somewhere. As we were moving along, just outside of town we got some sniper fire and they decided to leave the road and use a knoll for protection. We were hurrying across an open spot in the lee of the knoll and had stopped (when the first elements of the co. reached the aforementioned main road). At this point even with the D Co. machine guns mixed up with our platoon, a barrage of *nebelwerfers* came straight at us. The concussion is so strong that they seemed to be closer than they were. They raised a great cloud of smoke and dust, but they landed safely, just across the brow of a little hill from us. Martin still hung onto the wagon, though, and we pressed on until the whole company was in

perfect defilade. After another wait, during which the bn. aid jeep came after one or two wounded, we moved along the valley back toward Wellsbach, keeping a good 20 yd interval. At a convenient bridge we turned right and went over the ridge at Affatrach. On the other side we saw an FA drifter moving in or out; we were surprised since we'd been moving along the front. Of course there really was no "front" those days. About dusk we got chow and went to bed after some reading and writing. I had my guard early and got washed in a room near the front of the building. I was upstairs with Si, Dave and I suppose Schoewe, while Blake, Huff, Harding, and Dave slept in a room beyond us. During the afternoon, as the co. was moving in, a single mortar or 88 shell scared Sgt. Henson and me inside a doorway while we were talking. The house, cruddy that it was, was much better than the hole of the previous night.

Mon., April 16, 1945

We got up at a decent hour to find a beautiful day with the sun streaming in the window. After breakfast we carried our rolls down and threw them out the window. In a short time the company moved through town out a road along the edge of the valley. It was another day too beautiful for war and we enjoyed the bright, warm sunshine. The first town was Eschenau where we halted momentarily near a little ? while someone decided what fork of the road we'd take. We went to the left, more or less parallel to the railroad but without crossing it. Instead of going all around a little hill we went over just the edge of it and proceeded on a laney-road to the town of Wieslensdorf. Here we took the weapons off the jeeps and put them in the wagons. Just before noon we left this place and started generally east over a gentle rise, when some of the company was stopped by snipers. Soon a shell or two came in and the mortar section spread out along a draw running at right angles to the line of march. We set the guns up and dug pretty good holes for ourselves. Shells came in intermittently and the situation wasn't helped any when some of our own tanks came up and began to draw fire. The shells seemed to be just missing our holes as they skimmed over. We were afraid the tanks might run over us in our holes as they withdrew. About this time Andy Porter brought about twelve prisoners back and when we remonstrated at his casual standing up, he scoffed about using caution in the "rear etch-ay-lon" (mortar section). After dark we went back to Wieslensdorf, the Co. rear CP for supper and bed rolls. I got my guard over early that

night and before I went to sleep I put my raincoat over my hole and read my mail. During the day one of our machine guns was knocked out by a mortar. When Kimmey was talking to Huff about sending the prisoners back, K. said over the 536 radio in his booming voice, “I will not go myself –I will send two of my men with the eleven pri-son-nores.” Huff replied, “Damned decent of you, out!”

Smitty, as he was generally known, was a very beloved soldier to all of us who met him, and I ain't just sayin' that....Everyone loved him. And I can still see him in his winter garb standing about six-foot-two with his scarf...knitted perhaps by one of his sisters, all bundled up as we all tried to do against the weather. He was quite a sight.

- As recorded by Robert R. Huffman, May 20, 1998

Tues. April 17

Next morning, we rolled our rolls and went back to the town for breakfast. Afterwards, we moved out the same way, just to where an adjoining road came in and turned right. We went up a little hill and down the other side on an extension of this same road through or near the villages of Kriegsholzer and Hohenacker. At the bottom we stopped for fried eggs provided from a large house. During this rat race we practically existed on fresh eggs. Then we started up the hill on the opposite side and had to hand-carry the weapons while someone (usually Martin) dragged along the carts for use on easier stretches. We rested after the tough climb and went down the other side. We stopped on a kind of lumber trail and went up the other side to the woods just outside Herrenholz where we “enjoyed” K rations and apples. From here we could see down into Unterhumbach and Bill Stoddard’s platoon (3rd) led the way. Imagine our disgust when we found Maj. McCrum already there after we busted our backs to come in tactically and “take” the place. We went down a very steep green hill into the place, and ammo was flying every way. As we left the town we had to walk along the edge of the road because of mines and tree road blocks. The road led upgrade and we walked past engineers working to clear obstructions. It was a tough time and I was exhausted when we reached Oberhumbach, where we recuperated for a time. We counted on staying here for the

night but about suppertime we pushed off to help B & C Co's who were having a little trouble. We went still farther up the valley until we reached a field just outside Neuhutten. We deployed and waited until the Co. moved into the town. Si and I pulled our cart most of the way, being careful not to drag it over the holes in the road, filled in with gravel and masked with something white, where mines were hidden. Some whole stretches of ten yards or so were graveled just to cause confusion. Supper was very late that night because road blocks were put up behind us and the jeep couldn't get through. I forget if I ate or not, but I was dead tired.

Neuhütten
April 17, 1945
No. 95

Dear Beth,

I haven't written since last Fri. and tonight we are dead tired, and I mean it—after a full day before from dawn to dusk. Although I had a bit of mail last night, my first in six days, that is all and I won't comment on it. My only reason for writing this is to let you know I'm OK. When mail doesn't come, I know you're apt to worry.

There has been beautiful weather lately and it no doubt has helped us very much. I imagine that my letters won't be too frequent from here on because we don't have the time that came with an inactive winter period.

The blossoms are out now, and we all wonder how people that live in such a nice place could do such awful things. Until the next time,

Love to all,
E.

Wed. morning, April 18

We got up not too early by the standards of those days and had breakfast before we started out pulling our carts loaded with weapons. Just outside town on the dirt trail the jeeps came along and picked up our burdens. We hung onto the wagons though. The route lay along these trails and lanes, and we passed through several very small villages until we came to a main highway and turned to the left. As we proceeded we overtook C Company, and sitting on the left bank was Craig Foster, whom I hadn't seen since I went to the hospital Nov. 21,

1944. We continued on until the town of Mainhardt lay to our left front. Just on the edge of the burg we turned right and south on a road that inclined to the left into thick woods. We overtook a convoy of some armored outfit containing even ambulances and soon found ourselves in an area with scrub trees and soil like Ft. Bragg. The way wound back and forth until it descended to a stream and crossed it. Soon after we were on the other side the company started up a steep hill trying to follow a “trail.” Thanks to Lt. Hamelin, we left our weapons on the trailers, which went around a different way. At the top of the climb we hovered in the woods while the next town of Schonbronn was investigated. We ate K rations in a cellar and filled our canteens in the house and got on the road once more in one of those “hurry-up-and-wait” moves. Soon we all sat down to wait and I fell asleep. The patrol which was sent out ahead was fired upon and one of the boys in the second platoon (from California) was shot in the leg. Lt. Henson said that if we were fired on by snipers one more time, he would burn the whole town – and had received permission from battalion to do it (why he didn’t have to go thru channels to 6th Army Group know one will ever know). In due time, we moved out the road and came to the metropolis of Grab. On the way we noticed a dead Kraut on the right who looked as if he had been killed while asleep. A tank or TD Bn was in the place and had fired incendiary tracers into a house until it began to burn. This was in keeping with their policy of burning every house where a tardy, active sniper remained. As we continued toward Morbach the townsfolk began to stream back to their homes from the surrounding forest. These three towns lay in a horseshoe-shaped pattern and all were under the burgomeister of Grab. In Morbach we waited until tanks, supplemented by the D co. jeep allotted to us, picked us up. I noticed one old house with the cornerstone marked 1649. Our progress was fairly slow because of the lumbering tanks, but about dusk we reached Steinberg. We ate supper before going to our houses, and Andy Porter got a chance to go back to “K Kahmpany” since many of their men were captured at Heilbronn. The parlor of our house had quite a large pump organ and I played it some. We thought we needed more bedding and mattresses so went across the road to another house. The things we got all smelled musty and Dave Wagner found a large black beetle in his mattress. We joked about him sharing the blanket with Dobbin.

Thurs., April 19

It was a beautiful spring day and everyone caught up on eating, writing, and washing. From the back of the house we had a fine view of the surrounding hills. We ate an early supper and had quite a bit of mail. Brodsky re-joined the company after leaving Lemberg with jaundice. It had been quite a chase to catch up. The mission of the A co. task force was to go thru a town or two that had been previously cleared and check up on a place that hadn't been looked at. So once more the convoy of tanks started down the little valley toward the resort town of Murrhardt. Just at the edge of it, we were greeted with a burst from a burp gun. All the "passengers" jumped off the armor and we from the 4th platoon got our weapons from the jeep trailer. We stayed on the hill side of the road, walking in the ditch with the vehicles between us and the hill on the opposite side of the valley from which the first firing had come. By this time the company weapons had opened up and there was a real din coming from the tanks, which were using automatic weapons and cannon. We crossed the little stream and hurried on from building to building, not knowing much about the situation. Just at the outskirts Maj. McCrum had been lying in the ditch beside his jeep firing his carbine at dear knows what and shouting something like, "Keep on going, there isn't much of anything." We did keep going and crossed the railroad and the Murr River where the bridge was out. At this point Si and somebody else were sent to look for possible crossings for the tanks. I thought we were going to lose Schoewe again but he stuck, thanks to our words of encouragement. Poor Haffner with his below-par eyes suddenly grabbed for someone's weapon and said, "Give me your carbine, quick! I can't hit a thing with this" (meaning his pistol). He had seen a chicken dashing around in a camp or a back yard. Morgan threw an incendiary grenade into a house, and the fire lighted the sky the remainder of the evening. Everyone was out removing the rubble from the streets and soon the company, with the remainder of the Bn., began to push south and up the mountain. There was one roadblock after another of heavy trees felled across the road. We went through and around them, always lugging our weapons and trying to keep track of two prisoners, the older of which continued to protest he was a "Luxembourger." We made them carry our ammo all the way, and I guess they had quite a hard time of it. At the first town at the top of the hill we stopped and on hearing a few shots fired everyone dashed for cover including Perales who was watching the prisoners. We got into a shed and I dozed off. Shortly we moved upstairs into a house and lay down on the floor. On the edge of town we had waited while a group of people

(presumably the last Krauts in the place) noisily trailed off into the darkness. We were all tired, cold and hungry, and our tempers were short. We turned right at the "T" road junction and didn't go far before we stopped again in the woods. I think they sent a patrol out to some spot while the rest of us dozed and shivered.

Steinberg
April 19, 1945
Number 96

Dear Folks,

No more mail since I last wrote, and consequently I have no comments to make along that line. Today we are in a house with a nice little parlor organ. It is pumped of course. There are about 15 stops on it, and I've had lots of fun. As soon as I finish this I think I'll play some more.

I've sent Mother a *Stars and Stripes* in two envelopes, which describe the rites for Pres. Roosevelt. We heard about it as a rumor before noon on the 13th but it took us awhile to believe it. No matter what our former attitudes or statements have been, we feel very bad about his passing. As Mrs. R. said, his loss to the nation and world is greater than that to the family.

I wish I could send you all the issues for the previous week, but like mail the S&S has been reaching us irregularly.

Love to all,
E.

Fri., April 20, 1945

Not long before dawn the engineers' power saw, used to cut through road blocks caught up to us, and the tanks and TD's we left outside Murrhardt were right behind. Once again we pushed off, with the breeze resulting from the ride making us colder than ever. We criss-crossed the area through nameless towns and waited occasionally for the saws to do their work. One place we ate a "K" ration and another place everyone built fires or huddled over the exhaust of the TDs. After it had been light several hours, but still wasn't very late we stopped on a fairly open and straight stretch and Lt. Blaha said, "Get the weapons off the vehicles." There wasn't a jeep in sight in either direction and my overtired and exasperated nervous system blew its top: I said, "Well, where *are* the vehicles?" Blaha, with his biting accent said, "Don't ask such asinine questions!" We finally got the mortars and proceeded

through a very large mess of felled trees into the village of Althütte. We turned east and went through part of town, finally turning off on a lane which led through a descending draw to a settlement of two or three houses, almost surrounded by hills. We were surely glad to get settled for a little while in a place where we could rest. Most of us slept on the floor until dinner time when the chow ambled up. It was a beautiful day and in the afternoon we lay out on the grassy hill at the back of the house. The dwelling was built into the hillside so that the first floor was on the ground level at the front and the second story opened out on the hill at the back. Some of us were asleep on the bank behind the house when two lone and probably stray 88s came whizzing in and hit close enough that a piece of shrapnel chipped a bit of brick from the house. The first one I merely heard as if in a dream, but the second got me and the others inside the house once more. It turned out that those rounds were “the last hot of the war” for us since from that time on we were off line in one way or another. Morgan and I were on an early shift of guard together and I slept the rest of the night.

Sat., April 21, 1945

After breakfast they brought us a bunch of replacements and the 4th platoon got two, Swain in the m.g. section and Shelton in the mortars. One more always helps. About the middle of the morning we moved via truck right from the little company area in a little April shower. After some miles of riding, we dismounted in Winnenden and the 4th platoon established itself first in a house, and later in one building of a hospital where everyone had a bed and mattress. We surely needed the rest, so we were very lucky. Chow was very late that night, but we used the extra time for reading, talking and writing by candlelight.

Sun., April 22, 1945

We took showers in the morning at the unit set up in a field on the outskirts of town. Since Chap. Lecrone had gone to Paris on pass, and the 3rd Bn. with Chap. Sam Tyler was dear knows where, one of the artillery chaplains had a service for us after supper. During the afternoon I went to visit Foster and we went to church together. Some of our pessimists were sure that we were going to be in on the battle for Stuttgart.

Winnenden

April 22, 1945
Number 98

Dear Sis,

Your air mail of April 3 came Thurs. evening and I enjoyed it immensely. I decide to answer you in kind and wait the extra day until it was your turn. Today I got my pen and pencil set as you notice by the now unfamiliar ink. I certainly am glad for it and will be using it to good advantage.

I am glad you all got such benefits from your Easter flowers. Speaking of Sundays, we are to have a service at 7:30. Why the late hour I know not, but it will be light beyond that hour for some time. This afternoon I dropped over to the next street to see Craig Foster and have a chat. I discovered that he was wounded the day I rejoined the company in December and after about a month in France was sent to northern Wales and England. After he was really discharged, he had a week's furlough which he spent in Scotland around Glasgow and Loch Lomond!

Since you have mentioned it yourself I shall add comment about Mark. Although you have grown less fanatic about it and I've become more tolerant I still was very happy about it all and imagine the folks were too, although they no doubt tactfully reserved their opinion. I'll not be worrying at any rate.

As to the increase in my share of the letters I will be most happy. I guess you know I've always had my opinions, but when it comes to picking someone I am a bit perplexed. However, I intend to mentally and visually survey the field and then let you know.

I am anxious to see the Easter pictures. Here's hoping your plans for A.C. work out and you have a good time. I enclose a few railroad tickets I picked up and have been carrying around until the proper time came to send them home.

Today I had two boxes from Auntie M., numerous *Suns*, G'pa and G'ma's thank you letter, a booklet from Lucille Antes, letter from Jane, clippings and a heavy envelope of printed things from Ditty. Oh yes, a letter came from Auntie M. also. She seems to find numerous clippings about us Centurymen in her own and the metropolitan papers.

This is my first letter today but I expect to spend much of the evening in catching up.

I am enclosing also Dr. Gibson's letter because I feel it is rather unusual like Blanche Schleh's.

It rained most of the day but now it is very cool, bright and breezy. Once I detected the rumble of thunder,

but again, maybe it was just more of the war.

Well, it's time to get the churchgoers together so I'll close.

Love to all,
E.

Monday morning, April 23, 1945

We ate early and got our stuff ready to go. After carting our bedrolls up to the CP we got on trucks and ambled around the countryside, stopping in every little hamlet while the rifle platoons searched the houses. At one larger place we all got off and went into some houses for about an hour. The usual hunt for schnapps, etc. went on and some of the boys were plenty high. Their roughness toward each other frightened some of the German kids. As we came out to get on the trucks again, after learning that our division had been put in Army reserve, Maj. McCrum came along. Noting King's condition, Maj. M. said, "Will, this man's squad leader get him on the truck?". The joke was that King had been a squad leader for two months and was the proud possessor of buck sgt's stripes, only about ten days old. We returned to Winnenden for supper and got on trucks immediately afterward to ride to Stuttgart to help the French in its occupation. Because of kaput bridges and a "pocket" we had to go around by a 100-mile route although we were less than ten miles away at the time. Our route lay through Backnang which the *S&S (Stars and Stripes)* reported the 100th taking, Sulzbach, Spregetberg, Löwenstein, Willsbach, Weinsberg, Heilbronn, Schwaigern, and Esslingen. It was quite cold but someone "skanovitched" (def.: "to appropriate, usually by questionable means") a top along the way which helped. Si had the "sulfur burps" and most of us were tired out. Lt. Blaha had gone away as liaison officer between 1st Bn and regt and during the night we heard a crisp voice, full of diction say, "All right, get off the vehicle, but let your equipment inside." Brodsky said, "Huh! Sounds like Blaha's brother." It was a Blaha alright but the same one we know. It turned out that one of the bridges was unable to carry a truck and its load at the same time so we had to walk over. Kimmey said, "First time I ever heard of gettin' off a truck with the tailgate up." Si put all his stuff on and John Perales never did get off. The night wore on, but finally through instinct or rumor we knew we were in Stuttgart.

Tues., April 24

Just as a beautiful dawn was breaking we got off the trucks and were taken up to our fourth platoon house. The drivers were so overtaxed that one of them fell asleep during a stop and lost the rest of the convoy. Finally, though, everyone was settled in the house and we went to bed. Si and I were in a very nice room with a southern exposure on the third floor apartment. We traded with Kimmey and Higgins after we were in another room. The house was one of those very typical German apartment houses that doesn't look the part on the outside. We were surprised to find electric lights available by only pushing the switch – our first experience for that in Europe. There was a very good radio downstairs in the room occupied by Huff and we all spent much time listening to the progress of the Western Fronters eastward and of the Russians, westward. We used to clean up with an electric cleaner but couldn't use the bathroom to its fullest extent because the water was gas-heated and the gas system was gone for one reason or another. I found this American notebook and the paper I'm writing on in the house and a little cheap slide rule as well. Chow was served at the bottom of our terrace and the supply and kitchen personnel were one house to our left, with the kitchen in the garage of the establishment. We had a beautiful view in a generally easterly direction from our place, which was on Stalinibeg just off the road and streetcar line, the cars of which (we noticed later) were marked "Am Kochendorf." The road led to Degerloch, I think.

Stuttgart
April 24, 1945

Dear Auntie M,

Day before yesterday I had two boxes from you, one with the four packages of dates and the other with candles, cocoa, etc. I certainly am enjoying it all and thank you so much. Tonight I am writing by electric light, no less, because we are in a house at a place where the power plant is still working. I still have yours of April 10 with me, but since it arrived Sunday I think I answered it. No, on second thought, the last time I wrote was Sat. I found a typewriter in the house and used it for my letters home and to Jane. However, typing tires me and I've given it up for yours and the ones following.

Before we go to bed we're going to have some cocoa and

cereal that one of the boys received. It isn't as warm just lately but spring surely is still advancing. We are making the most of these electrical facilities—there is a radio downstairs and we can get the BBC, etc. instead of reading two-day old news in S&S. Well, now for the snack...

Love,
E.

Wed., April 25

I got hooked to go down to Bn on a detail which took us down to the foot bridge across the Neckar River, which must have been the only one standing. (The Cannstatt end came out near the carnival grounds). We were to carry rations across the bridge since no trucks could make it. They had lumber laid on the steps so the jeeps could go. What a set-up! Either Tues. or Wed. Reese went to the hospital and eventually to the U.S. with jaundice.

Stuttgart
April 25, 1945
Number 100

Dear Beth,

Today I was very pleased to hear from Auntie M., Jane (3), Carl Strub (I think the first time since he was at POE last August), Mother (164, 166-170) and Ditty's clippings about the Pres. From the Phila. *Record*.

I have been busy myself getting lots of letters written. It surely is a good feeling to know that something has really been accomplished. Oh yes, I also heard from Lee Sistare and he mentions Mother's Easter card and "nice, newsy letter."

May I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Beth, on being elected president of the Intermediate Dept. If I may be of any assistance to you in your administrative duties, please feel perfectly free to call upon me at your convenience. All kidding aside, I am tickled that you have been so honored and am surprised to know the dept. was organized. Could it be considered an Intermediate MYF? There are such things, and they had them in the days of the old Epworth League. When is the first council meeting?

Not wishing to show any jealousy or stir up any of the same, I want to point out that where Vince Evans has completed so many missions and is now returned for re-assignment, we in the infantry go on and on, "a fugitive from the law of averages," as it were. With 11,000,000 in

the armed forces and a nation as large as ours, none of us can see why an infantryman in a line outfit cannot be similarly treated after so many days on line or a certain number of engagements.

This is indeed one of our sore spots, and I could detect the longing in Mother's letter. By the grace of God, this war will be over soon, but just think if a person had come thru North Africa, Sicily, Italy, Anzio, South France, Vosges, and now this and had been sent back time after time to the line after being awarded the Purple Heart and numbers of Oak Leaf Clusters thereupon.

One thing about ASTP being disbanded is that we have in the infantry a group of that standard who in the future will be in the places of leadership. Having seen the war from the worst point of vantage rather than a nice campus, they will be even more determined not to let it happen again.

Understand we often expostulate and rage at each other about this, but just tonight when I was writing and in the mood I decided to let you in on it. I am basically in just as good spirits as ever since coming overseas, and when you're fretting over it, I will have forgotten it, but I thought I'd send it anyway. Really I should tear it up, meaning this letter.

Ditty's box of honey came today in perfect shape. It looked just as it must have when mailed. Last night I forgot to wish G'ma a happy birthday. So you do it for me even if it's a bit late.

Well, lots of love to all and more later,

E.

Thurs., April 26

Some "bard brain" got the idea that some factories needed guarding. Almost all the platoons were responsible for something but we had a jet-propelled plane factory well camouflaged and virtually untouched. About two-thirds of the platoon went out to this place in the Zuffenhausen area. I forgot who was in charge but since Huff wasn't there it must have Kimmey or Blaney. Some "amusement" was provided by watching some Frenchmen who were co-occupiers shoot tin cans off each other's head á la William Tell. There were bicycles there and we rode around to the factory area to see what it looked like. Dave Wagner and I were on guard probably 2 to 4 during the night and passed the time by talking.

Stuttgart factory
April 26, 1945
Number 101

Dear Folks,

I was up very late last night because we were writing, talking, eating, and listening to the radio until such an hour that it seemed foolish to drop off to sleep before guard. As a result I slept all afternoon. Now the situation is changed, and a group of us are on special guard for a period in a section where the facilities are passable but not luxurious. However, we still have our "home base" and I'm hoping to enjoy it again.

All this guard prompted me to remark rather hotly the other day, "When I go home, I won't feel safe unless my father is at the front door of the house and my mother at the back." However, it is better than lots of things we've done in the past and I'm really not complaining. It's an old joke by now though that it's poor policy to let the troops be too comfortable.

There was no mail today and this evening I hope to do my last bit of catching up. I wrote to Aunt M and Uncle B Sem., but I don't know if it was safely posted or not. We are all fine.

Love to all,
E.

Fri., April 27

They brought chow out in the jeep and trailer; it was quite a circuit by the time they visited all the platoons. We continued to do what we could to make ourselves comfortable; there were no lights so we fished out the candle supply. There was plenty of time to look for drinkable stuff and by dusk various members of the command were tight. Everyone had his own T/F weapon and maybe an extra GI or foreign one besides. It wasn't long before we who were inside heard the beginning of "shooting the place up." Jack (Skanovitch) Lohsen, who came to A Co. from Bn HQ when our old co. was captured, had an M-1 and two bandoleers of ammo. He proceeded to try to shoot the chimney off our house. Dust and mortar began coming out the stovepipe. Since the shooting was on our side of the house we thought it advisable to get down on the floor behind the furniture. Our action was none too

early since one came thru the shutter, right down behind where Brodsky had been and imbedded itself in the ceiling. We knew what Lohsen was when he was drunk, but this was too much. Most of us had come through our entire overseas experience without being wounded and this was someone in our own outfit making things unhealthy. The ammo finally ran out but that didn't make us feel any safer. I wrote a note to Capt. Strickler and many of the others signed it. Lohsen had had a grudge against Schoewe ever since Bad Wimpfen so we decided to send Crocken (who volunteered) and him back to the CP on one of the many motorbikes the gang had been fooling around with. In order not to re-arouse Lohsen they were going to push the bike about a block and Schoewe was going to meet him there. We hardly expected any action that night, yet we thought something should be done as soon as possible. The evening wore on and we decided to lock the doors and not to go outside for anything – including the guard – the rest of the night.

Sat., April 28

Everyone was able to wake up on *this* earth and before long Lt. Henson came out in a jeep to take Lohsen in. Later in the afternoon Huff came out with a group to relieve part of us. Most of the boys didn't care which place they lived since the lack of "new-fangled" convenience was compensated by the freedom of being away from the company. At any rate, Si, Dave and I, and perhaps more, went in on the ton-and-a-half truck from Bn. Huff told me that someone from our old platoon, with an Irish name, had returned with three new replacements. After some questioning I learned it was Ogilvie – a Scotch name. I had never figured out what had happened to him since at the time I was in the clearing station in Nov. 1944 he was there also with his arm in a sling. My second day there I didn't see him and assumed he had returned to the company with what he described as a minor wound. It turned out that the bone was broken, became infected, and required a long siege of recuperation. He had to return to the hospital for sinus trouble after he'd been in rehab. Well it was one swell reunion because I still looked upon the P.O.E. [port of entry] company as the official one. The constant turnover made me feel differently later, but it was grand to talk to someone who knew most of the people I did. The three others in our platoon (additions, but replacements, not old-timers) were Sgt. Dana Jacobs, Cpl Joe Sumiak, and Cpl. Wm. Cochrane.

Stuttgart
April 28, 1945
Number 103

Dear Sis,

Despite my being tired and not having much to say, I am writing this air mail, because I want to enclose one mark note each for you and Beth. It is strictly the invasion type and looks almost like the French. It is worth exactly 10 cents.

Today I got the second batch of pictures taken on Easter which came slower air mail than the double V-mail written the same day. I thought the pictures were very good and have filed them with the others and the ones I brought through the Vosges with me.

Also I have the April *Contact*, Mother's V-mail at the hairdresser's and a long letter from Aunt Kate, and V-mails from Jane and June. I imagine Ditty addresses Aunt Kate's envelope.

Since I have read the letter several times I am going to enclose it since there is an envelope.

It was still showery today and now is quite chilly. I am back to the radio tonight and heard Charlie McCarthy.

Remember those "and now as we leave the little community of 'Newberry' on the 'Lycoming'" parts of *Mirth and Madness*? Well, the news has brought us a new one. The part Munich has been playing uses the German name "Munchen." So "Munchen on the Crumb."

Guess I'll close for now.

Love to all,
E.

P.S. We just made up the Crumb part. Today several of us sang happy birthday to Grandma.

Sunday, April 29

Chap Lecrone had services both morning and evening so that as many could go as possible. I think Sinc was on pass and I remember playing the pump organ at the evening service and vaguely recall officiating in the morning as well. It was held in the small auditorium of a former Gestapo HQ – quite a change. The next few days we did little but eat, sleep, write and listen to the radio. The last mentioned was very interesting because no two broadcasts were alike – the situation changed so fast. Ogie went out to the j-p factory so we didn't have as

much time to reminisce. Some of the boys went downtown to see what a large kaput city looked like, and some dope from our co. asked Gen. Burrell where all the girls were. There were shots in the air all evening, but we stayed in the houses (which were still blacked out of course). The French were mixed in with us and we heard they put on a parade for Gen. Eisenhower when he came down to get them to leave Stuttgart, which was needed for an American supply point.

Stuttgart
April 29, 1945

Dear Auntie M,

Today your V-mail of Apr. 19 came, which is faster than they've been arriving for some time. The scenery here is very beautiful, but everything is old and mellow—you might say wearing down—compared to frontierish PA.

One of the boys, John Chichester (San Francisco), known to us as "Si Chichester," said I should tell you that we're just the "cow town" regiment and division, after you asked about the famous cities and places. Right now we're in our first really big place. All we know about is the types of farmhouses and manure piles—so prevalent in Europe, although Germany is less worse than France in this respect.

Our weather is still cold and chilly, windy, and showery, but I guess spring is coming with consistent warm weather after awhile.

One of our boys in the platoon who has been away a long time in various hospitals in England came back yesterday, and I was so glad to see him since he is "one of my boys."

Love as usual,
E.

Please send me something to eat.

April 30, 1945
Stuttgart

Dear Beth,

Haynie says some of the mail facilities are on the move and there will be "no mail today."

I'm going to take this opportunity to wish you a very Happy Birthday, come a week from Sunday. I still remember the first time I saw you through the glass of the nursery of the fifth floor of the new building out at the hospital.

Then when you and Mother came home at the early age of

twelve days, Wilbur Engleman held you as did I. Do you remember, he was my seat mate in first grade, Miss Black's room.

This morning we slept through breakfast and got up just in time for dinner. However we weren't awake any longer than usual before eating the noon meal.

I wish you'd get the family on the ball and try to find out when the first Smiths left this God-forsaken continent and where they left from and went to. I know it was a long time ago, but if I had any close relatives in England—either natives or Americans on duty there, I might be able to go see them. Some of the folks were going to send me the family tree before. I think it ought to be written down before some of the older ones forget. I tried to do it yesterday but I can't get all the great-grandparents done.

Well, Happy Birthday again and many more of them.

Love and kisses,

E.

P.S. Enclosed is a very pertinent poem from P.M. which I have copied. I wish Mother would type several copies and send me one back.

This poem in free verse is taken from *P.M.*, New York, Sunday, March 11, 1945. It bears out some people's convictions that P.M. isn't afraid to say what's what.

A.W. #63

(Article of War)

by

Lt. George S. Ford

I know a guy
A GI
Who used to be a sergeant.
Now he's a Second Lieutenant
A goddam 2d Looney
He made it in the field
How
Why
Is another story
But he's probably the best
Shavetail in the A U.S.
He's a friend of mine.

He was telling me about
A court martial
On which he sat as
The junior member

And didn't know what the hell.
The only court martial he knew about
Was the one in the States
That stung him
A couple of years ago...
AW 61---AWOL.

But now
As an officer
He was to help judge
Some joker
Some poor bastard
3000 miles from the
White picket fence around his front lawn
In Ohio
Who was up on AW 63 which says:
"Any person subject to military
law who behaves himself
with disrespect toward his superior
officer shall be punished as a
court martial may direct."
"I didn't know what the hell,"
This looey told me.
"Just a kid
and plenty cocky-
And plenty scared too."
He grinned:
"Scared as I was that time in the States
I knew how he felt
And I knew I'd give the poor bastard
A break
If he hadn't been vicious
Or rotten wrong.

Well, there we were
Five of us
Sitting behind a long table
And then they brought him in
And went through the usual rigamarole-
Roll call, challenges, swearing.
In
The arraignment, charges, specifications...
And him sitting there with the sick
Little grin on his puss...
It took a while to get the story
But in a nutshell
This is it.

It seems this guy
This BA private

Had been out on patrol
With Lt. _____
And it seemed that the Lt.
Had gotten them lost
And damn near captured
And a wee bit shot up.
When they finally got back this Pvt.
Had started to tell the Lt. off,
But the Lt., burned up anyway
Reminded him none too gently of
His rank—the little yellow bar.
The Pvt. had then said something derogatory
About that little yellow bar in particular
And yellow bars in general
And according to a witness, the following:
"You may rank me militarily
With that goddam little yellow bar,
But Oh Brother,
I rank the hell out of you MENTALLY."
Well the kid got some pay forfeiture
And restriction out of it
But if I had my way
His "punishment" would have been
Sergeants' stripes...
For telling the truth."

May 1, 1945
Stuttgart

Dear Folks,

Today there was no mail again for the same reason as yesterday, so I can go ahead with the writing from this end without waiting for the ones to reply to.

I must tell you about something that happened over a month ago, shortly after I returned from Brussels. We were in our first German town of any size and were initiating our policy for staying in the best houses.

While we were still on the way, a quartering party sent in advance was obtaining these places for us, requiring the civilians to evacuate. As a rule they always are excited, and teary (?), thinking, I guess, that we're going to tear the place down. Often there are a few scratches or mars left behind.

All this time pandemonium reigns, with them in and out and we trying to "make a beachhead" on some sort of luxury.

This one woman spoke to one of the advance boys in our house saying, "Haben Sie eine Mutter?" This means "Do you have a mother?" Just as if she thought we were barbarians or

something.

Later one of the family complained to another of our platoon that there were five families living in one house, some of them moved out of their own homes and doubling up with neighbors. He replied, "Yes? Well, last winter five Americans [were] in one foxhole."

All these people say they aren't for Hitler and gang, or maybe never were. This might be the truth, because he's let them down now. But you ought to see the snapshots of them "heiling" him as he passes in a car five and ten years ago.

When they had the winning army, and their soldiers were doing the ousting, firmly enough but how justly, it was OK and there are very few that didn't cheer them on.

As far as Germany itself is concerned, there is very little food shortage and that is confined to the cities and large towns. So have no qualms of conscience. For visual evidence of the way some were cared for, you should see the Russian, Polish, etc. slave laborers.

We are still chilly and some of the boys complain about the lack of warm weather. Then I remind them that way down south in N.C. last year the donning of suntans was postponed from the first Sunday in May until the second because of unseasonal weather. Also I recall Memorial Day when I was about five and Ditty, G'ma and I went up to Towanda on the S&N.Y. We walked across the bridge up there and how cold it was. I guess that was the day when G'pa had to bring Marion home from the movies.

I wish you'd send me the latest Pennsy and Reading timetables again. I know the latter has changed.

While I think of it I'll make a request for something to eat. More later.

Love to all,
E.

Stuttgart
May 1, 1945

Dear Mother,

Last evening I was reading through the *Army Times*, an unofficial publication put out by someone at home, and I found these two interesting articles.

The picture about "Sons of Bitche" was taken at the same auditorium where I saw the show. It certainly was nice to read about us. Ed Hines is third from left, seated at the piano and facing the audience.

The other is quite interesting since it gives the latest line up of things over here. I thought it would be a good record.

I want to wish you a very happy Mother's Day. It would be grand to be there and say it myself, but as has been usual for the last year and a half, I must pen my regards for these occasions.

I certainly am proud to have a mother like you who takes an interest in so many fine activities. Surely you can't be PTA president and the same for WSCS. I'm sure Beth would rather have you be the latter. And then so many would say that they couldn't take part in the play. When you send me your schedule for a day it reminds me of my WHS one sometimes.

Well, this is all for now.

always,

Love for May 13 as

Emory

About midnight, Wed., May 2. Huff got a phone call saying that we were going to move out the next morning after breakfast.

Thurs., May 3

The bunch from across the town finally arrived and we loaded the battalion on various vehicles. The division had made a provisional trucking company from a composite group of vehicles and these were engaged in the support of the other divisions which had continued to the east. A Frenchman on the wrong side of the road had smashed into Sinc and Chap. L. and their jeep was irreparable at ordnance, so Chap. L. was riding in a truck cab. We went south and crossed the Neckar at Esslingen and journeyed north and east until we reached Schorndorf, a town of about 10,000, 30 km east of Stuttgart in the Rems Valley. Our houses were on the wrong side of the tracks, but we got settled fairly well. I left the 3rd squad mortar in Stuttgart and Huff and Warda had to go after it. Thought they were all taken care of.

Brodsky, Si, Schoewe and I were in one room downstairs and got along very well. The first day even before chow we took a walk around town and I got the German equivalent of the *Official Guide* and some ticket samples from the station. We saw some 2nd Bn men on the other side of town and spent the rest of the day getting settled.

Friday, May 4

We were given the lowdown and an immediate tightening up on everything. Boy were they

bucking! We got Lt. Jennings in our platoon, and thinking he would be a valuable asset, we were very happy. Time showed us. It was during this period that the German forces in Italy, Denmark, Norway, etc. gave up. Chaplain Lecrone thought it would be nice to revive as many of our choir as possible for the service on Sunday so we practiced on Saturday with Herr Hecht, the local organist in the big church playing. Sinc and Dave Wagner were both away at the Riviera so I had our squad (in keeping with the policy of the first gunner taking over when the squad leader was gone). Saturday night when Stahly and I were on CP guard we learned that the 7th Army had been given a cease fire order.

May 4, 1945
Schorndorf
Number 108

Dear Sis,

Today we enjoyed a lot of mail. I had Mother's 161, telling all about Conference appointments, ones from Mrs. Reese, ____? Henry (long), Jane (3), Auntie M., programs from Lee, Glenn, and class play program from Ditty. Robert Croyle I thought was a navy chaplain; he was formerly my counselor when I was MYF district pres.

We spent some time in Stuttgart recently. This is the first place I've mentioned for a long time, but I've been assured that it's OK to say this. It's a very large place and the facilities were grand.

Today Chap. Lecrone came around to say that we would try to have a choir practice tonight. There's been some turnover in the personnel and we had some new faces as well. There were just six or seven there and in the absence of Sinc (at the Riviera on pass) I directed. The civilian organist was there with an interpreter and it was quite hard to express my ideas adequately even then. We worked on "Be Still My Soul" and tomorrow at 1:30 we hope to do a few responses in the large chapel hymnal. A small hand-pumped organ had to be used in lieu of the electric three-manual job. I think there will be a good crowd Sunday. It's good to get back to rehearsing again. Well, I'll close for now.

Love to all,
E.

May 5, 1945
Schorndorf
Number 109

Dear G'ma,

Today came Mother's 182 & 183, Mother's program of the play, Ditty's program of Conference, and several from Jane. I was quite pleased to see the folder was printed. Is that regular now or just a special fling for the guests?

I want to remind you all that every time you read something about our Army, it doesn't mean that I personally, the company or the division is right at that spot. Auntie M has written about many places that figured very prominently in the news. Very few have applied to us and that is especially true now.

There are times when outfits are put in "reserve" and live almost like garrison. I find that after six months of suffering the potential danger of submarines, etc. on the way over, cold, heat, hunger, thirst, tiredness, boredom, besides the various well-known, commonly-described things that might happen, these things seem wrong.

To have to swallow the bad points of being over here (away from home, family, and friends, and American conveniences) plus the good old garrison regimentation is kind of a bitter pill to take. We used to hear about it from older outfits (especially when I was in the hospital with a mixture of fellows), and hardly believed it.

I used to put a type of voluntary censorship in my letters, but now some of us feel that in years to come a letter written by a "front-line infantryman" might have a little weight when reviewed in times like that.

My little complaints I put in now and then are not to give you the impression I am unhappy or anything; my morale status has been the same practically all the time since we came over. But I feel a few of these things should be recorded for posterity.

Now that Ernie Pyle has passed on someone must still carry the torch and a little individual writing by each of us will help.

Today we had choir practice again and this time the attendance was sixteen. Tell Beth her friend Art Gemmer was there; I've seen him only twice before. Foster was there of course as were several from our company. Besides "Be Still" we are doing "O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee" as a prayer hymn. Ed Hines is another one you know.

I wish you'd give this letter to Mother to keep. I like to send these in order, but some of them would be nice to save with my stuff.

The European news looks increasingly good with Italy and the Low Countries both taken now.

I am reminded that two weeks from today I observe my first year and a half in the army (Nov. 19-Harrisburg). I

shan't say "celebrate."

Well, please send me something to eat. We are all fine.
Church is 10:45 tomorrow—just like home.

Love to all,
E.

Sunday, May 6

We had a good crowd out to church and the choir did very well. For an anthem I directed them in "Be Still, My Soul," with Ed Hines singing the second stanza as a solo. On Monday they began giving us stuff like close-order drill and being very demanding about everything. We heard that the surrender had been signed at Reims and would be effective at a very early hour on the morning of Wed., 9 May 1945, which would be V.E. Day. Foster copied and Ed mimeographed copies of "The Heavens Are Telling," as taken from the back of the large army hymnal. The regiment had an observance on a large field near the edge of town first, but we didn't pass in review. The 1st and 2nd Bns were in town and the 3rd was in Plüderhausen so it was very easy to get together. Gen. Burrell was there and the whole thing was very impressive. The weather was consistently beautiful and quite summerish during the whole period.

6 May 1945
Schorndorf

Dear Beth,

This morning we got up a little after eight and had breakfast shortly thereafter. Then returning to the house, we straightened up ourselves and the house.

The service was scheduled for 10:45 and the choir was asked to arrive by 10:30. I left for the church about fifteen minutes before that and found the chaplain and some of the singers and congregation gathered outside waiting for the completion of the civilian service.

They were able to use the three-manual, electric organ today, built at Ludwigsburg in 1909 (four years newer than the 1st Pres., F'ville) and that added much to things. We hadn't played it at all previously, but things went on OK after all. The church is built in a rectangular shape with the pulpit in the center of one of the long sides and the seats facing three ways toward it. The organ and choir are at the "front" and the one section of seats has reversible

backs—I imagine this is to enable everyone to face the choir and organ during a cantata or something. The railed-in altar is on the floor level in front of the pulpit. This position of the pulpit was found in that other church I described also.

The order of service was typed out in English and German opposite by the assistant pastor, while the regular pastor sat with the choir as emergency interpreter.

There was a good crowd there, more than used to come regularly at Bragg with a smaller group to be represented. Of course I realize it wasn't a hot summer day with everyone out on passes all over the eastern seaboard.

I slept about an hour this afternoon, and then Foster and I went back after the civilian 2:00-3:00 service so he could play the organ a little. They keep it locked like we do at home and the organist had to be there to keep an eye on things, if not to supervise. We couldn't stay long, but everyone (we two) had a good time.

The organist has played there for 27 years but I guess things haven't been booming too well during the war. He complained of non-limber fingers due to non-practice and being forced to work, shoveling mostly, in the Volksturm (people's army). [Ed. note: literally translated as People's Storm in the meaning of National Storm, it was a German national militia of the last months of Germany's Third Reich.

As soon as Huff finishes, I'm going to take a bath in one of our back rooms in a bath tub. We do that quite often in these houses. I had a shower day before yesterday and got partial clean clothes, but every washing helps.

Last night after I'd written home and was on guard we heard about the Seventh Army ceasing fire today noon. You'd probably be interested in the reaction here. Practically everyone just accepted it quietly and calmly because it has been imminent for so long. It didn't affect us so much at the time either. There has just been a gradual diminishing of activity for some time.

One of the boys decided to celebrate a little and got a little happy over the bottle. Last night was cathedral-like compared to some occasions I've seen. Most everyone was just quietly thankful. News comes through but the whole picture isn't clear. We know about the Italian and northern Germany surrenders, but didn't know (and I still don't) if this latest one is the same as V-E Day or not.

If it is officially V-E, I can just imagine the reaction at home if people had Saturday night to celebrate in.

I never thought the European end would come like this although in the last month or so we'd been expecting it. We all were looking for something more dramatic. I don't think

wild celebrating at home was in order but when people think very seldom of units below Army, things seem quite impersonal. I know how it was when I was in Brussels or when we read about other outfits.

Today I had Mother's 161 & 184 and yours and Marion's joint one announcing the arrival of the packages from Brussels.

I'm going to keep up writing the rest of the evening and see how many I can do.

Love to all,

E.

P.S. - How's this for a long letter??

May 7, 1945
Schorndorf
Number 111

Dear Folks,

No first class mail for us today although I did get a *Sun*. Tonight and tomorrow night we are having special choir practice in preparation for a special service Wednesday morning marking the official V-E Day which will go down in history. There are quite a few details and some of the hymns and special numbers which are in the complete, large chapel book aren't to be found in the field one. So Foster is taking music paper and copying the parts and Ed Hines is duplicating them some way for us up at Service company.

Today was warm and very summery for the first time in days. We've had lots of cloudiness and rain before. Last night I wrote Lee Sistare a long letter, telling all about our activities. This sudden spurt of activity has excited me, and I just wish we had some real anthems to do.

Right now several of the platoons are fooling around trying to make the lights work. We have a tap in from next door, but it doesn't seem to be working yet—or rather has gone out. Well, one more letter and then

Good night,

E.

Schorndorf
May 8, 1945
Number 112

Dear Ditty and all,

It is now 6 p.m. (1800 by 24-hour time) and supper is over. This letter I am going to dash off before going to the

second special choir rehearsal this week. Today I had Mother's 185, and heard from Jane, Grandma, Aunt Margaret, Tilly A., three *Suns*, two Christian Advocates, and a box from Auntie M. I think four of hers have come in the last two weeks or so.

Today was a beautiful summer day with enough breeze to keep the mugginess away. The description of the play that Mother sent arrived several days ago and I see that no matter how many are gone for a time, our church can always gather up enough folks to put on a good play. What is Earl Carson doing now? I believe he was in ASTRP at University of Florida when Mother and I were in that one with the Spanish name two years ago this fall; but we "starred" together one time.

Everyone seems quite cooperative about getting the choir to rehearsals and we get new members every time. Well, I must leave now and move on to the church. Doesn't that sound like home?

Love to all,
E.

Schorndorf
May 9, 1945
Number 113

Dear Sis,

This is some very good American notebook paper which I found some time ago. It makes nice "stationery" for writing to the family.

I thought I'd confine today's letter to informing you of the way V-E Day was celebrated in the places where it happened. First of all, we got up at 6:00 or a little past today which was a half hour early. We "fell out" at 7:30, the same amount of time in advance.

The first thing was a regimental commemorating the day. I thought it would be more of a formal review, with quips being read from the President, Shaef, and right on down to division. However, they opened up with a prayer, played "America, the Beautiful" and "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean"; the division commander had a short message which might be called the epilogue teamed up to the prologue he gave that day you were staying at the guest house, and the MP's wouldn't let anyone out. Chap. Lecrone announced the subsequent services and then we came back as separate companies.

It was a little before ten when I got here and I fixed up just a bit before leaving for the church. When I arrived, the station that was filled on Sunday was already filled, and not all the represented units were there. When we

finally got started it was really filled. Later the assistant pastor who was our interpreter again today said we had 800 at the Protestant service alone. There were simultaneous Catholic and Jewish services, too.

It was divided into three logical parts; Chap. Lecrone had the first two, and Chap. Tyler, whose service I haven't attended since the first Sunday in January, had the last. We had a beautiful warm day for it.

At seven this evening Chap. Lecrone is going to have a communion service since he felt there should be one on a day like this but didn't want to mix them.

The month-or-so-old Germany Edition of S&S came out today in two separate issues—north and south. The headline was "ETO WAR ENDS."

Well, I've not had as much sleep lately so I'm turning in. As you can see I've written a good amount for today.

Love to all,
E.

Thursday, May 10

The battalion was supposed to move north – almost to Heilbronn they said. We waited around all afternoon, lounging on the lawn, until the transportation was finally ready. Vehicles were still very scarce so the Dog Co. jeeps were running a shuttle service. We had to wait until at least one of the rifle co's had been taken up. King, Haffner, Ogie, and I were in one jeep, and we made good use of sun glasses and goggles. The day was another one of blue skies and bright sun, making the ride along W-29 in the Rems Valley very enjoyable. We went clear into Bad Cannstatt by the Neckar and turned right back in Waiblingen, which had been by-passed. We started up N10 and passed through Wennenden to Backnang. Here the convoy turned left through Gross- and Klein Bottwar and we dismounted in Murr. The houses here weren't good at all, but we finally got settled and got ourselves something to eat after building a fire. Some of the boys found meat and eggs so there was a great time of frying. Martin wanted to be sure that everyone had eaten enough eggs and we had a great time persuading him that no one wanted any more. He was under the weather.

Friday, May 11

We moved by foot across a wooden bridge into the larger town of Marbach am Neckar. It is on a bluff quite high above the river and we had a good climb to get to our houses. They were pretty nice but Little Caesar Strickler had to make us stay in the houses instead of

letting us try to get radios and the like. Our stay was marred by the excessive guard that someone felt was suitable. There were several hospitals, roadblocks and the same old stuff. We were getting up at all hours of the day and night, and for the first day or so he wanted formations with co's and hikes, marching to meals, and all those things that we had long since learned that any group can get along without. On Saturday Dave Wagner came back from his Riviera pass and Ogie and I conversed with him as we bathed, following my being on CP guard (M-1 at right shoulder arms, walking).

Sunday, May 13

V.E. Thanksgiving Day, Ascension Sunday, Beth's birthday and Mother's Day. Our regiment was spread out from Ludwigsburg to Gaildorf so Chap. L. sent a message asking me to hold the service. We had it in the building which served as CP, dining room and theater. Monroe played the piano for me and I made out okay using material from the Classmate and other periodicals.

Monday noon they told me I had an appointment with the dentist at Ludwigsburg so Nick took the group over after dinner. Despite my never having been to a dentist from induction until the week before we left Bragg (and then having only two small cavities) and my visit resulting in a filling at division rest early in February, the dentist found one tooth bad enough to require pulling. I was surely embarrassed after all the care that had been used earlier in my life, but I guess it will have to be included in the cost of the war. The job was done very easily and didn't bother me much.

13 May 1945
Marbach, Germany
Number 115

Dear Beth,

Today is really a triple celebration with your birthday, Mother's Day, and VE Thanksgiving Day all at once. I remember before, one year, when your birthday was also Sunday, Auntie M came home on an excursion and we went out to Joe Berry's in the afternoon. The train went back about 5:30 p.m. and we brought her back down to the Pennsy Newberry station.

This is a gorgeous day—warm and spring-like but not

July-ish. No doubt the days will be hotter further along. I was on guard from 4-6 this morning and went back to bed when I came back to the house. Because this is a garrison type of Sunday (like last week) I didn't get up for 8:00 breakfast, but lay low until about 9 since church was to be at 10.

The church part is quite interesting: Yesterday just after dinner I was called down to the CP (meaning command post—would be called orderly room back home) where they said that Chap. Lecrone wanted me to have the service for our company due to the outfits being exceptionally spread out. I was quite taken aback, but mustering my MYF experience I decided to see what the literary bins afforded. Luckily I had several old *Classmates*, two *Contacts*, *Strength for Service*, besides several other pamphlets from which I used a number of poems and articles. Some of these I had mentally earmarked and the others I noticed when leafing through. I've been carrying a field hymnal for some time and I was all set.

I used the Mother's Day meditation in *Strength for Service* followed by the one in the *Upper Room* which leads to the thought that the best thing for mothers would be the right kind of world. The other articles were on the "what-are-we-going-to-do-and-how-are-we-going-to-do-it" idea.

Pfc. Monroe, who is "paper-work" assistant to the 1st Sgt., played the piano. We held the service in our mess hall, the dining room of a small hotel.

Because of making the service out and other things, I didn't write any last night. One very good project was a complete bath in the tub upstairs. The boiler looks much like one of ours, but the water is heated by a wood stove built in beneath the tank.

Jim Ogilvie from Orlando, Fla., who was in the outfit when we left the States and came from Benning about when I did, is the one I mentioned about two weeks ago as the boy whom I knew well that was just recently returned from hospitalization and convalescence in England. He was wounded back in the Vosges in November, and I saw him at the clearing station (field hospital) when I was there with my leg infection.

Well, anyway, he and I decided that the usual shower (not too frequent at that) wasn't too cleansing as far as real scrubbing effect is concerned. So we cleaned the tub of its collective rings (!) and proceeded to really soak. We borrowed a little brush, something like a hand and nail brush, and did each other's backs. While one was tubbing the other shaved and did the fine points (teeth, etc.). He brought some Yardley talcum back with him and we finished off with it.

Another activity was the welcoming back of our squad leader, Sgt. Dave Wagner, from Nice on the Riviera. That is

one of those pass trips now. Dave has been over here for 28 months, mostly in anti-aircraft; but during this wholesale transfer to the infantry he came to us last February. He lives in Harbor Beach, Mich., and it was to his parents that Mother sent that Nazi flag I mailed for him.

Today the values for the point system of redeployment and discharges were announced in the *S&S*. I see that the minimum is 85. Very few of our bunch have anywhere near that number, but Dave has 87 and I suppose he'll be getting some results. He's been up for rotation for some time anyway.

The other day they gave us our ETO ribbons with the one campaign star for Germany. We really have a complaint on that score for sure. These battle or campaign stars count 5 points on this system. The awards are made by time rather than by territory. Therefore we have no star for "France" (although we had our worst time by far there) since that phase ended Sept. 15. Everything after that is "Germany." Of course I never saw the Fatherland until I returned from Brussels; and all that preceded it embodied such places as Bitches (twice) and the Vosges in general. We all know that the German part of our struggle is proving to have been fairly easy.

The argument isn't so much that people won't see the stars on us since the ones who know much about it will also know what the division patch means and what our division did here.

But, some of the reinforcements who came to us the latter part of January went to a replacement depot in Italy first. Now they are allegedly going to get a star for Italy while they were definitely rear echelon there. For us during that period (around Christmas) was the various counterattacks, etc. that you all read about.

As I say, we don't care about the show-people know what we did. Our 3rd battalion (I am in the 1st) got a Presidential Citation for work accomplished during part of this period. But five points is five points, and on this part of the system struggle and hardship don't mean a thing toward a discharge. We're rear echelon here in France before 15 September we'd have that one even. Several of us have spoken to the company commander, hoping to go through channels clear to the top, if necessary, to get an explanation. He has assured us that we ourselves can't do anything about it. Some of the boys plan to write *S&S*, *Yank*, *P.M.*, and some Congressional personnel as well.

I see some of the civilians, the women in rather old-fashioned black, and the men in toppers and some sort of long coats going up and down the street. I don't know if they have been to a "viewing" or not.

This afternoon those interested in swimming have gone down to the river. I think I'll forego the pleasure this

time since I want to write and still have a little cold anyway.

Right now we have tuned in a bit late on the V-E Thanksgiving Day service at St. Paul's Cathedral, London, being broadcast by the BBC. It started at 3:00 British Double Summer Time; I understand that Their Majesties King George VI and Queen Elizabeth are there.

Another thing that took up time yesterday was more guard from 4-6 in the afternoon. However, I think I'm making up for it a little bit with this letter, don't you think?

While I'm in the mood, I think I'll tell you a little about some of our boys: By the way, since Christmastime I've been in the mortar section and have been a first gunner since the middle of February. Ours is the third of the three squads.

The line-up is as follows:

1. Sgt. David E. Wagner, 25, Harbor Beach, Michigan, to whom you mailed the flag
2. and then I.
3. Pfc. George J. Haffner, 24, Franklin, N.J. came to the division about a month after we went on line.
4. Pfc. John G. (Si) Chichester, 25, San Francisco, Cal., came to us the latter part of January. Most of us say "Si" instead of "Chi" with the "ch" like the one in "chester" due to a misunderstanding when he had just arrived. He likes good music and is very conversant with modern literature and has taught me a lot about the set-up of the Catholic Church. At present he is at army rest in Lyon.
5. Pfc. James W. Ogilvie, Jr. 19, Orlando, Fla. Came in the fourth platoon about a month before we went POE. He was pre-med at Johns Hopkins and lacked just two weeks of being accepted by the medical school. He was registered in Selective Service in Baltimore and they wouldn't let him transfer to his home board which undoubtedly would have given him deferment for the short period, when his acceptance would have guaranteed a blanket deferment. But it seems no matter what need must be met, such as doctors, this inconsistencies of government bureaus and regulations go on ad nauseam. By the way Ogie has a scholarship there at J.H.
6. Pfc. Harry H. Schrieber, 30, Mechanicsburg, Pa. We call him "Pop" and he is a very typical Pennsylvanian Dutchman.

I'll give you a tabulation of my own points.
Total months in service @ 1 per month.....17
Total months overseas additional @ 1 per month.....7
Campaign stars @ 5.....5
Total 29

Of course the one that's going to help lots of people is the dependency clause: Twelve points for each child under

18 up to three children.

As someone remarked today it seems as if the official stand has just been reversed on the college students. First an entirely separate program was set up which rightly or not was abandoned. Naturally very few of our group have the parenthood status, because although some that young are married, the ones most likely to be in school would not be yet.

When I heard about Glenn W. actually being in the Merchant Marine, I thought of him as being too young until I remembered he is 18 now. Only then do I realize I am almost 20. We have become so used to thinking of age and scholastic advancement being the same that it is hard to separate them.

Even on a non-accelerated program I should be finishing my sophomore year in college this spring. I can just picture old, gray, Grandpa Smith getting his diploma at Bucknell in 1985, ear trumpet in hand.

Where I gave our squad line up there should be just five, but Pop is just back from the hospital.

Hoping my sermon hasn't been too trying,

Love to all,

E.

P.S. Are you having shad and dandelion today? School was supposed to start over here about a month after V-E Day, but it may be about two months.

RES

Marbach
14 May 1945

Dear Auntie M.,

I suppose you'll be anxiously awaiting this letter from me written after the official V-E Day. I don't have too much time to write, after all, but I have kept up on the home ones.

The abnormal chilly weather is past now, and really nice spring is here at last. So far it hasn't been uncomfortably hot and now there's a good air, as G'ma would say.

I received your box last week with the fruit juice, etc., in it. If you can spare it and the points, I think that the fruit juice is a very good thing to send. Today your V-mail of May 1 came and I hope that by now you have several past April 15. We are still in the same general area, and I hope to go swimming in the river.

Today I was to the dentist and had the shocking activity of an extraction. My first one, which I attribute to lack of care during the winter. It was the upper right,

fourth back. I also had a cavity on the corresponding place on the left. It was quite simple, but for me I am quite embarrassed. What would Dr. VanValin say? I was just there in early Feb. at division rest. I suppose you've read about the point system of redeployment. I have 29 of the required 85. Please send some juice. Love, E.

Marbach
May 14, 1945

Dear Folks,

Today I was to the dentist following a dental survey last week. My work and treatment was the most radical we've ever had. Lately I've had some pain in my upper gum which I thought was caused by so much prepared food; and pieces of food would go between these two teeth. The dentist (by far the best I've had in my treatment in the army) saw that the tooth was gone evidently and applied local anesthesia. While waiting for it to take effect he dulled the corresponding one on the left. I think his drilling is the most careful I've ever had used on me. The one that is out is the fourth from the front on the upper right. It was solid enough that it came out easily and all in one place. As I wrote to Auntie M, Dr. VanValin and I would be quite surprised at something like that. I feel somewhat ashamed myself but I suppose it's due to inactivity and lack of attention during the winter.

If you can find a German-American dictionary anywhere (Jane sent me a French one published by the Infantry Journal) I think we could use it very well. There is a small GI book handed out, but as usual it is inadequate.

Please send me something to eat. I got a commencement invitation from Barbara Strole, Chadbourne, N.C. today. Just a year ago our choir sang for her sister's baccalaureate service.

Well, this is all for now,

Love to all,

E.

Send 120 and 620 film for one of the boy's cameras.

Tuesday, May 15

We turned the 19 towns that Capt. Strickler was "burgomeister" of over to someone else, since the 1st Bn was to be entirely on the west side of the Neckar. Our company moved by truck to Ludwigsburg, via Poppenweiler, crossing the Neckar over one of the locks. We

lived in the eastern section of town in very nice houses except they were too crowded. Our place belonged to the Hamm family and downstairs we could wash our clothes in a washer and get them damp-dry in a centrifugal dryer. It wasn't long before we had to spend all our time guarding a camp filled with Russian DPs - displaced persons. We used to spend eight hours a day out there – four on and eight off. Despite the efforts of everyone the thing soon turned out to be a farce. In those days almost everyone hated the Krauts and felt sorry for the DPs. If I had it to do again the little bit of strictness I did have would be absent. There were plenty of holes in the fence and we didn't care how many sneaked out. The object was "comese-comesa" – in other words liberating produce from the nearby gardens. The Germans could cry all they wanted to, but no one listened to them since that was the period before the glib-tongued fraulein. We took candy and cigarettes to the inmates and picked up quite a lot of German and a little Russian. At night the kids used to build us a fire and keep it going and stay around with us until the wee hours of the morning. If we went to sleep and a vehicle came, they'd wake us up *schnell*. We felt as if we knew them very well by the time we left. We also guarded the Castle, where American Zone war criminals were later tried, and a warehouse. The kitchen and CP were on a main street leading east toward the DP camp. One highlight of the period was a trip to Heidelberg sponsored by Bn on Sunday June 3. Meade, Pop Holloway and I went from our platoon. The route was via Besigheim, Heilbronn, Sinsheim, and Neckargemünd. We walked around, visited the Red Cross, rode on the Strassenbahn to Wiesloch, attended a concert by Adolf Berg and his string quartet and saw a show at the later-named Capitol Theater. The town was inhabited by 6th Army Group so that was very rear echelon for us. We got back about midnight via Backnang. About the beginning of the second week in June we were relieved of our guard by an artillery outfit and we got ready to go back to Schoendorf. Harry Wannamaker rejoined us May 22 so we had three of our old platoon together once more.

Ludwigsburg
16 May '45
Number 118

Dear Sis,

Well, here I am writing again although I was delayed

for an hour or so while someone decided when we should go on guard at a misplaced persons (refugee slave labor) center.

Today in the line of mail I had Mother's 187, 193 from State College, besides Ditty's of May 4. There is no news from here in particular except idle chatter, and I guess I may as well indulge in it.

This was a beautiful day with a little breeze which has died out now. It wasn't too warm and I slept three hours this afternoon as I did yesterday. Today's rest was still coming to me, but at the same time I felt a little ahead!
17 May 1945

Well, just as I was finishing the previous paragraph I got into a long conversation. Since it was already growing dark, I resignedly shut the spiral notebook this paper is from. I came back to the house and it was about midnight. However, yesterday a box from home came with cocoa powder (which we make cold into chocolate milk), canned chicken, fruit cake, and candles—also triscuit. We have been having electricity regularly lately and I believe with the candles I have saved up (which could be used for emergencies) there are enough so you wouldn't have to send anymore for a while. As time goes on, the systems that aren't working now will be repaired. It was just like the one (box) I got several weeks ago, and I've decided that one with a complete meal like that is a good idea.

We still have some fruit cake left and I think we'll eat that with some more cocoa tonight.

So last night it was very late when I came back or rather went to bed. This a.m. I skipped breakfast and got up at 11:30 just before dinner. We have certain times we are supposed to go on guard and not do anything else; that is why I could arrange the day like that.

Yesterday we received several issues of S&S at once and one for May 15 had the Eastern League included in the "How They Stand" column. The listing was as follows:

Williamsport 2, Wilkes-Barre 1 (1st)
Williamsport 8, Wilkes-Barre 3 (2nd)
Other games postponed, rain

	W	L	Percent
Albany	5	2	.714
Scranton	5	2	.714
Utica	4	2	.667
Elmira	4	2	.667
Williamsport	3	3	.500
Hartford	3	4	.429
Wilkes-Barre	2	6	.250

I'm going to send you the paper, but it seemed these figures would be more interesting while they are fresh.

Also yesterday I had the pleasure of seeing Williamsport mentioned in the *Century Sentinel*. It was a comment by Cpl. Karl J. Fisher of Co. K, 398th. I don't know anyone by that name at home, and when that article about the 398th was in the paper "Local Men Start Combat in the Tough Sector" or some related subject, he wasn't mentioned. So no doubt he's a replacement. I think this more than ever since the only corporal in a rifle company is the company clerk. This fellow could have been transferred from some other branch; we have two corporals in our platoon now.

Tonight's mail consisted of Mother's V-mail written on Conference Sunday, a V-mail from Uncle William and air mail from Auntie M.

Today was quite sultry, and I expected it to rain and then clear up after a thundershower maybe. However, there was nothing doing in this respect.

I never thought it would take me 24 hours for this letter, but since it has, I think I'll close and tackle several more.

Well until the next time, keep me posted on school and other things around town.

I am constantly receiving compliments on your tinted pictures.

As ever, your proud brother,

Love,
E.

19 May 1945
Ludwigsburg

Dear Auntie M,

The latest letter I have from you is an air mail which came a day or two ago written two weeks ago. Last evening I had a box of yours, containing the cheese, triscuit, chocolate, etc. We've been enjoying it very much.

I knew that as the various components of complete surrender affecting us were announced you'd be awaiting word from me written after that. They haven't told us what we can say yet, but I mentioned previously about being in Stuttgart. At anytime during the winter we could mention a place a certain period of time ago previously. However a statement like that was confined to "visited."

I still haven't gone swimming in The River although it's almost as handy as before. As to my yen for travel, I

think it has been sharpened. I know I'll think a lot more of the U.S. after putting up with some things so much over here.

Besides that I know so many people from all over that have lived with me (or I with them) all this time. Understand, the circle hasn't remained unbroken; far from it. Many of the ones in the outfit that I counted among my best friends have left the outfit and been reclassified due to physical (surgical and medical) and psychiatric reasons. Naturally we had our share of all types of casualties. Someday I hope to give you the complete picture on that.

Today I am in a combination of mental mourning and celebration since it is just a year and a half since I was inducted at Harrisburg. Subconsciously I don't feel that I've advanced at all since then (of course we've matured psychologically) since we've grown so accustomed as kids to think of age and year in school advancing simultaneously. Of course that's stopped now and I almost picture the kids in Marion's class as having caught up with us. Also, a week from next Wednesday it will be a year since I started home on furlough. You arrived the same day as I, but on the Susquehannock.

As I write home these days, last winter I had more-or-less of a voluntary censorship on details I could have mentioned because there was no use of unnecessarily worrying you. But now that the ETO war is over and I have the combat experience besides the six or seven months additional of regular life in the army, I like to call your attention to things occasionally.

My few words of complaint will do no good, I realize, and I want you to know that I'm just as happy as and more comfortable than ever before. If I was disgruntled during the winter I just didn't write about it.

No doubt you've followed the workings of the point system of redeployment. We've all read about it in the papers, Yank, etc. and saw the pre-prepared film "Two Down and One to Go" the other day.

It's human nature for everyone to complain about blanket rules when they are in the group (usually a minority) that gets hit. In this respect I criticize only the part that doesn't give points for "combat" (as against "overseas") time, and the sub-point which determines campaign stars for theater ribbons on a chronological rather than geographical basis. In other words, we have some replacements that came to us the last of January via a replacement depot in Italy. They reputedly will get a star for that phase of the Italian campaign. Yet we, busy from early November with the Vosges, the first time at Bitche, etc. are not eligible for a star for France since that campaign ended Sept. 15. Understand everyone in a theater

(including rear echelon) between certain dates get these various stars, but it seems unfair to award them for hop, skip, and jumping into various countries.

I don't care what people see on my chest, and if I did the division patch would help that (people who would care will know what the 100th did); but these stars count 5 points a piece.

My total is 29 of the required 85. I have 17 months in service, 7 overseas, and a star for Germany (5).

Specifically, it looks as if a large group of us who apparently were to be classified at the reception center according to something concrete, not only have had the program broken up and sent overseas but now have this quite old method of judgment thrust upon us.

Very few fellows who were planning to go to college would be married and have families. Each child (for 3) counts 12 points. The way the draft has worked, most men in the army now either came in when mostly single ones were being taken (and have lots of points for overall and overseas service) or else weren't taken until the later period when fathers came in by the bushel. Therefore the present recently-graduated-from-high-school boy is way low in points with almost four years of school ahead of him and even more if he's entering a profession

If I were to be army of occupation and that were to be a potential trouble-quelling force (opposed to the constant police and guard duty) and the educational programs are put into effect, I might feel my time is not being wasted. I could be "away at school" as well in Munich, Heidelberg, Dijon, Strasburg, etc., as in Lewisburg.

But as before with the ASTP, it's all one big IF.

One of the boys who came over with me in our platoon and is now back after being wounded and a long convalescence in England, had just two more weeks of the semester of pre-med at Johns Hopkins to finish before he'd be accepted by the medical school there and be automatically deferred. He's there on a scholarship so you know he's good. The Baltimore draft board he was registered in would neither defer him nor let him transfer his papers to his home board in Florida which no doubt would have done the deferring.

So he went ASTP as the next best thing, then Bragg, Kilmer, ETO. All this time the country was in theoretical and actual crying need of doctors both military and civilian. Anyone know how old young doctors are anyway until they begin practicing. What about cases like this????

I know I've lectured too much already and will close for this time. I hope I've painted a picture that's true and realistic. Keep this—it will help to show in years to come that everything isn't cut and dried. A few words from so-called combat men are supposed to help.

Please send me something to eat.

Love,
E.

P.S. Can't you see old Grandpa Smith getting his diploma at Bucknell in 1985, ear trumpet in position?!?! Ha! Ha!

May 20, 1945
Ludwigsburg
Number 120

Dear Beth,

There was no mail for me from home today, but I was gifted with a package mailed only 31 days ago by Auntie M., three *Suns* and a Christian Advocate. They just told us that there is no more censorship by the unit censor (company echelon). It is expected that base censor will still spot check, but we can seal our letters. I'll go into a few more details sometime when I write an air mail. I did get around to putting down a chronological list with dates of all the places I've been from Marseilles to right now. I knew it couldn't wait long or I'd forget—especially in the time since I returned from Brussels when we were moving so fast.

I still haven't seen the Beautiful Blue Danube yet. My total on rivers was Rhone, Saone, Moselle, Meurthe, Saar, Rhine, and Neckar. There may have been additional ones on the way to Brussels, but I don't remember them, or the names at least.

Some of these days I'll be sending that list of places home. You'll be able to find lots of them on the map I sent home from Brussels. We guard a palace, that one of the King Fredricks lived in, some of the time now. Another nice day today.

Love to all,
E.

21 May 1945
Ludwigsburg, Germany

The best thing that happened today was the return of Harry Wannamaker. He left the company January 1 with a stomach disorder and battle fatigue, and has been around England and France ever since. Of our POE bunch that came over, not counting the jeep drivers and people who have jobs in other parts of the company now, Harry, Ogie, and I are the only three left in the platoon. A number were captured

besides wounded and killed. Lee Reese is in the hospital with jaundice and he will be another when he gets back.

Harry and Reese were in the first company at Benning next to us and we three came into A Co. together, also came into the 4th platoon last May at the same time. In the barracks we slept in the same row by the windows - Harry in the corner, I next, and then Lee. By the way, I came into the 4th platoon a year ago tomorrow. Anniversaries galore these days!!!

I have some pictures taken and developed which I'm going to send home shortly. This will be all for tonight. Ask me any questions you wish now although My Day will get you up to date eventually.

Goodnight for now,
Love to all,
E.

23 May 1945
Ludwigsburg, Germany

Dear Ditty,

I didn't write yesterday because I used it mostly to catch up on sleep. Occasionally I get behind and must spend the better part of my "off" time in repose. We are on guard at this displaced persons camp eight hours a day, amounting to a 4-hour shift on, followed by eight off. Sometimes a twelve hour rest period creeps in.

Besides this, we eat early if a shift would come at a normal time for chow. And besides, we try to sleep, write, keep up on the world and do normal things like getting clothes (this never happened yet), filling out forms, etc. Auntie M. and you say you hope we have time to enjoy the scenery, boxes, and to rest a little. The army is very adept at finding time-occupying, energy-wasting, fraternization-discouraging activity. When we were on line, saving their necks, the rear echelon could easily find someone to guard its gas and ammo dumps. We Americans are very good at the big things that win wars; but when it comes to the little things which would display common horsesense, tact, and good judgment, we shine much better at home as individuals, "Man's Inhumanity to Man"!

We've had some rain the last few days but this evening it's clear and moderately warm again. According to what some have written from home, you've had lots - too much rain.

Yesterday and today I had a lot of mail, both from home and some of my casual correspondents. Also came the package of jam and jelly mailed Apr. 9 - I think that was the date.

Last evening the machine gun section sergeant, S/Sgt. Hank Blaney, Roxbury, Mass., got four rolls of film back

which he had taken back in Feb. I have ordered prints of nearly a third of them, so they'll be coming one of these days. I will go into which letters I got a little later, probably the next time when I'm writing at a table.

Please give this to Mother to put with the rest of my itinerary so it'll all be there for me. With the pre-POE history I wrote in the hospital, you have just a year of my army history.

Love,
E.

My points came back today. Officially 29 as I predicted and figured.

26 May 1945
No. 123

Dear Sis,

My neglect in writing since Wednesday has not been voluntary—there has just been too much in the way of stuff to do, and the free time has been all split up.

Please tell Mother that the flag to the Wagner's was sent by their son, a Jr., who is my squad leader. He is about 26 and has been overseas 28 months, long before anyone ever heard of ASTP. Mrs. Connie Tamms (the Connie is the name the husband goes by) is the sister of Bob Schoewe (Shay'vee), who was in our platoon and now is company bugler. All this group is now near division headquarters getting a drum and bugle corps together. As far as I know, neither of his parents is living.

Today I had Mother's air mail with the old platoon pictures and "AW63" poem enclosed. I never expected the pictures so soon. Naturally, we've done a lot of talking about the old outfit and the pictures meant a lot to us who were in it.

We who are guards at the Russian displaced persons camp are picking up a little Russian. Both the Russki's and we understand German more or less, and by using that as a medium, we ask each other for phrases and words. Each one writes the pronunciation of the other's language the way it sounds to him. I think that this and similar experiences will do much to cement us. So, don't let people tell you about our having to fear the Russians.

In spirit and actions at the camp we are against the Germans, they naturally more than we. They've told us of some of the things that happened. Hard and over-abundant work, little and poor food.

The money I enclose is Russian, one and three rubles,

respectively. Please put it with my other mementos.

Among our friends at the camp is Nosof (No'soof) Alexander. The name in Russian is spelled differently, but this is the pronunciation. He is very intelligent, speaks a little English, and learns more every day, and speaks German with our accent—not this Württembergish guttural stuff. He was a tanker before being captured, is about 25, and lives in Moscow. He is the one most of us on that post like the best. Of course, our cigarettes, gum, and other food makes its way out there.

Just now I'm downtown at a warehouse (not this minute - but that is my post) and we don't see our "kameraden," but we'll go back Monday, I guess.

As an example of how international we have become, I can ask, "What time is it?" in six languages - English, French, German, Russian, Polish, and Spanish. It surely is most interesting and a very enjoyable part of the work.

I forgot to say that Nosof calls me "Smitty" and we are all surprised how natural and clear his words are.

I have Beth's birthday letter and many others from some of my casual correspondents. Rachael Sistare sent me a card which came in just a week from Myrtle Beach, S.C. where she was spending some time with some other teachers. All those folks go there or somewhere handy as their "Atlantic City."

I've sent several S&S home recently under separate cover. Notice the marked places.

Well, good night for now,

Love to all,
E.

28 May 1945
Ludwigsburg
Number 125

Dear Beth,

My mail today was limited to two air mails from Jane. It was a beautiful day in Württemberg province. Grandma would call it a perfect June day—blue sky and no clouds. It wasn't too warm and in the shade, just right.

Since this isn't a diary type letter, there isn't too much news. In a few minutes I'm going to drink coffee and then get ready to go on guard from 12 to 4. As usual the evening has sped by with too much radioing and jabbering and not enough writing. I despair ever getting caught up.

I am more and more pleased with our friendships with our "Russki kameraden." They are most appreciative of anything we Americans do for them. They, I think, feel more actually thankful to us as "GI Joe" than any other group,

including many at home. My Russian vocabulary and counting is increasing also.

Well, I must rush off now and see about the coffee for us.

Love to you all,
E.

Ludwigsburg
May 30, 1945
Number 126

Dear Folks,

I'd already started a V-mail to you when the mail came. Then I did an errand or two besides taking care of getting a package to you up to Haynie. It was censored and wrapped last night. In it you'll find some German timetables much like the American Official Guide except that the railroads are government owned entirely. The other stuff is insignia from a warehouse which we can add to my flag as more Nazi souvenirs.

Yesterday I had Mother's 209 and today 211. Just a week is very good for V-mail. The thing better than that is two by air mail which came today—one each from Jane and Tillie Alexander—mailed five days ago on the 25th. Jane's was postmarked 4 p.m. I got it at 6 p.m. (noon EWT) today or in 116 hours. Quite a few have been coming from the East Coast in this time.

Well, I'm mentally reminiscing about a year ago tonight. I was on my way home on my first, last, and always furlough. About this time I was rolling along above Rocky Mt., N.C. sitting on Nell Lancaster's (the ? cousin) suitcase until almost Richmond. It doesn't seem so long ago; in fact it seems longer to my last pass home.

The services in the large church were separate from the civilian ones. Although the organist was a civilian and the non-fraternization policy is in full force, we could naturally talk to him in rehearsing and getting things ironed out.

I enclose two sets of pictures, the smaller ones taken the month we were in Lemberg, near Bitche last winter, and the others taken in the last two weeks here in Ludwigsburg.

I received a change of address card from Bob Holland this week c/o P.M., S.F.

Oh yes, the negative for my own picture is enclosed

also. You can have as many made as you wish. They'll be dark but usable.

I'm on K.P. tomorrow so no guard tonight. My first time in Europe. Got a box from Mrs. Reese last night.

More tomorrow I guess.

Love to all,
E.

May 30, 1945
Ludwigsburg

Dear Auntie M.,

I suppose you recall a year ago tonight when I was on my way home on furlough. Then the next night you arrived home yourself. If anyone had told me then that in a year I'd be sitting in Ludwigsburg, I'd have told them to go jump in the Cape Fear.

Things have been planned so that our free time is quite split up. Strange as it may sound, I feel as if I have less time to write now than when we were more or less stationary in the winter. I'm not on guard at the displaced persons camp tonight because I have KP tomorrow for the first time in Europe.

I got your box last week with the figs, Huyler's candy, etc. and we enjoyed it so much. Also your letters of May 1, 3, 8, 13 and April 28. This isn't much for news, but enough however to let you know about my general welfare. We know nothing about our status yet; but if the division is a "raisin pie," I'm just a "seed in one of the raisins." I have given part of our geography in letters home. I'm now up to Dec. 19 so you'll be hearing about it.

Love,
E.

1 June 1945
Number 128

Dear Sis,

By the time this reaches you, you ought to have just about joined me as a graduate of WHS. I guess the big day is two weeks from yesterday although we used to have it always on Fridays.

Today I heard from Paul Trost, Lee Sistare, Mrs. Reese

(they've moved again) and Mother, No. 213. I'll be glad to know what kind of letters the Wagners write. Dave says they wrote that they've written you and no doubt you have it even now. I've seen their pictures, and they are quite distinguished; I believe he is a banker.

I've been explaining the issue of Yank which contains the story of Truman's life and Roosevelt's death, to some of my Russian friends at the camp where they have to stay. It certainly seems unfair, and I hope they get sent home quickly.

The Germans kept them here three years and now we French and Americans prolong the agony. Their food isn't very good, but I hope it improves for them. The VNRRA gets it from the Germans. Well, it's almost dark, so I'll close.

Love to all,

E.

Ludwigsburg (am Neckar) Germany

4 June 1945

Number 130

Dear Beth,

I didn't write yesterday because of my trip so I believe I'll give you a little more this time. Three of us "Pop" Holloway (36 years old, from Missouri and with four kids), Stirling Meade (Skeets—from Sweet Valley near Wilkes-Barre), and I got up about 6:20 and were supposed to be at the company CP by 7:00. We arrived about then (a block and a half away) and ate a breakfast at the kitchen.

Since our kitchen truck was one of the three being driven by the battalion, we just rode down to battalion CP in it so we could pick up some of the others from Bn Hq, B, C, and D companies.

We never left battalion until after eight and then took a while to get on the right series of roads after we got out of town. The autobahns (super highways) have all their over-and under-pass bridges blown up, so we couldn't use that. We stayed on the west side of the Neckar all the way, just touching Heilbronn. We reached Heidelberg about 11:30 and parked the trucks. Then we took off on our own.

Our dress was fixed at O.D.'s with combat boots, ties, Eisenhower jackets and overseas caps. Of course I didn't have blue braid, division or regimental insignia, U.S. or infantry buttons, Hershey bar, Pfc. stripe, etc., but it was the most dressed up I've been for a long time even when I went to Brussels. My clothes were newer then, but this time I had my CI badge and ETO ribbon, star-spangled with one glittering jewel (although we're due two now).

Our headquarters seemed to be the Red Cross building

where we first had coffee and donuts. Then we walked down to the river, the ever-present, slow-running Neckar once again. All the bridges have been blown up but there is one good GI job now. After Pop took our pictures several different ways we rode across the river in a large rowboat, one of several that is providing ferry service at 10 pfennigs (1 cent) a trip. We came back from there and tried to rent a boat ourselves at the army-requisitioned boat house. However, one must have a Sixth Army Group (the next echelon above and controlling both French 1st and U.S. 7th and maybe 3rd Armies) to partake of that luxury, and in lieu of one we dropped in at the Capitol Theater to see *Tahiti Nights*, which wouldn't get the Academy Award or anything.

Next, about four bells, we walked to the square by the Hauptbahnhof (Main Station) and got on a street car to go on a twelve minute ride to one of the suburbs. I was quite surprised to see them running but I hear they also are in Stuttgart nowadays. The fare to Leiman, the end of the line, was 40 pfennigs (4 cents) each way, but once I bought all our fares together, and she seemed to give me a sort of pass or commuters' book, which I am enclosing.

Returning to town we walked back toward the Red Cross. On the way Capt. Bradbury, Bn surgeon, who was in charge of our Bn convoy yelled to us that we weren't coming back until 9:30 instead of 7:00 as previously announced.

So Meade and I reviewed the evening's program and after more coffee and donuts and another short walk went upstairs to Victory Hall. Ed Hines was along in another convoy, from Service Company, which is in Backnang. So with the ones from our battalion that I know on sight plus the other I ran into, I felt quite at home.

One of the high points of the day was running into Albert Eschenbach and Jim Boortz, both of E Co., who'd come up in 2nd Bn trucks. I'd seen neither since we left the ship, although they live across the river from us now. Boortz is the tall blond from Everett, Washington who used to do so much 1st bass solo work in our choir. I didn't talk long but we're going to look each other up if the regiment ever lives together again.

In the Victory Hall at 7:00 was an hour's concert by the string quartet. I've enclosed the program. Immediately following was an informal program by the "Bavarian Waltz Kings," who played from a balcony overlooking the garden for two hours. Quite a picturesque way to hear Strauss waltzes and others!

We went back to the parking lot about 9:30 and left shortly. We came back the same way to Heilbronn, then up the east side of the river to Backnang and then over here.

I got in the house at 2:00 and after reading Mother's V-mail No. 210 and Marion's commencement invitation, went to

bed until 11 this a.m. I'll close this after I get back to the house when I see today's mail.

There was no letter mail today so I guess I'll close without further comment until later.

Love to all,
E.

Marks for you girls—tickets for my collection.

4 June 1945

Dear Mother,

I've been meaning to write this for sometime, but boy, have I been busy. Having this split-up guard certainly splits up our free time.

Have you done anything about a graduation present for Marion from me? I should have done this before; I see commencement is next Wednesday. It's been on Friday for so long that I thought it was permanent. Leap Year sometimes made it Thursday, but Wednesday seems early.

I'd like to give her an \$18.75 war bond. If you've already done something, just take it out of my allotment and use your own good judgment, as before, this time.

Will you tell me how Roosevelt ever got three representatives to the Jr.-Sr. prom? It's lucky if we have even one usually. Maybe it's the up-and-coming-ness of the coming generation.

I was pleased with the outcome of the present for Ditty's birthday. Is Marion going to work full time at Sylvania? You speak of her going down there and the last day at Stearns.

I am sending a few old marks that are too old to be good. Also more railroad tickets which I'll send gradually.

I got the flag and poster in Shifferstadt west of the Rhine, below Ludwigshafen; the flag in the Rathaus (city hall) and the poster in a Hitler Youth barracks; we were searching the town for Jerries and weapons on Palm Sunday.

I've just checked over a group of your letters I haven't answered fully—no more questions or comments so I'll close now.

Love to all,
E.

5 June 1945
Ludwigsburg

Dear Folks,

Not much news tonight—I've mailed two envelopes of RR tickets "Free" already this evening. My diary, or "My Days," I'm planning to write little by little and send home by phases.

I got Mother's 214-216 tonight and several from Jane. Today was nice most of the time, but we had a very hard shower for about an hour beginning around noon. Tonight I haven't written as much as last night. For one thing, I'm tired and it's hard to concentrate.

I am on guard from 12-4 tonight so about eleven I'm going to get something to eat. They tell us we are to have no more fresh meat indefinitely but it may be just a rumor. I can't figure where it's all going to.

I wish I had some fresh vegetables myself right now. I may appropriate some from one of these Jerry gardens one of these days.

Tonight the V-E issue of the *Sun* arrived plus the ones on either side. It was quite interesting to compare all the headlines.

Well, now to eat.

Love to all,
E.

6 June 1945
Ludwigsburg (on the Neckar), Germany

Dear Auntie M.,

This evening I got yours of May 28, and Jane has also mentioned that she didn't receive any mail from me for a long time despite the fact that I wrote quite regularly all the two weeks preceding V-E day. Tonight I had an answer to a letter I wrote to Mother on May 20. Just 17 days for the round trip—both V-mail; not bad, eh?

We've been taking pictures of each other, and Mother has the negatives of one taken last winter at Lemberg, near Bitche. As many can be made as necessary, and no doubt she'll send it to you soon. I have additional ones every once in a while, and those I can, I'll get enough of to send you one.

The "cow town division" (our battalion of 398th) is in a city of 40,000 at ? about 10 miles north of Stuttgart. Last Sunday I was on a GI trip to Heidelberg, further down (but north on) the Neckar. We found the suburban trolleys running and had a ride. A very nice Red Cross was there also, located in a former museum with a formal garden to sit in. We arrived too late to take the formal tour of the

University, etc. but did quite well on my own. A year ago yesterday, before I say, I rode with you to Sunbury to visit the Witmans.

Love,
E.

7 June 1945
[Pictures]

All the home made ones are duplicates. The others are various views of Schloss Ludwigsburg, Ludwigsburg (am Neckar), Württemberg, Germany where we lived May-June 1945.

7 June 1945
Ludwigsburg
Number 133

Dear Sis,

No mail tonight and I guess it's a good thing because the clock just struck nine, and this is the first thing I've written. After this one and one to Jane, I expect to do more on my catching up. I don't know just how prolific these will be because I'm not too ambitious tonight. Just now they came in to collect 198 marks (\$19.80) for our PX rations. Several of us forwarded the amount and we'll collect later from the member of the section.

One of these days I want to write you a separate extra letter about a few things but with about eight others to write, I don't know when your turn will come.

Tonight we had a battalion review to award some silver and bronze stars and Brig. Gen. Tyschen, assistant divisional commander, was here to do the honors. Having been relieved of our D.P. guard preparatory to moving to another town, we didn't have anything in the duty line for tonight so they easily found a time-user if not waster.

Please send me something to eat and keep it coming—the evening snack type of thing.

Love to all,
E.

Sunday morning, June 10, 1945

The Bn started back to Schoendorf, crossing the Neckar as if we were going to Marbach, but turning south toward Waiblingen. The 4th platoon got in some nice houses on Goethe Strasse. The mortars were next to the CP with the m.g. across the street. We no more than had our things upstairs and our bodily junk off, than we started out looking for a radio. At

that time everyone had to take weapons everywhere so several of us went to the next house. After some jabbering and tears we gave the people a receipt and had *them* bring the radio to our house. It worked very well and meant a lot to us. We were in a very nice third floor apartment and Dave, Si, Ogie and I were in one double bed. There was a kitchen and bathroom adjoining so we made out fine. Cashman was in one little room, Perales in the dining room, Schueber and Shelton in one room and McGee in another. We had received six replacements in the platoon just before leaving L'burg who were in the post VE training co in Backnang. They were very nice in giving us all of Sunday off.

Schorndorf, Germany
10 June 1945
Number 135

Dear Beth,

Today I had your air mail of last Sun. and Mother's No. 223 of the same. As you see, we moved back to this place where we were V-E Day, but this time we have a better section of town. The mortar section has an apartment and seven of us live on the top floor. We went to another house for the radio and we have an electric iron. This floor is so nice that we need no incentive to keep it clean. There is a little kitchen very compact with enough utensils to provide us if any food comes while we're here. Three of us (and one more on pass now) have a beautiful room with a wardrobe where we can hang all our stuff out of the way and sight.

Tomorrow a much-disliked training schedule (including reveille and retreat formation) begins. It just seems the "powers that be" just don't show much appreciation for our efforts last winter and this spring—we could have a less-restricting program now. Well, some day we'll be doing what's just, right, and good for us and that's all, I'll answer questions tomorrow. No church today because of the move.

Love to all,
E.

Schorndorf, Württemberg
No. 136
11 June 1945

Dear Folks,

I am using my away-from-home stationery tonight since I

am on guard at a swimming pool which we'll no doubt be able to use from time to time. That seems to be one drawback to the situation as it stands now: in conjunction with the training schedule, they have three or four guard posts plus KP, etc. Most of us feel it would be better if one platoon at a time did the guard and the rest of us concentrate on the other. Division of labor, they call it in industry.

Today I had Ditty's church program by regular mail since June 6. It must have come by air. Also came Mother's 221 of June 1 and a double one from Marion and Auntie M. of June 5.

My one letter that came to you opened and resealed was spot-checked by the base censor. He would do one bag out of so many.

I don't know where Atterdorn is but I'll look for it on one of the many maps I've scanovitched. (This word means to find and appropriate an article.)

We are at the same town where we were on V-E Day. I think maybe the whole regiment will be here; if that's bad because of having so much "brass" around, it's good because maybe we can get the choir together once more in that big church.

I guess I've explained about the two boys Mother sent the flags to - or rather, their parents. The one, Bob Schoewe, was in regular ASTP at the Citadel, Charleston, S.C., following Benning basic. He was in the mortar section of I Co. until our company was captured at Wingen. He is about six months older than I. The first time at Bitche, he got some shrapnel in the cheek and rejoined us in the middle of January. He was in our mortar squad all along until a month ago when he was put in headquarters section of the co. as bugler. Then all the players of drums and bugles went to a central point in the division's territory to form a d&b corps.

Dave Wagner is a sergeant and my squad leader. He came to us in Feb. from the anti-aircraft as part of the conversion program and has been overseas 30 months (five "Hershey bars"). He is 25, a Mason, and a graduate of Michigan State U. and was through Africa and Italy. They both belong to the group in our outfit who are interested in some of the better things - education, reading, music. I've sent pictures home of them and a lot more. Dave and Ogie are the two in my room with me now in this new house.

I don't seem to have much more to say, and all the questions are answered so I guess I'll close. It rained this morning. We've been having much cool weather and some rain.

I'll let you know how the swimming pool is. There seems to be a shortage of some toilet accessories. Will you please send soap - Ivory because it's good for hands and socks, double-edge razor blades-the best, and dentifrice, also a

little more baking soda.

In the morning when I'm on my second and last time (6-10 p.m. and 6-10 a.m.), I may get a few off to a few more I owe yet. I've whittled the pile down this past wee.

Love to all,

E.

P.S. I don't know how much good they'll do but send my swimming trunks along if they're in good condition.

12 June 1945

Dear Folks,

Here's a book that gives our combat history up to the Rhine. My personal record includes the time I was away; and since it's just our company in most cases, is much more detailed than the book. However, this gives the necessary overall picture. My diary follows in due time.

E.

Tues. Eve., 12 June '45
Schorndorf, Württemberg

Dear Auntie M,

Last night I had yours and Marion's joint letter of June 5. Six days from your hand to mine with six hours' time difference is not in our favor.

We have moved back here to where we were on V-E Day. This is the place where the large church is and the field for regimental observance was. This town is 30 km (just under 20 miles) east of Stuttgart. This time we live in a better section, though, up on the hill in "Vallamont."

Three of us and one more, when he returns from visiting his air corps cousin in Mannheim, occupy a very nice room on the third floor of a European-type apartment house. The furnishings, etc. are very nice and we find the original good condition an incentive to keeping it this way.

They tell us we are supposed to have a training program (too much like basic) but have an asinine way of mixing in enough guard to make it irregular, confusing, and undependable.

There is a nice swimming pool over on the other side of town, which occasionally figures in the guard schedule.

Today we saw an official film (evidently a sequel to

the point-system explaining *Two Down and One to Go*) called *On to Tokio*. It consisted mainly of different classifications of ETO men asking questions of Gens. Somervell, Marshall, Eisenhower, Stillwell, Arnold, etc. The average reaction in our group was a succession of the army versions of booing.

However, when we got back to the house I had thrust in my face a copy of the *Stars and Strips*, which proclaimed, "3rd and 7th to Occupy Germany." I hope our ? and individual points are right to keep us here.

It's pouring here tonight to keep up the consistency of quite a spell of cool weather with intermittent rain.

Marion didn't mention anything about Carl White (class mate) but made some description of a North Dakota dischargee about to finish his senior year of college with 2 ½ years' army intermission. I wonder how old he is.

It's funny, but I just wrote her a brotherly letter on Sunday. Now another must go with the latest comments.

Tonight I have high hopes of cleaning up on the last of my back correspondence. In tow or three days I heard from almost every one of my casual correspondences. With the irregular life we led while guarding displaced Russians in Ludwigsburg, I just didn't get many answered.

Gradually, I'll get my entire story home. What are your plans for the summer? Are you renting and moving? Suppose your school is out unless the five days more makes it the same as ours.

Enclosed is 1000 marks worth nothing-too old-but at present rates equal to \$100.

Love and kisses,
E.

Schorndorf
13 June 1945
Number 137

Dear Marion,

Today was quite ordinary except for one thing—we had our first good meal in a week—steak, fried potatoes, salad, corn, bread & butter, cake and coffee. Tonight was also extraordinary because I didn't get any mail although there was a small mail call. Seldom have I failed to get a paper, package, or letter. But more will be coming for not getting them now.

The day was chill and damp, but that never kept us from going through a full day of basic training. "What fools we mortals (morons!!!) be!!!"

I am not going to write much because news is scarce. We

took our clothes for laundering and pressing to the woman who belongs in the house.

I guess I'll close now. We had good showers in a regular tiled and elaborate shower downtown.

Love to all,
E.

Schorndorf
June 15, 1945
Number 140

Dear Beth,

Tonight I had Mother's No. 228 and several others...Now it's Sunday and I didn't get any more than the first line written. Friday was just one of those evenings when I don't get so much written. I don't believe I said that Ditty's box of May 16 came the other day also. It had the nuts, cocoa, and candy bars contained within. The weather has finally cleared up for several days in succession.

Friday afternoon some of us went to a USO show held in a large auditorium about a half mile from us. There were six in the team, 3 men and 3 girls. One of the former group was a very excellent juggler and the other two made a comedy team with one acting as M.C. The girls were as follows: a tap dancer; an accordionist and popular singer from Pittsburgh; and a semi-classical vocalist from Florence, S.C. That's not far below Dillon on the ACL. She sang "Night and Day," "Indian Love Call" and one more. We liked this last mentioned one best. More later.

Love to all,
E.

From Mother
June 17, 1945
(Atlantic City)
Number 237

Dearest Emory:

Hello from all of us at Auntie M's.

Arriving in Philadelphia a little late, 11:00 a.m., in very hot weather. Checked our luggage and proceeded to Horn

& Hardart getting back for the 12:00 to A. City. A hot, bouncy, cindery (?) ride. Arrived at 2:15—a big crowd of us. At the corner of the station Beth noticed a fellow with a 100th Division patch. So Mom walked up to him and asked what part of the 100th he was in. He said 398th, 4th platoon. He is Rudolph Wilson, Pleasantville, N.J., a replacement. Went into the company, he thinks while you were in hospital and was captured with the rest of your company. He was released on April 14. I had all of the pictures you have sent home, with me and showed them to him. He didn't recall any of the faces or names. Wasn't that a coincidence that we should meet him like that? Beth has been in bathing twice. Ditty and I just today. The water is still pretty chilly for us old guys but not for you young ones. Auntie M is working full time. At Huylers. We talked of you much last night. Our family is widely separated today. Pop home, Marion Rochester, you Germany and Beth & me A. City. "That's life, eh?" We are eating in and out but today is nice so we are riding to Starns for dinner at 4:30 or after. Wish you could be with us. More tomorrow, Darling.

Love, hugs, kisses,

Lovingly,
Mother

Schorndorf
17 June 1945
Number 141

Dear Folks,

Well, I finished Beth's delayed action V-mail since I started writing and now I'll try to come up to date. This noon I received a greater variety of mail than I have for almost two weeks. Just to make sure I haven't missed any from Friday to today I'll mention the ones on hand: Mother's V-mails 229 and 230 and her air mail envelope of clippings of June 10. Also I've heard from both Grandmas and the latest Messenger.

In the S&S today I saw finally where the railroad wreck in PA was. I said I didn't get the details on the radio Friday night. Since it mentions the 14-car passenger train and people on it from both the Buffalo area and Central N.Y. area served by the Elmira Branch, I figure it was the 2:48 from home in the afternoon. It was the worst around home for a long time. (It also could be the northbound twin to the 2:48, arriving just before 2:00 that Mother went to St. Mary's on).

The one letter today said that maybe Mother and Beth would be going to A.C. on the 15th but I suppose you would

use the Susquehannock. Anyway, I don't see your names among those mentioned and am not going to worry about it. I hope it didn't scare you into not doing anymore traveling.

Do you remember when the Strubs and I were in Philadelphia two years ago in May I went to A.C. less than twenty-four hours after and right past the wreck of that A.C. to N.Y. train, the "Nellie Bly?" And a week after the "Congressional" cracked up at Frankford Jct. I went past on my way to meet Mother in Philadelphia after my September trip alone. Of course the Broad St. Station fire confused us on that one.

Yesterday we had regular Saturday inspection and in the afternoon went down to the swimming pool. I wasn't in the water long at all, but I was exposed to the sun longer than I would have thought is good for me. However, I notice no bad results at all. In the evening we saw "Uncertain Glory," one of those pictures about the French occupation. Tonight's, a Blondie film, would be more my type, but because I wanted to write I stayed in.

This morning we slept until 10:15 when we got up to go to church. We had a late evening (until 1 a.m. or so) and quite an exciting one too. We found out how much this non-fraternization is a "don't-do-as-I-do, just-do-as-I-say" attitude. I hardly want to go into it just now, but I know I won't forget it for future writing or telling. It seems that despite rank everyone is learning that combat men can't be fooled around with. This place is rapidly being called Ft. Schorndorf IRTC (Infantry Replacement Training Center). An IRTC is the basic center where replacements are trained. Hardly a more GI or rougher place can be found in the Stateside army. By the way, tomorrow morning Dave Wagner, our squad leader, has been assigned to give an hour's class on military courtesy. Shades of West Point!

I was very surprised to get a *Sun* today only two weeks old, Sat. June 2. The V-E edition came about ten days ago. This afternoon we slept; tonight to supplement the things from home we are having fresh strawberries with sugar and milk provided by the man next door. They're very large and nice. I'd like to get some every day. Too bad fruit is scarce at home this year.

We often hear Strauss music on the radio mostly on AEF stations. I often just get up and look out the window where we have a beautiful view because this section is much like the parts of Austria which inspired him. The closest we've been to the Danube is here; the nearest point on it is Ulm, about 55 km (35 miles) away. We were to church at 11:00. Saw Foster and others at a distance but we didn't talk. C Company lives where we did the last time. There is an all-Viennese program on the radio now.

Love to all,

E.

Schorndorf
June 19, 1945
Number 143

Dear Sis,

This evening was quite a varied one for mail; I had Mother's V-mails 225, 226 and 232, also some from Jane, Harriet Morgan and Tilly Alexander. Then the Planter's Peanuts box arrived from Wilkes-Barre, tell Ditty. There were six jars of salted mixed nuts—very good. Jane's dictionary, like the French one that came the beginning of Feb. both published by the *Infantry Journal*, came in just five days. It was first class, but not airmail. Why, that was just last Thursday!

In our platoon there are three mortar squads of five each plus section leader and runner, two machine gun squads of five each plus section leader and runner, a platoon leader (lt.)

Schorndorf
22 June 1945

Dear Auntie M.,

In the past week I've had two packages from you. One had the fig bars, cocoa, etc., and the other had the canned apricots as the main ingredient. We've been enjoying the various things supplemented by things we get here. Several nights we've exchanged cigarettes for strawberries, milk, and sugar; another time we had cherries—delicious, dark red, sweet ones. I understand that both items are very scarce and expensive at home this year.

I don't know if there is much mail tonight if any at all. At least we haven't had any brought up yet.

Although things are very indefinite as far as our future is concerned; however, I wouldn't be surprised (and hope you won't either) if we come home some time this summer.

I got a letter from Steve Eckstein in the 100th Division yesterday; he says that several thousand of them are being put in the 5th Div. Then they come home and then the Pacific. More later.

Thanks for the boxes. Please send something more to eat.

Love,

E.

Schorndorf
24 June 1945
Number 145

Dear Beth,

Yesterday I had Mother's V-mails 235 and 236 written the day before you left and on the way to Phila. I'm so glad you didn't cancel your trip. Our family, I know, is just so many people—whatever it is—on the train; but we always went that way. We aren't one of those traveling just because of something the war brought on, or because we formerly used some other form of transportation.

I am enclosing a few more pictures which Brodsky had developed when he was at Nice on the Riviera last week. I believe they are self-explanatory.

Tell Mother she can show my diary to anyone we know personally, but she should be careful there are no pointed remarks made. A lot of people have no idea about what a war is other than the newspaper type of report.

If I haven't in the parts already sent, I am going to editorialize on some of the things that happened, and not too kindly either.

I have already written Mrs. Sears and Jane in the tone I may use or have used in the diary so they surely may see it. I worked on it some more today, and I'll send this installment when I get it up to March 15, when the spring offensive began.

I should like to have a good picture (snapshot), a print of one of the various I've sent home, to sent to Steve Eckstein. There are two of me in the group I'm sending tonight but I don't like this pose as well as some of the others. You pick the one that you think is best (don't send the one in a steel helmet at Lemberg), have an extra print made, and send it to me.

Dave Wagner, our squad leader, started the trip today that will climax (shortly, we hope) in stepping down as a civilian at the Pere Marquette station in Harbor Beach, Michigan. We surely hated to lose him (he came to us, from the AA, at Lemberg last February), and he hated to go as far as leaving the various fellows was concerned; I know I'll feel the same way in that respect some day. He's been overseas longer than I've been in the army, so I guess it's his turn.

I didn't write yesterday although I started to last night. I was on swimming pool guard last night and today, so no rest, no church, and no writing. C'est la guerre.

Until tomorrow,

Love to all,
E.

Schorndorf
27 June '45
Number 148

Dear Sis,

Well, I'm getting around to my writing not exactly early; but still, considering what I've done this evening besides just sitting around, I feel satisfied.

Today Si Chichester from near San Francisco left as a Class D personnel. With him were two others from our platoon and Cpl. Hennings, our company clerk since activation, and S/Sgt. John Socha, who was a corporal in the third platoon when I came into the company. The last mentioned was wounded somewhere along the line.

It was rumored that these Class D's (taken out of the outfit because of physical defects) were going to the 63rd Division, at least temporarily. No one knows if they'll be kept over here or sent home. Anyway Si says at my suggestion that if he's stationed somewhere in Ft. Dix, Meade, or one of those many small posts in the Middle Atlantic area that he'll come to see you some weekend. And we said we'd do the same if any of us got his way.

His going was the second departure from someone in our squad in four days; Dave Wagner left on Sunday on points. I guess I have explained that we call him "Si" because we thought he explained when he first came that the first syllable of his name was pronounced that way instead of "Chi." His first name is John, and he's 25 and a Catholic.

This double departure also meant that we lost two of the four in our room. The most we have had on the floor is nine, and now four is the best we can show due to shifting around, passes, etc.

Today I had Mother's V-mail 240 of June 20 and air mail 242 of the 22nd. The latter came in four and a half days of actual time from postmarking. It came as a reply to mine of only two weeks ago yesterday to Auntie M. How's that for fast time?

The lights just went out for a while and I've hunted up several of my whole box of various types of candles. It reminds me of last winter, but we're making out.

In the meantime they've come on again. I think I'll close now and get a few more off.

Until later,

Love to all,

E.

Schorndorf
29 June 1945
Number 150

Dear Beth,

Today was surely a busy one, and I can look back with some satisfaction at having accomplished something. We arose at 6:30 as usual and had reveille and breakfast. Following that we cleaned up our rooms, kitchen, hall, and stairs. I usually do the kitchen myself. We used to have two more to help with the tidying so it keeps us stepping.

After that I washed a few things and took a new shirt, my Ike jacket and field jacket over to Frau Hahn to have her press them.

Next I finished a letter that was already started; by the time the platoon meeting orienting us on this Gmünd deal was over it was lunch time.

Just there goes the "air raid" siren which they use for the civilian curfew signal. At 9:15 p.m. they blow the warning and the final one sounds at 9:30. It sounds almost exactly like ours on the Newberry Station.

After dinner I continued to be just as busy. The day's activities climaxed at retreat when Lt. Col. McCrum, the Bn commander inspected us in OD's, ties, Ike jackets, overseas caps and shined combat boots, and gave his final approval for our sojourn—which by the way is postponed one more day, until Sunday. This whole outfit has never made an important move that it didn't happen on Sunday.

I had no mail from home or the home folks although I did hear from Vicky Alexander and Lee Sistare and Jane. Lee is furloughing and wrote this letter from Jacksonville where he was visiting Marshall_____, one of his organist friends.

He started on the 18th (Mon.) and spent that Sun.-Tues. at home and went to J. Tues. night. He was going to Pennsylvania (Kennett Square, W. Chester, Phila., etc.) the next Monday and go back to Bragg on July 1.

If I ever come home on furlough I suppose I'll have to visit Rochester, Lewisburg, A.C., Muncy and all points north.

Vicky said they heard the 100th was back in N.Y. and they saw a man on Hay St. with a division patch. However, my letter from here spiked all rumors. Let me assure you that I'll keep you posted on all likely-to-be-reliable rumors.

Since one of the chaplains of Lee's outfit was shipped out and only one assistant could leave, he has a new address for a while that Mother might be interested in.

[Lee's address at Ft. Bragg]

I got no nap today because of the unprecedented chores on hand so I must early to bed "heute abend" [today in the evening].

Love to all,
E.

Schwäbisch Gmünd
2 July 1945

Dear Folks,

I have mislaid my book with my record of writing in it due to our moving yesterday. After many false rumored starts we finally came to Gmünd yesterday.

A few of us left yesterday morning at 8:30. These two truckloads included those who were going on guard first as well as all those for the airstrip guard. I can't see any reason for the latter because we never went on until 6 last evening.

It was a blessing in disguise (that I had to be ready three hours earlier) that I got here early because we got a good place—again a third floor apartment.

Three of us, Ogie, Harry, and I have a large bedroom, small dining room, kitchen, bathroom, and another small bedroom where another boy sleeps on the third floor. These quarters aren't as immaculate as the ones in Schorndorf but we find them quite nice.

Yesterday afternoon I spent getting settled and my stuff away. At 5 p.m. I had supper and went to the CP at 5:30 for this airstrip guard. Nine of us went out from 6 p.m. until 8 this a.m.

We stayed on cots and litters in two pyramid tents and the three on my shift were on from 8-10 p.m. and 2-4 a.m. We had these artillery liaison planes and a few captured Jerry ones in our charge. The American ones all had plates saying "Piper Aircraft Corp., Lock Haven, PA, USA." Of course I expected them to say that, but it made me feel at home anyway—all of us products of the Susquehanna Valley there together.

The weather here has been very rainy for us—so changeable, just like April usually is.

This p.m. we walked downtown and felt our way around.

There is beaucoup brass here and our company, representing the whole division, are trying to make a good impression. They say that VI Corps doesn't like the 100th. The only reason I know is that one day someone on a road checkpoint stopped the corps commander, a major general I guess. In order to create a good impression the guard in all sincerity thoroughly searched him, the vehicle and even asked for dog tags—really gave him the works in general. Here it turns out that we aren't even supposed to stop a general's car. Well they just never tell you a thing until it's too late.

This evening we saw "A Royal Scandal," a story of Catherine the Great of Russia. It certainly showed how foolish, silly, and useless all this rank is. We sat in the enlisted section of the balcony with a dozen full colonels and on down. There was this generous section reserved for officers and a part of that especially for members of the Corps general staff. The plot of the picture gave us many opportunities to express ourselves vocally.

The issue yesterday of *Beachhead News*, which is to the VI Corps as the *Century Sentinel* is to the 100th carries entirely the story of the 100th in combat. So, on the surface anyway they think something of that part of our history. But as the captain said, "That doesn't mean a thing now." What fools we mortals [morons] be!!! How much politics is involved we'll never know actually, but how much I've learned in 18 months makes me know that the impression of the army, being cut and dried in all actions that I got from George Sharrow, is all wrong.

Well, more tomorrow; I haven't written since last Friday.

Love to all,
E.

4 July 1945
Gmünd
No number +2

Dear Beth,

Tomorrow I shall spend at service company on my way on pass to Nancy. Nancy is between Sarrebourg and Paris so I may get over to the latter. It is what we've called all along "Corps Rest." I'll let you know what the deal is as things progress. I've been on either side of the place before since I was in a clearing station which was the railroad for the hospital train at Bayon. On my way to Brussels I went through Metz, the next place north. It will be my first return to France since March 22 when we entered the Fatherland.

Today I had Ditty's envelope of clippings, your folder of postcards which are very good for showing to strangers, and a letter from "Si" Chichester who left us last Wednesday to go to the 36th Division as Class D personnel. Our second "family" in the platoon is already well broken up. I'll bet I'll be here still when the division is deactivated.

This was a miserably cold and damp Fourth and I can't imagine anyone picnicking or picking cherries.

Au revere,
E.

Sixth Corps Rest Center
Nancy, France
7 July 1945

Dear Beth,

Well we made it finally, arriving at the station here about 8:20 last night. Yesterday morning we arose at seven or a little before and ate breakfast. After getting our things together, we went in front of the transients' house at service company in Schorndorf and shortly thereafter got on trucks. Our regiment had two large, so-called GI trucks and a ton and a half weapons carrier from anti-tank company.

First of all we had to go out of our way, up on the hill so the regimental commander could look us over. No one can understand why he can't trust the ranking officer who is going on pass to make sure we are presentable enough to duly represent his regiment. That's just another example of some of the eager-beaver type making everyone miserable when *they* think they're holding up traditions or customs a la regular army.

By the way, including the ones that have acted at different times this makes the sixth commander the 398th has had since I've been in it. Everyone knows that most of this stuff we put up with comes from no higher than regiment and we hearken back to the good old days when Col. Duff (with whom the choir appears in the Easter chapel picture), who had been with the outfit since activation, still had it.

Now that I've used about as much time as we wasted yesterday in describing all this, I believe we're ready to begin the trip.

We left Schorndorf about 8:30 and went west the way we've gone and come numerous times through Waiblingen and Fellbach to Bad Cannstatt and Stuttgart. From here we went west and southwest through Freudenstadt and across the Rhine to Strasbourg. This was my first time in this important

place.

The trucks dropped us off at the station (1 p.m.) and we waited until 3:15 when we were to gather in the main concourse in order to go upstairs for the 15:40 (3:40) train.

This turned out to be a mixed train with some freight cars and refugees in 40 and 8's. Our car was a 3rd class with wooden seats. We were clear at the end so the ride was quite clean. We came up through Saverne (they went through the Saverne Gap to get to Strasbourg in November), Sarrebourg (where our division CP was for over three months last winter), Luneville and finally Nancy.

Even with the gradual change provided through Alsace, France is surely a contrast to Deutschland. The advertising, etc. all seems to be so old-fashioned.

After waiting about a half hour at the station here we were picked up in trucks and brought out here to what appears to be an old French garrison. It reminds me of several hospitals I was in last winter which were in that category.

We got blankets and took showers and settled for the night. Today I've eaten breakfast, got PX rations and got ready to step out a little the rest of the day. We also got new clothes, the trousers of which outfit I seriously needed. More tomorrow.

Love to all,
E.

VI Corps Rest Center
Nancy, France
8 July 1945

Dear Auntie M,

Well, how's this for Yankee ingenuity, as a way of getting a letter to you not via Billtown? One package I got from you several weeks ago had the P'ville address on it, but I thought maybe you'd just wrapped and mailed it from there.

I did have 11 So. Oakland packages with later postmarks, I think (at least they came later), and the family's mail was reaching me in just a week after they mailed it down there; and by now I know you didn't leave the apt. until about a week ago last Wed. or Thurs.

Mother sent me your P'ville summer address, but last Sunday our company moved about 15 miles east of Schorndorf to Gmünd to act as guard for the headquarters of the corps whose rest center I am now enjoying. Coupled with packing on Wed. night to come here, all this moving caused me to put things where I couldn't find them or perhaps burn old

letters.

Now a little about how I got here: We left the company on Thursday morning the 5th and stayed at Service Company in Schorndorf that day and night. The next day we left by truck about 8 a.m. for Strasbourg. Despite all your fears of last winter and thinking that I personally was everywhere that the 7th Army or even the 100th was, this was my first time to be in Strasbourg. We came through what the map calls the Black Forest, but it looked much like any other part of wooded and hilly Germany except for one belt of quite high mountains, which we crossed.

At almost one p.m. we reached S'bourg and we waited around the station until 3:40 when we got on a mixed train with passenger cars just for us. Our route was up through Saverne, Sarrebourg (where div. rear was so long last winter), Luneville, and to Nancy by 8:30.

After about a half hour, trucks picked us up and took us through town up here on the hill to the rest center. After showering and getting blankets, we settled down and then to sleep.

Yesterday we got new clothes and in the p.m. and evening went downtown, seeing two movies. A captured GI bus runs from the gate every 15 minutes for the business section.

Now we are going to 11:00 church.

All my love,
E.

Nancy
9 July 1945

Dear Beth,

After I wrote yesterday I went to church at the Chaplains' Center, or did I write after that? Anyway we sang a lot, and I enjoyed it. It was only my second time at a service since V-E Day. When we went to Ludwigsburg I overslept the church time once, another time traded guard shifts and had eight consecutive hours at a warehouse and was too done out to go, went to Heidelberg the next week, moved the next, did go in Schorndorf June 17, on guard the next, moved a week ago, and went again yesterday. That's my worst record in the army, and after the war was over at that! Oh well, they all can happen anytime but it just was so odd they came together.

This morning I slept until 11, showered, etc., came downtown for a bit of shopping, visited R.C., went back to eat, came down to see *Keep Your Powder Dry* and am at Red Cross again. I expect to be a little earlier tonight. It's

quite warm tonight—sitting around in OD's.

Love to all,
E.

Nancy
11 July 1945

Dear Beth,

Well I finally got my packages off this morning. There were two, but only because everything wouldn't fit into the one. The things are as follows: The perfume is for you girls and Jane; the two bottles alike are Jane's and Marion's and the other is yours. The metal ashtray is for Pop; the pins are designated on the envelope (large "Lorraine" one for you, small one for Marion, and large one with no punting for Mother). Mother's is really quite good and you girls' are more souvenirish but with the Lorraine coat of arms I thought they'd be nice since Nancy is the capital of Lorraine and the [symbol] which symbolized the Free French during occupation and the de Gaulle government today is known as the "Cross of Lorraine."

The hankie is Auntie M's and I want Mother to please send it on for me. Likewise to give Jane her perfume. A French Red Cross worker helped me wrap them and it was better for the perfume to all go together and her boxes were scarce.

The wooden dishes with lids are one each for the Straits and Vastines. The plate is for Auntie Ruth and G'ma's house.

About two weeks ago I sent a box from Schorndorf containing a lot of German insignia which we scanovitched from a warehouse in Ludwigsburg. Some of it is in an envelope, separated from the rest. That in the separate cover is for Donald Sears. I had planned on sending it direct, but again it's the question of finding the right-sized box. The pamphlet and other insignia are my souvenirs.

I also had a supplementary package mailed today. The cards, folders, etc. are marked for the proper people. The things with RES Jr. again are mine for the growing collection of stuff I've sent home from Europe.

For the past several weeks I've been sending home envelopes with travel folders in them. A few tell about places we've been. It was easier to send a few at a time first class than to get a box signed. I'll bet our postal people as well as the ones over here wonder what the heck.

We're going back tomorrow, someone said, in the morning, but the others from various outfits have been leaving in the evenings this week. So as usual in the army,

????

If you're behind on requests, please send me something to eat. I'm now listening to the "Music Maids," a quartet that plays light classics in the music room of the Red Cross on Rue St. Dizier.

My writing tomorrow depends on what time we go.

Love to all,

E.

Williamsport
July 15, 1945
Number 265
(excerpt)

Dearest Emory:

...we had dinner at Ditty's today. Aunt Kate is still here and we had a grand visit after dinner until just when I started this letter. Much of our visit was about you and I showed her the things you sent home and how she enjoyed hearing about everything and frowning and sighing when she heard the awful things. She brought down for you, Grandpa, Thomas Smith's diary written while he was in the army in 1865. It is quite legible and most interesting. A little book very well preserved and how you will enjoy reading it. We have read some of it as we sat together, Beth reading it aloud and so much of it seems to be of the same expressions you have used in your letters which makes it very amusing since you are the third generation removed. For instance, Jan. 17, 1865 he wrote, "We had a revue today and inspecion---of all the tom foolery I ever saw this goes a head." Isn't that "rich"? I copied it right from the diary, spelling and all. He was considered a good speller and used fine English but as Aunt Kate says we must remember at that time, the most any one ever had was six months schooling and some none at all. He even wrote one fellow's letters home for him because he couldn't write. It took a lot of space to tell you about this but I knew that you would get a big kick out of it...

Lovingly,

Mother

Sun., July 15, 1945
Gmünd

Dear Auntie M,

Well, we got back from Nancy Friday afternoon after a delayed trip, which never started until 9:30 Thurs. p.m., although we left the rest center at 6:00. We went by 40-and-8 box cars to Strasbourg, where we stayed the rest of the night. Next morning, we came back by truck the same way and we were landed at battalion at Schorndorf. They picked us up in a company jeep from there.

Stuttgart is now in the American zone and the Americans are the 100th Division. All the units east of us pivoted around to the west, but our battalion has stayed firmly in Schorndorf.

We expect to be here one more week on guard for VI Corps, and I hope it's no longer. This morning we had church as supplied by Corps downtown in the Lutheran Church. I never got up until 10:40 and since the service started at 11, I was a bit late.

However, I very much wanted to go because I've missed more Sundays since the war has been over than before because of guard, this, that, moving, etc.

I found your summer address duplicated in a letter from Mother when I got back. I sent one to you enclosed in one to Hep while I was in Nancy, so if you don't have it yet, and she doesn't know where you are, you might stop by and get it.

The postals are from Nancy but I didn't know where to send them from there.

I have your letter of July 5, rec'd the day I returned. All your letters have been legible including the penciled V-mails. I often have written them that way myself.

By now I hope you've heard I got your can from school that the kids sent. Also, I got the one with the peanut clusters.

In three days I've got five boxes: two from home, two from Jane, and one from Straits. We ought to be supplied for this week. Of course, everything practically is shared by three at least, or maybe five or six.

Everyone mentions about our being attached to SHAEF. Shaef was dissolved last week and to take its place is United States Forces, European Theater.

The S&S says we'll be here through 1945 with 18 other divisions besides those as definite permanent occupational outfits. We heard a date up to March mentioned. I guess you know that anything official now can easily be changed after it's no longer a rumor.

If your requests aren't holding out, please send me something to eat.

This is all for now. I have so much mail to answer today. Someday when I have mental and nervous strength enough, I'm going to try to explain what's going on over

here. I think a lot of Gen. Ike and the boys in the outfit, but there's a "[rat] in the woodpile" somewhere in between. A bn school for several hours is supposed to open in a month. That should help some.

Love,
E.

Gmünd
17 July 1945

Dear Beth,

This evening I have been quite busy; before I write another air mail I want to get the descriptions on the back of the pictures that Iwanski printed for me today. They were taken in Schorndorf and developed while I was away so all the prints weren't available. I shall do it tomorrow I am quite sure. They are quite good and will fill my needs for a time. Tell Mother she can forget sending me any prints of negatives I've already sent home. These are more suitable. I had Mother's letter of July 8 and 9 and her air mail clippings. Gerstetten is quite close to Göppingen; I never heard of it until those clippings came. Of course we (the Division) are now in the Stuttgart area. I'm glad you have recovered now after a week of ups and downs. I was very sorry also to hear about Chas. Corson. I wrote Miss Horn a note this evening. That is the third death I've heard of since I got back on Friday: Ray Thorsted (a friend of one of the boys in our choir, both from Utah) who went with the choir sometimes, on April 7—must have been Heilbronn, Lee Sistare wrote me. The second was Elvin Long, a former band boy whom I read about in the *Sun*. I am on guard 3-6 a.m. and p.m. tomorrow but in between times I hope to get the pictures ready—via air mail.

Love to all,
E.

Gmünd
July 18, 1945

Dear Folks,

Here are the pictures finally. None of these are duplicates and I have a few to send to Jane and Auntie M. I should like these for record and display if you so desire. The subject material is about the same but they're all different.

Due to my writing on the back they are self-explanatory now. I may send a negative or two later.

Today I had Mother's No. 260. Some coincidence about the Stephens, wasn't it? Glad Beth is better. Please send me something to eat—keep up the juice. Must get the other pictures off.

Love to all,
E.

Gmünd
20 July 1945

Dear Sis and all,

The book marks enclosed within are from something I got downtown today. I got some post cards also, but I forgot to enclose these with them. I mailed two envelopes of them today and have another set, separate cards of which I've previously sent which will be coming later. After thorough scrutiny by the family, I should like these put with my other stuff.

There is something I'd like someone to see about getting for me: I'd like to have Bill Mauldin's "Up Front," published for \$3.00 by Henry Holt. No doubt the best way will be to go through Otto's.

Harry W. got some delicious fried chicken from home tonight in a tin can. Rachael Sistare always had her things done that way and supervised the Dillon canning project—probably is this season too. I've had many a can of their tomato juice and applesauce. Do we have anything similar at home where actual home-prepared food could be sent?

I like your cap and gown photo. We surely are having a lot of pictures back and forth.

We are listening to the radio as usual. Our most common ones are AFM in Milan and Munich, the AEF programs of the BBC. There are lots of AMG stations that we never get the identity of. After all music is international.

I am working on my diary again and have another installment finished almost. I'll send it home when I get up to leaving for Brussels March 16. Besides I'm working on a current one as of last night. That way I won't always have to write in the past.

Ogie went to Paris on Thursday leaving for service company in Schorndorf Wed. a.m. He had a convalescent furlough in England, but this was his first GI pass. Harry and I have the floor (room) to ourselves with only one more on the floor.

I am on guard 12-3 tonight and the same tomorrow afternoon. They seem to work it on the basis of two days on and one off. I should have Sunday off at this rate.

Was I in the directory last year? What can they say

about a person in my straits? Oh yes, I remember the year I worked at Hurr's they had me in under "Roscoe." Even though people wouldn't know who I am that wouldn't be too bad a blow because it is my official name in the army.

I sent Lee some of the pictures like I mailed home, of the churches here. He is always so interested (and made me so) in church architecture. And these places are old!!

Today I got a box mailed June 25 by Mother containing juice, sugar, and Kool-Aid. We have a veritable grocery store of things. Shortly there'll be some eating going on up here.

Mother's letter No. 263 came today. It answered mine of July 4—only 16 days for a reply. Very good. Now to another letter. Love to all, Brother

Gmünd
22 July 1945

Dear Beth,

I sent an airmail to Mother today enclosing the chorus leaflet and asking her to do and send some things so now I'll give you the news. I wrote my diary this afternoon and now have Part III all finished up to March 14. Today I mailed it—25 pages (not sheets) in all and I feel as if I have something accomplished. Now comes the beginning of the end.

Yesterday we got a complete list of the company repatriates (?) and Harry rechecked it today. He says Rudolph Wilson was on the list. So he must have come in when Ogie and I were in the hospital and Harry was on division rest. We three are the only ones still in the platoon and none of us were there then. Evidently he was with us but a few days before he was captured at Wingen.

I had Mother's 264 today. I am anxious to hear about Beth Towar. Sorry none of you got to Linwood's wedding.

Love to all,
E.

Ober-
25 July 1945

Dear Sis,

As you see, we did move as per schedule. I'll never understand how "A" Co. was ever able to move on anything but a Sunday. This town is a typical cow town just up on the hill from Unter-Urbach which is just outside of Schorndorf on Route N29 toward Gmünd. The company is spread out over

the whole town and the fourth platoon alone has four houses—two for the mortars and two for the machine gun section. We left about 10 a.m. and got here in short order, but it naturally took a while to get settled.

We are on the third floor of one of the better houses of town and have a small bedroom, a combination living and bedroom and a small kitchen. The best of all is the nice bathroom with such a good washbowl and bathtub with a wood burning heater. I've already had a bath. Mother's 257 and 268 came today and I'll comment later. Now für essen.

Love to all,
E.

Oberurbach
29 July 1945

Dear Beth,

This is the first I've written since Thursday because it just seems that we've been everywhere and are still in the air. Ah me!!

Friday morning we followed the training program (exceedingly boring) and in the afternoon went for shots and dental survey about 1:15. After we waited for a time they said that the dentist wouldn't be there until 2:00 and in the meantime we should go home and pack to move again.

Last Monday we had partially packed because we might be leaving Gmünd and then waited two days before anything was actually done. Then we moved to Oberurbach and just got completely settled, cleaned up and reorganized when they decide to move again.

This was partially politics because our original location was picked by a lt., acting co. commander while Capt. Strickler was in Brussels. So we all packed and most of us engaged native wagons to move our stuff. The new place was a housing project with the houses alike and set straight on little streets—ideal for someone who wanted to hold an outfit under his thumb. The houses are nice but very small and without all the extra rooms and beds and couches that large European houses usually have.

To top it, the house I and half the other mortar men were supposed to occupy had a scarlet fever sign on the door—and they wanted us to go in anyway!! Well nothing doing!

More confusion was caused by our having to go back into the center of town to eat since the kitchen hadn't and still hasn't moved. So after supper Brodsky and I went to see the captain ourselves and we persuaded him that we weren't going into the house even though the people might have been using

that as an excuse. We wanted a medical officer to come up and make a diagnosis of the child's illness, but so far as I know, as yet—48 hours later, no one has been up. This is true even though each battalion aid has a doctor. If this is an example of medical care as provided by a governmental agency, then heaven deliver me from socialized medicine.

Finally, about 9:00 we went into a house on the other side of the area from our platoon where the kitchen staff were to live when they moved. We're still living there and the kitchen hasn't moved from town because a further move (!) is contemplated to the first town on the opposite side of Schorndorf.

To make things more difficult the whole company has been restricted to the area and we march to chow. We still can go to the movies and church in groups; but even if I'm not the type that runs around a lot I like to get around a little to see the town on my own. This area is set apart and we have no civilians coming in occasionally to give our laundry to. We also haven't been able to get a radio. They're just insulting the intelligence and good sense of the average American.

I went to church today here in Schorndorf and Chap. Lecrone had the service. A new chaplain, Chap. Hill, gave the sermon. He is taking Chap. Sam Tyler's place who has gone to a pool near Paris from where he will be reassigned to the Pacific as per his request since we are to be here this long. The new one is from S.C. and seems good.

The civilian choir sang several numbers directed by the regular organist and choir master, who played for us on V.E. Their best one was the German version of "Now Let All the Heavens Adore Thee" by Bach. Of course it is right at home here. We sang it at Christmastime both 1942 & 43 in our choir at home, I believe.

Brig. Gen. Tyschen and Col. Williams were both there, sitting the pew ahead of me.

I must go on guard now. If I think of anything I'll say it tomorrow. Beautiful day.

Love to all,
E.

Oberurbach
31 July 1945

Dear Auntie M.,

I've had your letter of July 18 several days ago and haven't answered you yet because I had written just before that. However, the parcel post has been rolling in. I had one from you last Friday and Saturday, both with juice. So

you can see they are coming through after all. I don't know how you are on requests, so I'll ask for something to eat please.

To keep the continuity straight, we came to O. from Gmünd last Wed., the 25th. We were just getting settled and completely arranged when on Friday they moved us to a group of identical houses (housing project) on the edge of town. The house where I was supposed to live with 7 others had a case of scarlet fever and we had to move into another, to be occupied by kitchen personnel later. Since we contemplate another whole move to another town the status quo is still the same. However, you'd think that as fussy as the army is about ventilation and food they'd have had a medical officer come up to ascertain whether the family was just putting something over so they wouldn't have to evacuate the house. Consequently I was up in the air more or less for the weekend. On Sunday they took us to church in Schorndorf and I saw Chap. Lecrone for the first time in weeks. A new chaplain, replacing Sam Tyler who volunteered for the Pacific, preached and was presented to the congregation. That evening and yesterday I was on guard as our company's turn at "caring for" the battalion installations. Today we practiced for a review (?) tomorrow and got paid. More the next time; it's very cool here now.

Love,
E.

Oberurbach
1 Aug. 1945

Dear Beth,

Tonight the family mail came through very well as far as amount is concerned. I got from Mother her card she asked me to mention, marked July 23. Please tell her I have slept in both Cabin 22 and 23. Also I got her letter of the same day and V-mail no. 274 of the 24th. Also came G'ma Smith's letter of July 24, one from Auntie M of the 23rd and one from Jane. The most interesting one is what I received from Rudy Wilson, whom you ran into in A.C. He told me all the tactical details of the company's capture. He knows Harry and said thanks for letting him have his (Harry's) pistol while Harry was on division rest. Harry and Lt. Henson were both there then and it's probably the only reason they weren't captured too. I got a card from Lucille Antes in N.Y. but didn't know about the Drew deal. Tell G'ma I still get the Christian Advocate regularly. Please send me something to eat. A nice day after 4:30. Review cancelled because of weather.

Love,
E.

Oberurbach
4 Aug. 1945

Dear Sis,

I believe I got you and Beth transposed in my writing schedule during the last cycle so here goes. Tonight I am on company guard 6-8 and 12-2 and the same tomorrow, the last time being 2 p.m. So, once again I can't go to church since it doesn't let out until noon. By then I have to eat and be back at the rear gate of the hospital here.

Ever since the Sunday before VE Day I have had just two complete Sundays off. The others were occupied in part or wholly by guard, moving, etc. The two were the Sunday I went to Heidelberg from Ludwigsburg in May and June 17 in Schorndorf.

Tonight I got the *Classmate* and folder of July 22 from Ditty, three cards from Mother and her V-mail of July 27 (No. 277). Also I got two boxes: July 5 from Ditty and July 5 or 6 from Mother, both with all-around lunches. I'm reading Ernie Pyle's *Brave Men* now. Also I have more pictures to send soon.

Love to all,
E.

Oberurbach
7 Aug. 1945

Dear Folks,

If I get this finished before noon I can get it in with what normally is written Monday. (I have just had a two-hour break while we had a class in an auditorium downtown since it is a rainy day). Sunday I received Mother's letter with the M.T.C. program in it, a V-mail, No. 280. Yesterday's was Nos. 278 and 279. I also got numerous birthday cards—from Aunt Nellie, Sherry Lynne, and Ditty. I don't know if I'll get anymore written today or not because some of us are going to Stuttgart tonight to see *Night Must Fall*, a Broadway play at the opera house. Since our division is centered there we are getting more benefits of this nature. We have to be at service company in Schorndorf by 6:00 so we'll be eating early too. I hope it clears up by then but it can rain the early part of the p.m. if it so desires. I am reading Wedeen's (?) copy of *Up Front* so when you get mine, please keep it home unless you've already done it

otherwise. Also please get me *Brave Men* and *This Is Your War*, both by Ernie Pyle. They're the best sort of a record. Now to dinner.

Love,
E.

Oberurbach
8 Aug. 1945

Dear Sis,

Well, what do you think of the new atomic bomb? As we used to say when we saw a crater in some bombed city like Mannheim, Heilbronn, or Stuttgart, "Someone must have dropped a hand grenade." Please also thank Helen Ten Broeck for the birthday card she sent me that arrived yesterday.

I got Mother's short No. 282 written the day of the picnic at Cupp's cabin. Besides the clippings on the Empire State Bldg. from Ditty, a box from Jane, and a *Sun*, that was my only mail.

We enjoyed the show last night in Stuttgart. It was just like country hicks going to the city, except the rubbernecks looked down to see the buildings. C'est la guerre! The play was fine and the Golden Horseshoe "atmosphere" a change. Tonight Brodsky, when shown one of our group pictures, said he thought we looked like the Hardy Family. I'm sending more pictures tonight taken in Gmünd with a very good "liberated" camera by Krivoy, formerly in our platoon, now in Co. A, 325th Eng. Bn in our division. Please send something to eat.

Love to all,
E.

Oberurbach
11 Aug. 1945
(To: Mr. R.E. Smith)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

This type of greeting travels fast,
In cost it's very thrifty
But I want to wish the best to you
On this day when you're ??????

Happy Birthday!!

Love,
E.

Oberurbach
Aug. 11, 1945

Dear Sis,

I had intended to write a regular letter tonight (since we went to another play, "Kiss and Tell," last night in Stuttgart and I didn't write any) but about an hour ago I was called to the orderly room to call Chap. Lecrone. He wants me to accompany him to Plochingen tomorrow, where some of the regiment is, to lead the singing or play or do both. So I have to get to bed a bit earlier and do a few things before hand.

The news is certainly leaping from place to place. Our latest is that the four powers have given their five-point reply to the surrender offer. It looks very good and we're all hoping for the best. We aren't staying until March by the way, and once again I (we) expect to be home by mid-autumn. I've already written Jane quite in detail about it all. By now in 20 months you know how many things have gone the way of the unexpected, but I thought you'd like to know the latest. If and when the war is over I want to come home right away. Everything seems to happen near someone's birthday and this next week is a good chance. Now to bed. No mail at all today. Maybe I'll go to Stuttgart again tomorrow p.m.

Love to all,
E.

Oberurbach
Aug. 12, 1945

Dear Folks,

Well, I think your boy is coming home. Rumors are flying fast and thick, but I think the following statements are close to being fact: We are coming home very shortly. We are going directly to Le Havre (by-passing the Rheimes Assembly Area), sailing by Sept. 10, and arriving in the States by Sept. 20. If NY should be the port of arrival we'd go to either Shanks or Kilmer. From there I with the other PA'ns no doubt will go to Indiantown Gap. Either of the two stops takes about two days—I really don't know too much about these phases. By now I guess you know that what is gospel truth right now can be changed and everything I've said might not be true.

One thing I guess you don't have to have any urging

about is not to come to the port. Naturally the location is a question mark because I understand they're using Boston, Norfolk, and Charleston besides NY. It is foolish for me to even mention it, but not knowing exactly what you hear, I thought I'd better give you what we hear.

Again, I must impress upon you all the inconsistencies of the army and its actions. Should the Japanese war end, they might send the high point men home first and hold us here longer. Reports indicate that this won't happen to outfits already on the way; our present status is the disruption of a training schedule, and tomorrow begins the turning in of equipment.

I hear that pretty soon (probably by the time you get this) they'll begin holding up our mail. So maybe you'd better stop sending boxes, but not first class. If we should stay longer I can quickly tell you.

This morning Sinc, Chap. L's assistant came for me at 8:15 and took me to the chaplains' quarters near regiment where I was last Sunday afternoon. There I found Chap. L. and we with another driver in another jeep went to Plochingen about 20 km from Schorndorf. He wanted Sinc to play the large organ at P. and I could do the parlor type one in the chapel where we went. The service was just for K and M co's, and they had arranged for the women's civilian choir to sing.

I saw a boy named Hyde, who was in my company and hut at Benning and whom I hadn't seen since. He recognized me and I, him. We got back in time for the 11:00 Schorndorf service and I heard Chap. Hill. For special music a Sgt. from an engineer's outfit in nearby Winterbach sang, "The Lost Chord" and "The Holy City."

I rode back to Oberurbach with our group from church and ate dinner. There was absolutely no mail for me today, and two days in succession with not even a *Sun* is very unusual.

Today was beautiful for a change; how unusual it is to have a blessedly rainy week and then some nice weather on the off day.

Well, I guess this is all for now. Are my civilian shoes and watch in good condition?

More later,

Love,
E.

Since I've started with some rumor I'm going to keep you up on them.

Oberurbach
Aug. 14th, 1945

Dear Beth,

The mail situation improved today, although considering the scarcity lately there might have been more. That is, if the birthday cards hadn't been counted, there wouldn't have been much, compared to some days. I got cards from Ernest and Elvena, Marion, Ditty, and Henry Schultz. In the letter line I have Mother's 286 and 287 (V-mail) and the air mail of Aug. 8 (No. 289) with the money order. That coming in only six days is a record for just lately. Yesterday after I'd closed G'ma's letter I did get a V-mail after all—No. 285. I cancelled my Class E allotment when the company clerk was up to the company tonight. These days any excess can be sent home by money order very easily. We also gave the address of the place we're going on furlough. Still, we're all up in the air wondering if the schedule will be changed. Even the divisions in the assembly area are sweating it out, so you know we are all the worse. Yet, turning in continues. All these things I write are the day by day happenings which it's been my policy not to write, but if something goes wrong I know you'll understand. Please alert Dr. Van Valin to take care of me sometime while I'm home—I learned my lesson on that. Also look up my driver's license and have it handy please. Everything in the boxes has traveled fine. Stop the *Sun* when it runs out Aug. 25. Please thank the people for my cards. I'm writing to *Christian Advocate*. Hope you had good time at MTC.

Love to all,
E.

Williamsport, PA
V-J Day (announcement at 7:00 p.m.)
8-14-45

Dearest Emory:

We got here on Grandma's porch at 7:40. What a crowd.
We are thinking of you. Parade hasn't come yet.

Praise the Lord - Grandma Strait

Wonderful news - Grandma Smith

Trucks of people - cars full of people - noise racket -
confusion - but it does not make us feel so "solly." All my
love, Ditty

Sherry - hello

Hallelujah! Honey we're all so happy all we need is you to complete _____ - Love, A.M.

Grandpa is back from parade; so are the girls. They went downtown. We are waiting for Papa to come to get us. We are all so happy.

Hello Emory. I was in the Victory Parade for you - GrandPa I can't believe that this wonderful day is really here. Marion and I paraded. Now 11:00 p.m. - Love, Beth
Dearest Emory, I am so happy I think I'll go crazy. (?) many bros (?) work every day. No rest for the wicked - Love, Sis

The racket continues. 11:05 p.m.

Oberurbach
VE + VJ = VW old
15 Aug. 1945

Dear Folks,

Well, I guess it's over. It doesn't seem possible after six years of war either in Europe or with us in it. Ever since ninth grade (when I really began to grow up a little bit) someone has been at it. I went to bed last night at 11 p.m., and we all thought the surrender would be coming in a day or two; but with that representative and the message and so on being denied (?), none of us expected it then. About 2 a.m. Capt. Strickler came through our row of houses (since we live in the row with the headquarters group) awakening everyone and telling us of Pres. Truman's announcement at 7 p.m. EWT, 1 a.m. Central Europe Summer Time. All the officers stayed up and were all "feeling pretty good" by then. At least one went in all the 21 houses. He (Capt.) had a bottle of his liquor ration and was giving a shot to all who desired it. Those who partook want me to tell you it was good. I got up then and put the radio on and had raisins and tomato juice before re-retiring at 2:30. This morning we filled out clothing requisition forms and ate lunch at 10:30 to get ready to go to see Bob Hope at Bad Cannstatt. It didn't start until 2:30 so we were in good time. We also saw Jerry Colonna, and Billy Conn besides several singers. Still no change on our situation and I'm keeping my fingers crossed. Got Mother's 288, G'ma's of Aug. 7, Mother's clipping Aug. 7 and a greeting from John Snider.

Pearl Harbor Mother's birthday -one of the holidays at end on Pops.

Bronze Star supposed to be awarded tomorrow. Rained out

twice before.

Love,
E.

Williamsport, PA
4:30 p.m. Eastern Peace Time
Aug. 15, 1945
No. 296 (V-mail)

Dearest Emory:

THE WAR IS OVER----HOORAH!!! The 15 and 16th have been proclaimed as days of celebration or holidays. Today the weather is perfect after about 11:00 a.m. and everything seems SO peaceful. Marion went to work as usual because they hadn't told them to stay home if Peace was declared and when she got out there they sent her back home. Dr. Gibson called Ditty at 8:30 and told her not to come, so they have both been home and Papa didn't even attempt to start out, so we have all been home today enjoying a quiet peaceful day. Tonight is the V-J Day service in our church. Louise called this morning and asked if I would help out in a chorus choir and be sure to have Marion there too and I told her Aunt Margaret is coming to our church tonight in your honor and she said since they are short of people for the choir she would be glad to have her join us too, so I guess you will have three members of the choir singing in your honor and because we are so thankful you have been spared and because we are so very proud of you. G'ma and 'pa are coming up to our service too. Emory, I guess none of us could ever tell you about the excitement and noise that went on in our town last night. It still rings in my ears when I stop to think about it. The parade wasn't very long. When the Teteques came along, my heart beat a little faster, when I remembered the time I had seen you march with them. It was a queer parade without the WHS Band. Grandpa at almost 71 years old was SO happy to be able to parade and said he was doing it for you. The girls got in the thick of everything downtown, which was their wish and they had a fine time. They even joined the parade for part of the way and told us they were behind the War Mothers. Jane said she saw them in the parade and called to them, but they didn't hear her. Oh, you just couldn't hear a thing, but the general noise. It seems everything was to be as it happened. For instance the church services were not to be held until the following evening in case V-J Day was announced after six o'clock. So, since it was announced at 7:00 the parade and noise was all last night and now today, everything seems peaceful and tonight will be the services of prayer and thanksgiving. Just after

Peace came over the radio last night at 7, there was a passenger train went down and the whistle blew its loudest and longest. You would have enjoyed that because no train whistle ever blows other than for their regular signals. BUT THIS WAS ALL DIFFERENT!!! As you will note at the head of my letter, Peace time is being announced on the radio news, also the various industrial plants had announcements made about when their people should come back to work. Sylvania at Mill Hall doesn't want their people except a few until after conversion, so things are happening quick. Rationing went off of gasoline and canned goods today. SO DARLING TONIGHT WHEN WE ARE IN THE CHURCH SERVICE, WE WILL ALL BE THINKING OF YOU AND THANKING AND PRAISING GOD THAT THIS TERRIBLE THING IS OVER AND THAT HE HAS TAKEN CARE OF YOU, OUR DEAR ONE. Until tomorrow,

Love, hugs and kisses, bushels of 'em,
Lovingly,
Mother

Schorndorf
21 Aug. 1945

Dear Folks,

Today was quite normal in what I imagine is the regular life around here. This morning and all day there was a great project afoot to get typed-letter perfect—an original and four carbon copies of an epistle to the mother of one of the casualties in the regiment. It was passed down through chaplains' channels clear from the 7th Army echelon, and a copy had to be forwarded to each of these and one filed here. Still there is only one sheet of the three finished, and the ruined paper makes the room look like Broadway on V-J Day.

It didn't rain at all today—yet. The sun shown some but now there are dark clouds once again. This is very funny weather we are "enjoying" here. I received no mail but a paper today since I got it personally on Sunday.

Tonight the two chaplains are going to Esslingen to see the movie *Wilson*. Everyone thought it was fine (I am going, too) and I missed it when they showed it for our battalion. We're leaving about 7:30 for the second show which begins at 8:15.

Love to all,
E.

Schorndorf
28 Aug. 1945

Dear Sis,

I am beginning this quite early this morning, just about 9:00 before things begin to percolate too much. After I'd finished my letter to Ditty last night before supper, I thought of something else that could have been included.

During the afternoon when I was up to A Co., I noticed that their truck for the movies was going to leave at 8:00, implying that the show began nearly a half hour after that. That turned out that the timing was 8:30, and they are having two shows these days in order to accommodate more men in the small theater they use. For a time they used McCracken Hall (named for the winner of a high decoration in the division) but the acoustics were terrible, and most of these overseas films have poor sound tracks anyway.

Again after supper I went up to our company because in the first trip I was unable to get my PX rations. This time I made arrangements to go to the show with some of my compatriots. The movie was a rather different one with Fred Allen supported by Jack Benny, Rudy Vallee, and several of the more prominent stars. The title was *It's in the Bag*. They seemed to use a different plot for every scene and had to push hard to get some of the points over.

(Thurs. morning)

As you can see, I didn't get this finished last night, but I am a little ahead because I started it yesterday morning. After I stopped writing, Chap. H. and I went to Rommelshausen toward Stuttgart where he is getting some leather work done for one of the officers. Then we went to Waiblingen nearby, where the 2nd Bn is centered, to look for H Co. We were told they are in Winnenden, where we spent the week end of April 22 before going to Stuttgart for 10 days. We got invited to have dinner there, and I was told that it feeds the best in the regiment. After that we came home again. The water has been off periodically for several days and I didn't get a chance to take a bath then. Service Co., the volleyball champs of the 398th were playing the 397th here at Sv. Co. and both chaplains went to that. It was the best out of three games and they had to play all three for the 397th to win in a very close spot.

After that I brought the Chaplains back and then Sinc, who plays on the team, went out to the swimming pool because the water was off. I came back and went up to our co. to get some clothing and equipment that had come in. I visited some and came back in time for supper. In the evening I did get my bath and intended to write letters and in both of my diaries. But we got to talking and you know the rest.

You probably wonder about all my talk of going to this place and that. A week ago Monday, Sgt. Baird, the reg'l

motor sergeant, assigned me to the Hq Co motor pool for instruction and practice in driving. One day last week one of the maintenance men went with me to Esslingen, but they've been so short on jeeps that I didn't get out any more last week. On Tues. Sinc wanted to practice for this important game, and Chap. L. wanted to know if I felt I could drive well enough to bring the jeep back from Service Co. I said yes, and even though I didn't have my license yet, Chap. L. said he'd take the responsibility for it. Then he went up to Oberurbach to see the minister there and I went up to our company. (I did write this once, but now I'm filling in a few details). I didn't get my rations, so I went up again right after supper and brought some of the boys down to the movies. After putting the jeep in the motor pool I went with them to the show. Yesterday I did the driving as well as in all the instances I've mentioned.

Now don't get worried because this morning I went down to Sgt. Baird again, and he gave me my test, and I now have a GI license. Now on Sundays they still will have to supply a jeep for Chap. H. but no driver. Each chaplain is supposed to have a jeep marked 100-398-I CH 1 (or 2 or 3). Chap L's was wrecked in Stuttgart when a stupid Frenchman ran into them. Ours has been in ordnance for some time having quite a thorough overhauling; I guess Sam Tyler was a bit hard on it. So, Chap. L uses HQ 1, which is the colonel's jeep, since he uses a captured sedan. Chap. Buckley, the Catholic one, has his own.

I don't know how much good it will do, but I'd like to have sent my text books that I used at Jr. College. If I don't glean too much knowledge, some of the boys might like to borrow them. As I remember there is one in chemistry, physics, college algebra, English lit., and history. I'd like them all, because that is quite a balanced curriculum.

Also please send me my watch, if it can be done with any guarantee at all. I have received every package that was sent and when I'm on my own so much I really need it.

The mail yesterday was as follows: Mother's clippings of Aug. 18, addresses of the 19th, V-mails 299, 300, and 302, and a V-mail from G'ma Smith of Aug. 20. I think I'll close now to get this in the mail and eat dinner.

Love to all,
E.

P.S. Don't send the chemistry and physics laboratory manuals.

Schorndorf
31 Aug. 1945

Dear Auntie M,

It just doesn't seem possible that this is Labor Day weekend already. One reason is that summer never officially began for me with the letting out of school, going picnicking or hardly anything that one usually associates with it. We went swimming some, but we wore OD's (?) all the time; and there's nothing like the definite and decisive change of type of clothing to announce the change of seasons.

According to my records, the last time I wrote you was a week ago Sunday on the 19th. Since then I've gone to Service Co., when the regimental motor sergeant assigned me to the care of the Hq. Co. motor pool for instruction in jeep driving. They didn't have jeeps to take me out much, and all I needed was practice and the revival of habits. I remember how you consoled me when I found it so hard to find someone with gas, tires, a car, and time to teach me to drive. You said that when I got into the army that they might make me a truck driver. If you only knew how rear echelon a job most truck driving is. All of it is really, but about 95% is away back.

Anyway, some of the days Sinc (Chap. Lecrone's asst.) wanted to play volleyball, and I drove even though I didn't have my license yet. I got it yesterday so a major obstacle is removed. I'll just be driving a jeep, and our own is supposed to be back from ordnance one of these days.

As to the trips, you realize that we go by quota, and a pretty small one at that. The one to Switzerland appeals to me very much, and I should like to go on it.

Now about the scarlet fever house: we continue to live in the alternate house although I understand that the bone of contention has been vacated by the civilians since I left the co. and some of our platoon lives there. We were willing to go in it in the first place if a medical officer would OK it. But when the Captain asked us if we didn't trust the officers to look out for us, I felt he, a rifle co. commander, was not qualified to know what our welfare was in this case.

One week after we got to the area a doctor finally ambled up there and diagnosed the case as streptococcic sore throat! As I've said about twenty times already and shall continue to say, "If that is an example of medical care under a governmental agency, then heaven deliver me from socialized medicine." You might breeze this around A.C. a bit.

I received your letter of Aug. 15 on Monday—of course mail takes two days to be forwarded to me here. Sometimes I pick it up at the company. I note your instructions and will

comply. I feel that samples of money would make good souvenirs. There really is nothing to buy.

On Monday we heard the *Messiah* done in Stuttgart at the opera house (Century Theater). It was a civilian concert but the first balcony in these is always reserved for military personnel. It was very good and I saw lots of people I know and hadn't seen for a long time.

Lots of love,
E.

P.S. Please send me something(s) to eat again.

Schorndorf
1 Sept. 1945

Dear Beth,

As I have said several times lately, it doesn't seem possible that Labor Day weekend is upon us. Just now in connection I suppose that many people will be taking lots of trips with the curtailment on gas suddenly lifted and this the last of the summer holidays. On Tuesday, if the Williamsport School Board sticks true to form, you will be trundling off to eighth grade. How far advanced I thought myself when I was at that stage, and now you, who were in first grade when I went are there. It often seems to me that I haven't accomplished too much I can point to since then and have any continuity in my mind about it. Of course I did graduate from RJHS and WHS, go to college two months, work two summers, be in the army 1 ¾ years, travel thousands of miles, see two continents besides our own and three countries of Europe, help win a war without getting captured at Wingen or being any other kind of casualty, and see or visit such places as: Gibraltar, Oran, Marseilles, Avignon, Lyon, Epinal, Nancy, Metz, Strasbourg, Sedan, Brussels, Waterloo, Dijon, Ludwigshafen, Mannheim, Heidelberg, Heilbronn, Bitche, Black Forest, Stuttgart, and the Rivers Rhone, Saone, Meurthe, Moselle, Saar, Rhine, and Neckar. (Anybody have a glass of water?)

To be sensible again, yesterday I got letters from Mother of Nos. 295 and 305, and G'ma Smith, besides the V-J *Grit*, Messenger, and letters from Eleanor Young and Bob Holland at Tinian. Today I heard further from Mother in Nos. 298, 303, & 304.

Tell Mother to note that I also mentioned this week "He Shall Feed His Flock." Our choir has sung that in church as a three-part anthem. I don't know where Kitzingen is, where George Sharrow is. I want *Brave Men* and *This Is Your War*

bought and kept at home please.

I didn't write yesterday because of my going up to the co. in the afternoon for visiting and getting paid and in the evening going to the movie *Together Again*. We all liked it and saw it in an uncrowded theater for a change.

Today our jeep came back and Sam Tyler beat it up an awful lot while he had it last winter. It is in good mechanical condition, but most of the accessories were missing. They were welding on it today and Monday I'm going to wash and clean it and they will paint it then. We'll all be glad to have it back, and when it arrives, I don't intend to stand idly by. Aren't you all glad I learned to drive before I came into the army now? Auntie M. said once that if they knew I could drive, I might end up driving a truck. Truck driving is about as rear echelon as one could get. Of course Chap. L. says there is more difference between a line (lettered) co. and Bn. CP than there is between the Bn. CP and his being home in Chatham, N.J. Yet actors talk about being "up front," meaning the Division rear CP, about 25 miles back in most cases. They eat early on Sat., so I'd better go to supper. More tomorrow.

Love,
E.

Schorndorf
Labor Day, 3 Sept. 45

Dear Folks,

This is really my letter from yesterday, and if I finish it before noon, it will go in that mail. The reason I even mention Labor Day is that it is the first nationally legal holiday other than religious that I've ever had in the army. I didn't know it until last night, and I thought it might be on the bulletin board, and it was. The originating echelon was the Theater Commander, and I guess that must be Eisenhower. Yesterday we went to Plochingen and Esslingen as usual. We had dinner at L Co. and arrived home between 1:30 and 2:00. After that both chaplains wanted to take some pictures (both still and movies—Chap. L. has beaucoup equipment he's bought since the war is over) so we piled in the jeep and went until 5:15 just around here. After supper we went again to get a few of ourselves in various combinations with a suitable background for these. The first had been almost panoramic from up on the hill. Our next stop was up at A Co. where they wanted to get some of them developed. Almost everyone was in Stuttgart or someplace else, so I didn't do much visiting. It was a beautiful day as is today; we surely can stand some after the last month.

Maybe the autumn will be better for a change. I slept late this morning for the first time in ages because there was no church or week day duties. I got boxes from Jane and Auntie M. from Haynie.

Love to all,
E.

Schorndorf
3 Sept. 1945

Dear Ditty,

I already wrote home once today, but that was really last night's letter, and it made the mail today noon. Right after dinner Chap. L. and I went to see the 100th play the 12th Armored Division in baseball at Century Stadium in Bad Cannstatt. Beforehand we went to a movie camera factory in part of the bombed-out part of Stuttgart so Chap L. could get his camera overhauled. The 100th lost, 6-1. After that we came home for supper, following which I went up to our company to see if some pictures we took up yesterday were finished yet. Of course I jump at any chance to go up there. Often I bring some of them back down to our cultural center of Schorndorf. Huff is back from the hospital after several days he spent there with a sprained ankle.

Including what was delivered here and that which I got from Haynie direct, I got Mother's letters, Nos. 306, 307, 308 and 309. I notice that you were all anticipating my homecoming very much, and certainly this is not the worst thing that has happened to me since I've been in the army. Things like this, where it is simply an arbitrary question about who shall do thus and so or be first don't bother me. Someone will be first home and others will have to wait. It is only the unnecessary things that I complain about. You recall that Mother's little radio was not only to F'ville but to Benning by mail and to Bragg via duffel bag as well...

Love to all,
E.

Schorndorf
4 Sept. 1945

Dear Sis,

Today started just as cool and bright as the last two but by now (5:00) it is cloudy; no doubt we can expect rain before too long. This was a busy one for me. As soon as I'd got up, I went down to service co. to continue the preparation for the painting of our jeep. It wasn't quite

all welded yet, but I was supposed to go ahead and wash it and get the grease off in the meantime. When I tried to start it, the battery would hardly start the motor. So I got a boy that came overseas in 1st Bn. Hq. Co. and slept near me on the *Gordon* to give me a push. It started after a block, and after I kept the motor going about five minutes, it would even start by itself. I finished before 11:45 and walked up to the house and got Chap. L's jeep out before dinner since he and Chap. H. were going to the Div. Chaps.' Meeting at the Div. CP in Stuttgart for 2:00 and wanted to leave by 1:00. There was some hurrying around here for an hour while I ate, washed, shaved and dressed. We got started in time, and made the meeting OK. While they were there I went to regt'l personnel section to get some information for Chap. L about some of our casualties. While I went back and was waiting, all the other assistants were waiting as well; since I knew some of them from Bragg, and was introduced to the others, we had quite a gabfest. The SPCCA (see if you can figure it out) had its monthly "meeting" while the bosses conferred with Father Malumphy. No mail today—I got it on Sun.

Love to all,
E.

Schorndorf
5 Sept. 1945

Dear Grandma and all,

I spent this morning cleaning the protective grease off our jeep from when it was painted yesterday. After dinner they were checking it, and I learned something about it. Chap. H. wanted to go out but by the time the jeep was available, it was too late to go. So we are going to Esslingen in the morning.

Instead I went up to A Co. for supper. They were having another co. dance this evening with the regimental dance band (which live here) furnishing the music. I stayed for a while and came home then to do my writing.

Up there I got the package with my moccasins, swimming trunks, and dark glasses, and will surely enjoy them. I don't know about swimming but they're always a good thing to have. The glasses will be good for driving and I'm wearing the moccasins now. I got Mother's 310 today. I also heard from Mrs. McKean. The woman, Frau Boger, is doing our washing. They lived in the upstairs apt. Brodsky said many of my pictures I now have looked like the Hardy Family—not the new ones taken over here.

Love,

E.

Schorndorf
6 Sept. 1945

Dear Beth,

Well, how is school going? Time certainly marches on; today we begin our twelfth month overseas—in other words, eleven months ago today we set sail from Staten Island, N.Y. Today was dark and dismal the whole time. It's not eight o'clock yet, and I'm burning a light already. Around the longest day of the year, also in Schorndorf, it didn't get pitch dark until 10:30. It was raining when I got up this morning after a thundershower (donnerwetter) in the distance when we went to bed. It seemed to let up about 10:00, so Chap. H. and I left for Esslingen about that time. Returning by noon, I ate dinner and proceeded to the motor pool where they are working on our jeep. Today they gave us a top and tried to do something about the "kaput" tail light, windshield wiper, and horn. You see what I mean when I say they didn't send much back from ordnance besides the chassis, four wheels, and the motor. By doing a little at a time, the maintenance section hopes to have it in good shape soon. Right now it has a poor German battery and until recently had a French carburetor. Anyway we're glad to have it, because jeeps can't be had for love or money in the ETO anymore. Now I am about to go down to the theater and see the picture if it is any good. This year you'll be taking typing from Miss Rick, won't you? She taught me all about the art. More the next time,

Love to all,
E.

Outside church at Plochingen
9 Sept. 1945

Dear Folks,

The 9-10 service is over here and I'm writing while Chap. L. is talking before we start for the 11:00 service at Esslingen. I didn't get a thing written last night so I think I can mail this at one of the 3rd Bn Co's. I didn't write Fri. either, and were they ever two busy days. Friday we went to the regimental track meet at Warbling and continued on to the ball game at Bad Cannstatt. (As you can see this book isn't such a good desk). Yesterday I took Chap. H. to the clearing co. at Bad Cannstatt for an x-ray.

4:30 - Now we're back and I'm up at A Co. I ate at L Co. with John Harvey, and we brought one boy back to the football team in Waiblingen and two more to the drum and bugle corps at Schorndorf. It has rained on and off all day, but we didn't get wet. However, I wore my old pants, just in case. There was no mail today but yesterday I got Mother's 312 and 313. I hope you've started the *Sun* again. The company area is very quiet with everyone either in Stuttgart or sleeping. Guess this will be my letter for three days—I'm getting awful.

Love to all,
E.

Schorndorf
9 Sept. 1945

Dear Auntie M.,

I have your V-mails of Aug. 22 and 25 and the packages of juice and peanuts, candy, etc. Thank you so much; I was just getting a little low. Mae Weiss' box of sweets came today. I'll write her at Lincoln Place shortly. I already wrote you that the juice the family sent from down there arrived OK.

The mail from you knowing that I'm not coming hasn't reached me, but you should take it OK, now that I'm with the chaplain and have a jeep for my personal needs, some of them. I go up to A Co. often—in fact I'm there now.

This morning I was to Plochingen and Osslingen as usual and we ate at L Co. I know boys in most of these companies and I feel at home throughout the regiment almost.

It's been raining today although we did have some beautiful weather the past week. No further word on when we're coming home, but I'll let you know. Now to eat.

Love,
E.

Schorndorf
Sept. 11, 1945

Dear Sis,

Today has been as busy as usual; we went to Esslingen to arrange with Chap. Phillips, the VI Corps Chaplain, about our Sunday services. We didn't leave here until after 10:00, and Chap. Hill went to the 3rd Bn CP about noon and stayed for dinner. I went to L Co., my usual eating place in Esslingen.

We came home shortly after that and I napped until about 4:00 when someone came to the house saying that Sgt. Drew wanted me to go with him to Service Co. for a battery for our jeep. An H Co. jeep was wrecked recently, and they don't plan on getting it back since the frame was bent. So the regiment motor officer said we could have the battery. It surely is small because ours is a Jerry only worn out, and too small in the first place. About every other morning I had to be pushed to get started.

I dressed and went up to A Co. for supper after which I got my mail. For once there was some first class, and I got Mother's No. 315.

My job is now permanent, and effective Monday I am a member of Service Co. Since I go to A Co. as much, continue to send my mail there until I see what the best arrangement is. There is nothing more than a technical change involved and I continue as I have the past four weeks. We surely keep on the move. Enclosed is a picture of the girls that live upstairs.

Love to all,
E.

12 Sept. 1945
[V-mail to Auntie M.]

Although this birthday greeting
Will come a little late,
Across the miles, in mind and heart
We still can celebrate.

Lots of love,
Emory

Schorndorf
13 Sept. 45

Dear Beth,

This is some of the new stationery from the Smith Printing Co. that Jane sent me in a package. I am getting my writing started fairly early again since it's only mid-afternoon. We didn't go anywhere today, and I've been typing data on forms with regards to casualties in our regiment since last November. I also accomplished getting a haircut and bath.

Chaplain Hill, who is one of my staunchest cohorts in being anti-military, and I are overjoyed to see in today's S&S that Congress is demanding an investigation into the War Department's policies on demobilization. We all feel that if

our families wrote to our respective senators and especially representatives we would have some results. Everyone is anxious to get out, but we are at the same time willing to take our rightful turn. However, we want to see some action about getting the highest pointed men out so we may have our turn.

Despite my going to the company every day lately, I got a letter here tonight in answer to the one I wrote Miss Horn after her nephew's death. I shall go up for supper again and see what Haynie has to offer. Over the last month or so there has been a definite letdown on mail service.

Today was beautiful and chilly—really fall weather. I built a fire this morning because my activities weren't keeping me warm enough. The sun is streaming in my west window as I write, and the heating devices are no longer necessary. Enclosed is the program from last Sunday in Esslingen. I won't seal this until I come back this evening and see what mail there was.

Love to all,
E.

Schorndorf
14 Sept. 45

Dear Folks,

There was no mail yesterday, so I have nothing to report along that line. It must be held up somewhere, and I think that I was receiving first class mail more regularly back in Lemberg during Feb. and March than I am these days.

This morning we were to Stuttgart and returned in time for dinner. This last happening is very unusual; we usually are somewhere away from the fold at lunch time. It has been cloudy all day, and I wouldn't be surprised if it were raining in the morning.

I had a nap this afternoon, after which Chap. L. and I went to a wood factory here in Schorndorf to get some boxes made for him to send some of his photographic apparatus home in. (You know a preposition is a bad word to end a sentence with.)

These pictures were taken a week ago last Sunday afternoon, all the ones with people just on the edge of town behind the regimental headquarters co. area. I am glad you will see what Chap. H. looks like and see the changes in Chap. L., if any, since you saw him last August. The one scenery one was taken from the road we use to go to Plochingen and Esslingen every Sunday. It isn't very clear, but I may be able to point out some things on it, when I come home.

Today there was some first class mail at the house, so maybe I'll find some at A Co. You can send my mail to Service Co. now, because he can re-direct it more quickly, the regimental set-up being located there.

Now to supper; how about more pictures of the family?

Love to all,

E.

Schorndorf
16 Sept. 45

Dear Sis,

This evening it has cleared up after a day of indecisions as to what the weather would be. There was no reason why it should rain this morning though, since we both had our raincoats along. We had just the one service (in Plochingen) and found ourselves with the civilians there at the same time since they had turned their time back. We had rather expected that they would be delayed since MG had received no official word of it up to yesterday; however I think we should have known after being in the army this long. The inevitable snafu caught us by hook or by crook.

Since Haynie took off for Stuttgart right after dinner and I never reached A Co. until after 3:00 I didn't get my mail for today, if any. There was some first class throughout the regiment, and I'm wondering if I got my rightful share after not hearing from home since last Tuesday.

Tonight we went to the concert by the choir of the Stadtkirche here. It was very good, and they sang several I knew: "Lo How a Rose E'er Blooming," "Now Let All the Heavens Adore Thee." Now I must to bed. Please send me something to eat.

Love to all,

E.

Schorndorf
18 Sept. 45

Dear Beth,

Today was another beautiful one and we made the best use of our time. This morning after the motor pool, Sinc and I did two more of the 3 2/3 page list of the fatalities we are typing up. It is a good project to finish because I know that Chap. Lecrone is anxious to get the eye-witness accounts finished before the ones who remember the incidents are transferred.

This afternoon we went to the postponed track meet at Century Stadium at Bad Cannstatt. How beautiful a day this was compared to last Saturday for which it was originally scheduled. The 398th outdid itself in getting the highest score in points (not toward discharge, I hasten to add) and the championship team from the 397th played the volleyball team from division artillery for the finals in the playoffs. The blue-braided 397th-ers won the best out of five games.

Every time an event was completed, Gen. Burress would come out of his equivalent to a box seat to personally award the trophy to the winner. (I shouldn't have split my infinitive.) It was amusing to see his aide, a captain, following him around and not accomplishing a thing by so doing. If he'd been carrying something to be given to each one in order it would have been different. I should like neither the job of following or being followed.

I went up to A Co. for supper, and just made it since we never left Bad C. until 4:30 and they eat at 5:00. The mail was more normal tonight, and I got four air mails: from Mother, No. 321; Steve Eckstein, and both the Alexander girls. It's too bad I didn't have them along yesterday to show Joe Lewis.

Tell Mother that my extra-curricular activities are continuing. Tomorrow will be another one of going, I guess, so I better close and get a note off to Auntie M. This was the hottest day so far in September. We seem to get our warm weather late.

Well, more later.

Love to all,
E.

Schorndorf
19 Sept. 45

Dear Folks,

Well, surprise! Tonight my watch came, registered in only eight days after you sent it. Only yesterday I got the letter where you acknowledged my request for sending it, and the ones I got today, Nos. 322, 323, and 324 told of your plans and how it was too heavy; however it arrived before the letter telling what was finally done. The box was stamped by the registry division in N.Y. on the 12th and by some APO (over here or not I don't know) on the 14th. I hadn't even been thinking about or expecting it, so you know how pleased I was.

This afternoon Chap. H., Lt. Armstrong (regt'l athletic officer), and a sergeant went to Esslingen to the 3rd Bn library and the silver factory; then we went down to

Göppingen before we came home. Just before we left, Chap. L., who is on a special duty at the division chap's office called so Chap. H. wouldn't go anywhere. He was coming shortly he said, but we left without seeing him when he didn't show up. It turned out that Chap. Malumphy is back from Switzerland and Chap. L. had a pass to England; consequently he had instructions for us. Sinc was here so we had a relay this evening. Sinc himself is going to the Riviera on Mon. so that will leave us two holding the fort unless or until Chap. Buckley and Ed return.

I am sending the XXI Corps paper and S&S because they both have news about the 100th. Gen. Eisenhower was in Stuttgart yesterday but I didn't know it except for one rumor, which I didn't take to be true since it hadn't come from around regiment, and I thought anything like that would be known around here.

Besides what I mentioned, there came today G'ma's letter of Sept. 10 and Beth's of the same date. It rained today after the two beautiful days. I'll close now. Thanks for getting the watch off so well. More later.

Love,
E.

Schorndorf
23 Sept. 45

Dear Sis,

Chap. H. and I have just come back from seeing *GI Joe*. I have read the book(s) it was based on, but it seems to have depressed me quite a bit. No doubt we all fought the war over again. Herr Boger has just told us about a sergeant in Military Government becoming engaged and it sounded as if he said they went joy-riding afterwards; he mentioned three autos on one occasion and six on another. They just go into the civilian motor pool and take off. I suppose lots of people in MG have done other jobs, but they are just the type that make a lot of silly restrictions like forbidding us to buy articles—not rationed ones like food—and then take lots of privileges themselves. I'll be glad to get out of this caste system.

We thought the picture was quite true to life except that we didn't have as tough a time. The reasons are that the war was much nearer the end; the Sixth Army Group was on the defensive much of the time; and we had spells, both in the Vosges and after March 15, of going very fast. I wonder what the reactions of a whole civilian theater at home were. It's hard to draw parallels since every situation is different.

Last night was mine off from letter writing. Yesterday after the inspection at the motor pool we left for E Co. at Fellbach to find out about a fellow not writing home for some time. It turned out he is in the hospital, they thought in Bad Cannstatt. After eating dinner at E Co. we went to the 216th General Hospital and asked for him. They had no record but thought he might be in one in Karlsruhe so they called up for us. That was some red tape of connections. He wasn't there so we thought we'd trace him from the 2nd Bn aid station. We stopped in Waiblingen on our way back and they said he is in the division clearing station at Bad Cannstatt. We never thought of that.

We went to the inter-squad football game of all 398th players at 2:00 (program enclosed), and arrived home by 4:00. I got no mail and in the evening we went to see an all-girl orchestra at McCracken Hall. Today I went with Chap. H. and Sinc to Waiblingen and here to this church. It rained last evening and most of today. The morrow promises to be nice maybe. Soon to bed.

Love to all,
E.

Schorndorf
25 Sept. 45

Dear Beth,

Today it is a year exactly since we left Ft. Bragg. How I remember that night, spent on a tourist sleeper on the Seaboard, through Raleigh and Richmond. In the morning Capt. Bradbury, still on the regimental medical staff, opened a boil on the back of my neck; the next weekend I saw you in AC for the last time. What days those were and still are! It still is hard for me to believe that so much has happened to us.

We ate dinner at service co. and about that time a shipment of 300 left for the 12th Armored Division on their way home. They are sailing Oct. 5. From there we went to the clearing station in Bad Cannstatt and I ran three boys from A Co. (one is from Phillipsburg and went to the Tech. Institute and knows about where we live) over to Division in Stuttgart.

We came back right away because of the cold weather. It hailed around noon, and there was lots of it still sticking around. It had been cool enough in the first place without this additional reduction in the temperature. Tonight Foster and I went to Waiblingen so he could see how the organ works for Sun. He's playing for us while Sinc is on pass to the Riviera. We enjoyed ourselves monkeying around as usual. I

got Mother's Nos. 330 & 331 today. Also the box from Ditty of Aug. 17. I'll comment on the mail later.

Love to all,
E.

Schorndorf
27 Sept. 45

Dear Folks,

This is the first I've written since night before last, and what a schedule. Yesterday in the morning I got a haircut at A Co. and took an extra set of those division maps up to Si at Gmünd. Of course I stayed for dinner, and what do you suppose they had? Fish. We haven't had any for months; then today I had it here at hqs at noon and at A Co. this evening.

Since we were having the midweek service at the Century Theater last evening, we left here about 5:00 and I had Ogie go with us. We ate at the transient mess as several times before and just made it comfortably. We stayed for the picture which I'd seen in Nancy in July—*See My Lawyer* with Olson & Johnson. There was something wrong with the sound, and they announced that they couldn't show it there but the same show was playing at the Little Century, several blocks away. We tore out and made it fine. On top of it all, they showed the reels out of sequence, whether on purpose or not, we don't know.

Coming home, we picked up the usual hitchhikers from the regiment, including chasing a street car (the last one) for a boy from the 397th, in town, and arrived back at 11:00.

It's been rainy all week, and today was no exception. We didn't venture forth this morning, but this p.m. found us in Fellbach and Esslingen. There was no mail today at all; we seem to be following a pattern of none or very little for several days, followed by the whole lot at the end of the slack period.

Last night I had Mother's of Sept. 12, written just before the departure for Sears. Also came a box from home mailed Aug. 17. It was pretty beaten up for a change, due to no fault of yours. I guess it was just on the bottom of the pile.

Tonight we went to the show here to see Abbott & Costello in "Naughty Nineties." They were in it all the way and were funnier than usual. My correspondence has suffered this week, but I guess it does once in a while.

Good night for now, and love to all,
E.

Schorndorf
29 Sept. 45

Dear Sis,

This afternoon cleared up lovely for Gen. Burress Day at the football game. It ended with a 7-7 tie. We and the 84th were both winner in our respective openers last week. This is the first it has been nice since last Saturday; now the stars are shining. It's really cool and we have our fire; today I wore my scarf.

After supper Foster and I went to the church for him to practice, and Herr Hecht was there with us. When we were going through the hymnal I was showing him all the hymns of German origin. When we came to "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken," he said that was the tune to the Nazi song "Deutschland Über Alles" (Germany Over All). Eisenhower verboten. That's one for the books. Well, tomorrow's a big day so I must close.

Love to all,
Brother

Schorndorf
4 Oct. 1945

Dear Folks,

I suppose you have remembered a year ago tonight (Thursday, not the 4th) when we got on the General Gordon at Staten Island. You didn't know the details until I wrote my diary, but that was the night. I guess we were all scared to death, but after the first few days of learning the routine of the ship we who weren't seasick had a good time. We had so much nice weather on the way over (not long afterward though) and this year has been so rainy. The last nice day—all day—was two weeks ago this Sat. This morning about 9:30 Chap. L. and I left for Stuttgart. As I told you yesterday, he is still making this home-coming trip with the 12th Armd. Division after we all thought he'd missed it following his departure to the UK. Naturally he has a lot of things to get picked up and arranged for. He was acting division Chaplain all the time he was away—that is, he went from and came back to division headquarters. We got back just after 3:00, and I went on some more errands before going up to A Co. for supper. The mail clerk was already gone so for two days straight I didn't get any mail. I saw him tonight and he said there is a registered package up there for me. Ogie is

coming to regt'l aid station in the morning and will bring most of it down for me. Tomorrow is also a busy one since Chaplain L. is going to Heidenheim, not far east of here on Saturday morning.

Love to all,
E.

Schorndorf
8 Oct. 1945

Dear Sis,

After the hectic latter part of last week, I slept late yesterday morning since Sinc went along with Chap. H. to play the organ. In the afternoon I went to A Co. where I found that Harry Wannamaker was to leave this morning. Considering that I am no longer in A Co., that makes Ogie the last of the original POE platoon. Of course I have more time present with the co. than any of the other three who were never back in the 4th platoon following Wingen-Reese being the fourth. Harry has only 42 points, having missed out on one battle star when he was in the hospital in England. They called for a list of 45-54 (incl) pointers today, so maybe he's no worse off than the rest of us like me with 47. You see making the division Category IV means it will be taking a higher bracket home than if it had waited until Jan. or Feb. I guess you might as well send Christmas packages again. The mail I have from Mother is Nos. 339-343. It began to come to So. Co. today. This was a beautiful day all along. The stars are out again tonight. My bracelet came on Friday. Had been at A. Co. two days. Fine condition.

Love,
E.

10 Oct. 1945
Schorndorf

Dear Beth,

Today I got Mother's 344 & 345, both coming via the new co. I am now wondering about Marion's Baltimore trip, which the one announces. Ogie says that Union Memorial is about a half block from his fraternity house and that it's a good hospital in a good section serving a high class of people. By the way, he's leaving Friday for the 78th Division. I have only one more point than he and expect to be yanked out any time. I really never thought I'd see the division leave me behind. As one Mauldin cartoon said-Joe to Willy in a staging area, "I don't recall no delay in gittin' us over

here."

Chap. Nallinger was born in Göppingen, and we were there and to Gerslingen today. He brought a GE radio with him and the communications warrant officer installed a transformer to convert this 220v to 110v current. It works very well and AFN Munich is just where WRAK comes on the dial.

Love to all,
E.

Schorndorf
12 Oct. 1945

Dear Folks,

I remember writing a letter home a year ago today when we were on the Gordon in the midst of our 60 mph storm. Today was division chaplain's meeting at 2:00 and the sole topic discussed was the army sponsored youth program for Germans as outlined in a circular sent down by the 7th Army. They feel that chaplains are especially suited for it. I gathered that nothing was said or done pertaining to the welfare of the troops.

Well, Ogie left today for the 78th Div., which is going to relieve the 82nd Airborne in Berlin very soon. There's nothing new on my personal status but I think those with 50-54 that came over with the division will go home with it.

Tonight after the movie wouldn't work here we went to Esslingen to see *Music for Millions*" Lots of good music. Very foggy again. Today was somewhat cloudy but maybe tomorrow will still be nice. Rainy Sundays are regular though.

Love to all,
E.

Schorndorf
15 Oct. 1945

Dear Sis,

I am writing this up at A Co., where I am staying all night for a change after two months. Huff and Edwards say hello; I guess the names are familiar to you by this time. I no doubt have mentioned Huff before more times because we were in the same platoon. Ed came over with the co. and is

one of the very few still around. He will come home with the division, we think, because of his 58 points. The day wasn't as helter skelter as some others because they were busy with meetings some of the time. In the morning we were up here at Oberurbach to see about using the Baptist church for a youth program—they are expecting to have a rally this week, I believe. Tonight we went to see a poor movie called something or other—the title doesn't come to mind just now. The mail was absolutely nothing tonight; not even a Williamsport Sun. Tomorrow ought to bring better luck. This afternoon Chap. L. dropped back for a visit. The other chaplains were down to Chap. Nallinger's aunt's house and so missed him. The new division he is in has been delayed a week and he expects to be back again before leaving for the port. Please let me know soon how you made out at Union and what you think of Baltimore. Do you remember when we were there with Miss Wescoat, Auntie M, and G'ma Smith in April, 1938? Nothing new on my status, but I'm almost positive I won't come home with the division.

Love to all,
Brother

Schorndorf
16 Oct. 1945

Dear Folks,

Just a line to tell you the blow has fallen and I'm leaving here on Thursday. I expect to learn more tomorrow, but understand so far it's some kind of MP outfit. It doesn't suit me at all, but since my chaplain's assistant Military Occupational Specialty number is on my Form 20, I'm going to keep looking for a job like I have now. During the change I probably won't write for several days. Keep writing here until you get my new address, but don't send any more packages here. I am surely looking for a good niche to fit into and will be definitely keeping my eyes open. Got Mother's 348051 today.

Must to bed,

Love,
E.

Mannheim- Kafertal
18 Oct. 1945

Dear Folks,

Well, we arrived at noon, leaving regiment at 7:00 and

meeting the Esslingen group at Bad Cannstatt Bridge. Considering it's an MP outfit, things don't seem too bad, but we'll just have to wait and see. My, but I hated to leave the old 398th, especially A Co.

I'm living in the Kafertal (Beetle Valley) part of Mannheim. We've been in better places, but this isn't bad. Anyway, they may move so we don't have to eat in a tent. I'm not writing much tonight because I had to notify both mail clerks, etc. In case the envelope isn't clear, I am now
818th MP Co.

APO 758, c/o PM NY

About 116 out of 155 in the newly-formed co. are ex-100th men.

I sent two boxes home yesterday. A wooden one has two watercolors of Schorndorf, a souvenir wooden dish, *Up Front*, some leather peepers, and a set of those Division maps (keep them—I may send them to someone in the old co.), besides a box that my bracelet came in. I got Mother's letters Nos. 348-351. The pasteboard box has a German flashlight a Russian gave me in May and my bronze star with the orders for it, besides some inexpensive bracelets—one each for the girls and Jane. I'm very tired tonight and besides letters to Chap. Hill, So. Co., mail clerk, and Huff to let them know where I am, I've written to Jane and you and brought my diary up to last night.

There is no one I know very well here. I'll explain the set-up tomorrow.

Love to all,
E.

Mannheim
20 Oct. 1945

Dear Beth,

With one report card period over, how is everything with my eighth grade sister? After all the things I've been in my two years, I now add MPing to the list. I am just slowly beginning to realize it but so far seem to be taking it in stride. Next week at this time, when I've had some experience, I can judge better.

Today I got a much-needed haircut and went to the movies in the evening. The Ufa-Palast is beautiful and will hold 1500 or so. We saw *That's the Spirit*.

Since it is 11:00 I suppose the WHS game is just shortly over. Let me know. The 100th played the 36th this p.m. Ulm (?) There was nothing here which is 1st Amd. Division territory, by the way.

No mail yet.

Love to all,
E.

Mannheim
21 Oct. 1945

Dear Folks,

Church was at 10:30 this morning, downtown in a large building with semi-circular pews—the most American-like I've seen in Germany. I'm sending the bulletin separately; how strange it is not to have a chaplain that really belongs to the unit. There was a pretty good crowd there, but I imagine it was the only one for all these small units in Mannheim.

The weather cleared up very nicely, and we walked downtown this afternoon. My usual thin skin even was a bit sunburned from it all. I suppose V-mail is no longer filmed. Is it arriving airmail? I guess it goes as far as NY that way.

I wish you would please still send my history book so I can see how these places tie in. The others you can skip. Also please send me something to eat.

Love to all,
E.

Mannheim
23 October 1945

Dear Sis,

Today was quite quiet but I shall make up for it tonight. My first job will be checking GI vehicles at the Rhine River bridge over to Ludwigshafen from 12-8 tonight. It isn't exactly what we consider MP duty since we've done almost the same things on road blocks but most of the other jobs are different. I'm still interested to see what I do when I get on an intersection. Another phase is the motorized patrol; they say there are lots of accidents to be reported, or more than a person would think.

This morning I wrote some and got a V-mail off to Mrs. Swartz as per Mother's suggestion. Luckily I am scraping the bottom of old letters. I guess you can understand that in Schorndorf we were always hither and yon, and after supper (especially toward the last) we liked to go places. Nowadays I have enough free time to really get caught up on correspondence and not too many to visit with; so I'm very glad I spent time with the old gang while I could. No mail has caught up yet, but it will roll in any day we think.

Please send me something to eat.

Love to all,
E.

Mannheim
26 Oct. 1945

Dear Beth,

It seems I can never get all the n's in Mannheim; almost every time it looks like rn in the middle. Probably living in Schorndorf a total of three months got me in the habit.

For your information, I still am keeping up on my current diary, which I began in Gmünd on July 19. I am hoping to use it to help orient all of you when I come home. During the last several months most of us have decided that it is useless to attempt the education of the folks at home through writing. Hardly a one of us failed to try it at one time or another since censorship was lifted; and we no longer feel guilty over our failure now that we realize that the situation is universal. What I mean is that I have a file-mental and written-of things that would and will make your hair stand on end. These things won't refer to the war and the reaction won't be due to fear; it's all about the army as an organization of personalities and the feeling will be the result of anger and indignation.

This is one of the nights that I feel like rambling, and the mail I got tonight made me think a bit of what I'll do when I come home.

It would appear that our point group will be coming home sometime next spring. When I say that I mean to let leeway on either side of the calendar March 21-June 21. With everything being delayed there'll probably be no surprises from the early viewpoint.

Anyway, if I do come home in that period, I've been thinking of doing nothing until Bucknell begins its fall term-Sept. if they have two semesters and Nov. if they have three. That may sound like a long time to delay things, but in the more than two years I will have been in the army, I've had just one 10-day furlough. If I'd been in the States all this time probably I'd have been home four times more by this time. I feel as if I owe myself this time I normally should have had. I don't intend to sit on the front porch, living room, or back yard all this time-on the contrary I expect to do a good bit of going around. Ever since I left New C. I realized how little my great mileage mostly to A.C. and N.Y. had taken me, and after this time in Europe I really want to see America first-pardon me, second.

Tonight I received my first forwarded mail from Service Co., and here I have it even before you know I left. The letters were 353, -3, -5, -6, and -8. I've met some of the Stenger family, both at their church and the one daughter stayed with the High St. Bartows when she was going to Jr. Col. *Stars & Stripes* says air mail is once more speeded up. Mother's most recent V-mail was unphotographed as they all will be now. I heard Dr. Case at Conf. in Bloomsburg too—the night the lights went out. Tell Marion I am sweating her out too. I'm on Rhine again tonight but off tomorrow night. Please send something to eat. Have Ditty send some inhalers.

Have any of you written to our Congressmen, re: redeployment, yet?????

Love to all, E.

Mannheim
27 Oct. 1945

Dear Folks,

Last night went better at the bridge since the engineers had built a three-sided shelter for us to stand in—this being in addition to the shanty where we sleep. We were relieved this morning on time for once and I slept until dinner. This afternoon I managed a Sat. bath and dressed before supper. Last night just as I got to the bridge one of the fellows, who came here in our truck from Schorndorf, said someone had stopped and asked if he knew me. The asker was John Harvey who went I think to the 15th Cavalry something-or-other like Harry Wannamaker did. Later a 15th Cav jeep came along and I found the outfit is south of us, just west of Heidelberg. Tonight I went to the movies (*Swing Out, Sister*) and went to the big Red Cross a bit. I looked through the State book for Pa and found these: a S/Sgt. N.F. Spangler from Harrisburg from Co. H, 399th. The name Spangler is familiar from MTC; T/5 Wm Whitmeyer, Montandon; T/5 M R Bachman, Watsontown; John L Confer, Wmsport; Pfc Chas. S. Blanchard, 826 W. Southern Ave., So. Wmsport. I also saw one Sunbury and Renovo each. There were lots of names, but those the only ones from home. The timetable Ditty sent came today; from the various stamps I've (?): written 12th, mailed 15th, rec'd overseas 20th, sent from APO 447 25th; some other APO 26th, forwarded from Serv. Co., 24th; I got it today. I am on traffic (direction) tomorrow 8-1:30.

Love,
E.

Mannheim

30 Oct. 1945

(drawing enclosed by Sigrid Boger, 9, Schorndorf)

Dear Sis,

Well yesterday was a rather good one for mail although it was a combination of Sunday's too. I had G'ma's of Oct. 10 and Mother's 354, 359, and 360.

In the way of answers, *Up Front* carried very well and came to Schorndorf early in September. The damaged box was salvageable to quite an extent. I did do all the driving on our trip to Heidelberg. When I was driving and now that I am directing traffic, I think I have confidence that comes from being rather "thermostatish" in the first place and realizing that no situation will ever come up that will be as bad as Nov.-April.

One of the boys upstairs—formerly K, 398th—is from Akron and lives only a mile or so from the Colonial Salt Co. Another is from Huntingdon and knows a boy who was in my hut at M.T.C. one year.

On Sunday after I wrote I went back to the 59th QM Depot, and knowing where the room was, was able to find Allen Frawley very well. He was napping before supper having been out, but some of the fellows in his room thought it was time for supper and got him up. Despite the length of time since I'd seen him, he didn't look any older as I remember, but maybe a picture would prove differently. The last time I saw him was near La Trouche last Nov. 18 when he and so many of our platoon were wounded.

We ate supper and talked some, and since he was behind on his correspondence, he introduced me to a friend of his (ex-106th Div.) and we went to see *A Bell for Adano*, the story of AMG in Italy. I was so surprised to see them portray the army as a place where an officer was relieved of his command for doing the correct thing from the human common sense viewpoint although it went against one of those picayunish, without-reason orders. The army is undeniably and unquestionably that way, but you never hear tell of it except from *GI's*, the *S&S* or *PM* (like "AW61" I sent home in April).

After the movie we went downstairs to their club where there was an orchestra, etc. and had fruit juice (I mean it). After that it was growing close to curfew (10:30) so the friend brought me home on a motorcycle. Al is now T/5 and acting supply sergeant for the Hq. Co. They have a grand set-up. We are to move into better quarters within a week. I was on traffic yesterday and today, on co. guard tomorrow. Now to shave and lie down before supper. I haven't heard from you for a long time.

Love,

E.

Mannheim
1 Nov. 1945

Dear Beth,

After a quite nice day it seems to be raining now. A year ago tonight we were in tents near Rambervillers, having got off the 40-and 8's at Thaon-les-Vosges that afternoon. I forget if it rained that night or not, but there weren't many November days that it didn't. We got no mail today again because the APO for this unit is now located right here in Mannheim while the former location still receives the mail from the 100th, which has to be transshipped. The numbers are evidently the same, and the set-up is a bit hazy for me. And, why not, after 19 months of the APO following us constantly?

I slept both the morning and afternoon and could stand some more really soon. I am to be on traffic permanently when things get organized and that will mean either 8:00-1:30 or 1:30-7:00, which are very good hours.

My diary is coming right along and I wrote about a sheet (both sides) of fine-lined 8 ½ x 11" note book paper tonight, which brings me up to Brussels on March 18th. Now to get dressed.

Love to all,
E.

Mannheim
3 Nov. 1945

Dear Folks,

Well, again I'm downtown. What a week this has been! Yesterday we moved into new quarters farther out of town toward Frankfurt. The change is only about four blocks, closer to the co. club.

On Thurs. night I was on the Rhine Bridge and spent the day moving. Dinner was served at the old location and I tried to sleep in the afternoon, but had to go on guard at the to-be-officers' quarters for an hour.

Right after supper I went to bed and slept from 8:00 until 4:00 this morning when I went on guard again. Now I am back on traffic again and had the second shift on post No. 1 from 1:30-7:00 this afternoon.

Our co. seems to be plenty messed up yet for our having been here over two weeks. This p.m. I saw Warda (Erie, PA),

one of our A Co. jeep drivers. He had his dog "Butch" and one of the boys, now transferred to the 12th Armored.

Yesterday I had the first mail direct—a letter from Jane, air mail in just a week. The answer came only 15 days after I wrote it which is one day better than my previous record.

Now home, bath, and bed. I guess I can get to church in the morning.

Love to all,
E.

Mannheim
5 Nov. 1945

Dear Sis,

Today will be quite a red-letter one as far as communications are concerned. This was my first mail since last Monday except for that single letter from Jane that came direct. The bountiful harvest included the following: four from Jane (one direct), six from Mother (No. 357, 361, 362, 363, air mail with Beth's letter of Oct. 17, and 371—the first I've received direct from home, but evidently not the first sent), Mr. Wilson, Jimmie Ogilvie, and Hank Witman.

On top of that I saw a boy formerly in A Co., now in an anti-aircraft battalion attached to 3rd Armored Division who had become lost from his convoy going to Cologne for coal. This afternoon when I was on traffic I saw Sinc, who said Chap. Buckley and Ed Perron were just behind him. Chap. B. was being transferred to the 78th Division, up near Kassel, so it looks as if Ed (with 54 points and in the division since activation) will be the only one of the six of us in the Schorndorf house to go home with the 100th after all. From the rumors I've heard I'm not sure the point bracket will include him.

Later in the afternoon Don Albright, one of the 399th's Chaplain's assistants came along on his chaplain's way to the 84th Div. Their division CP is at Weinheim, not far from here and the 84th borders on the 100th between Karlsruhe and Pforzheim. Don, whom I knew remotely back at Bragg, led the combined chorus of that show we put on the last weekend before leaving for Kilmer. Along just for the ride evidently was Oleson, a boy from my company at Benning. Also I saw a jeep from G398th; everyday I see a number of trucks from the various units.

Jimmie is in the 78th Division and also is close to

Kassel, 8 miles. He hopes I am still with the 100th and wishes we were all together again, but is surely glad we don't have to be there with him. His company is L, 310th Inf. That regiment or division is the one where the men had to salute all airplanes passing over during a certain period because some brass was expected. They live in a cow town worse than Oberurbach and in poor houses. Of course we're all pretty adept at crying on each other's shoulder these days; I did the same when I came here.

I surely must congratulate you on getting in at Union Memorial. No doubt you will be started before I ever leave Europe or even Mannheim, but after the thousands of miles I've gone in the last two years, what's 180 miles down to Baltimore?

When you were considering it, Ogie said that Union is a high class type of place and located only a block from his fraternity house. Won't it be good to be able to kill two birds with one stone when I come to Baltimore?

Tomorrow I am off (don't faint) and I want to go to Heidelberg for part of the day. Please remind Mother not to forget my renewals to Railroad Magazine and Trains, whenever they are. Also something to get me and keep home is records. I'd like Grieg's Concerto in A minor or whatever it is. The complete work is about 12 sides long (piano concerto).

My packages must be all bunched up somewhere because they've been mighty scarce lately. I don't have any hood but probably can't wear any. I think they are making good preparation for us for winter. I've already asked for my horsehide mittens. By now I guess you know Harry W. went to a cavalry outfit with his 42 points. A year ago this afternoon 1st Bn, 398th went on line near Rambervillers. I'll sleep a lot better tonight! I guess this is all for now; please send me something to eat.

Love to all,
Brother

Mannheim
8 Nov. 1945
Dear Beth,

I have purposely reserved comment on your letter enclosed with the clippings since your turn to receive mail was very near anyway. For a while a least, and beginning with G'ma Tues. and yesterday, I am going to write air mail and put two consecutive days' letters in one envelope to the same person.

That was the first I'd heard of the bicycle being brightened up at all. I trust you are not like these Krauts, always getting in the way of GI drivers and consequently

many getting injured and killed. I am simply astonished at the careless attitude of the Germans toward safety. Today two civilian cars "went through" me, and the next time (provided the other fellow isn't away for chow) I am going to commandeer another vehicle (?), chase the Kraut, and bring him back to sit for awhile and ponder his deeds.

The report card looks very good to me; I don't recall the regular adult Smith standard set beforehand. Although what little additional improvement possible would look good, I won't complain. Mother may not like me to say this, and I wonder if I should, but those B's in behavior and attitude don't worry me. I don't advocate your making a nuisance of yourself, but for two years I've seen the army version of the teacher's pet. The name isn't so nice and not important, but the same points exist. Anyone who is good at his job is thought well of by his superiors and subordinates alike, but playing up is no good.

All of this may be a little hint that I am older than when I went to Harrisburg two years ago a week from Monday. However, don't let it worry you; I've simply discovered since I saw you last that there are too many big things in life to worry about the small ones—just because you've been in the habit of worrying about them. No mail today. Please send me something to eat. Don't forget the snapshots you're going to take.

Love,
Brother

Mannheim
10 Nov. 1945

Dear Folks,

Today for the first time in four did we get mail from the States. I had Mother's of nos. 370, 372, and 375. I was just waiting for the one where you heard I was transferred. I guess the reason Jane didn't get my letter from here when you did is that I began writing to school after I got here.

The Jerries are to take over the traffic posts beginning tomorrow so I imagine we'll be worked in on the police section with motorized patrols.

The stunt that the band did on Oct. 27 sounds very funny. How long was Marion working for Watkins? Has she stopped with Stroehmann's? I'm having a hard time keeping up with the world.

Foster had been transferred to an engineer outfit on paper (while he was in England before I came here); so far I haven't heard from him yet.

Also came Ditty's second bunch of timetables today.

Please thank her for me. This was a blustery day and colder than any so far. Tomorrow and Monday are supposed to be holidays in the ETO, but it won't mean much for us unless it would be off anyway.

I'll have to get up tomorrow about 9:00 so it's to bed for now.

Love to all,
E.

Mannheim
11 Nov. 1945

Dear Folks,

How typical an Armistice Day this is. It is 2:00 here, and that means you are just getting up at home (all except Marion?), it being 8:00 there.

Today is raw and windy with penetrating cold. I arose at 9:00 myself and shaved, polished my shoes, and dressed before hustling off for church about 10:00. I haven't changed in the respect that it takes me just as long to dress as before and always longer than I might plan ahead of time.

This was sort of a Harvest Home for the civilians of the church where we have our services. I went out here to N-38, the road from Frankfurt and got a ride with two fellows from an engineer battalion. It turned out they were going to church also so I accompanied them to the Red Cross for coffee and donuts. We walked in just as the prelude was ending and they brought me back too. They ran out of gas on the way home and what we got from some fellows on a truck must have had some water in it. Anyway, one of our co. jeeps came along, and I got in it and it pushed the engineers.

I thought I'd write until the fire here picks up and is going well enough to make it safe to leave. I seem to be the chief fire-builder and caretaker.

Now I'm thinking of ambling downtown again for a change of atmosphere. The mail isn't in yet so I can't report until next time. Please send me something to eat.

Love to all,
E.

Mannheim
22 Nov. 1945

Thanksgiving
(818th M.P. Company menu enclosed)

Dear Folks,

I hope you'll pardon this brief line, but it's already 12:30 a.m. and by this time tomorrow night I'll probably be well on my way to Paris. The co. has a quota of six men and since many have already been there in our year overseas, most of the boys aren't interested. Therefore they said anyone that would like to go should sign up in the orderly room.

It's not definite yet, but the co. clerk this p.m. said he had less than the quota so it looks pretty sure. If I do go, it will be on the Kassel-Paris leave train at 1640 (4:40 p.m.) tomorrow from the Mannheim station.

We had a nice day for Thanksgiving; I was off (as were all check pointers) and ate dinner with the second sitting at 1:00, having got a bath before that time. Our dinner was very good and well prepared and served.

I walked this afternoon and got a bit of fresh air and went to see Betty Rose's "Diamond Horseshoe," a variety stage show, and *Where Do We Go From Here?* with Fred MacMurray tonight. The movie is worth seeing when it comes home.

Mother's letters of Nov. 8 and 9 came yesterday—today was a postal holiday. It's been damp and raw, but not really cold all week.

My next letter will be Sat. if I go tomorrow.

Love to all,
E.

Paris
25 Nov. 1945
Western Union telegram

THIS WHOLE WEEK IN PARIS WILL TRY TO PHONE SEEING AND DOING
EVERYTHING LOVE=
EMORY

Paris
28 Nov. 1945

Dear Mother,

I'm hoping this arrives just about on your birthday to bring greetings to the most faithful letter writer in the U.S. I guess December 7 will be a lot happier this year than

any of the last four. So a big hug and 50 kisses across the Atlantic.

This morning I mailed two packages to you. Only the one is for the Smiths and even though I wrote the names on the outside I'll go over it again. The pipe holder is for Pop, one tray for Auntie M and the other for Aunt Margaret and Uncle Bill; the picture for G'ma and 'pa Strait, and one hanky each for you, Beth, Marion, G'ma Smith, Auntie R, and Jane.

The smaller package is perfume, of which I bought none this time since I did on both the Brussels and Nancy trips. It is for one of the boys in the co. who asked me to pick some up. It was not purchased at the PX since we are limited to one bottle there. In order to get the French luxury tax refund the things must be mailed first. It is 33% so I decided to mail it to you and ask him where it should be forwarded to.

This afternoon I went on a bus tour of the city and was already well enough oriented that I knew our approximate location all the time. Tonight we're going to the Follies. Last night we saw a movie. Tomorrow we have tickets for "Cavaleria Rusticana" at the Opera Comique.

The food is good, and I've been getting up every day for breakfast; Sunday I didn't because of Saturday night, which could have been better. However, this morning is an important time for getting things done.

Last night I had a sundae and milk shake at the PX milk bar. I'm going there again right now. Oh yes, yesterday I was to the Louvre. There are a few pieces missing, not having been restored from their hiding places during the occupation.

Thinking of you a week from Friday.
HAPPY BIRTHDAY.

Love,
E.

Paris
30 Nov. 1945
(letter returned)

Dear Harry (Wannamaker),

I finally made it here after a year in the ETO. We left a week ago today and are returning tomorrow. Having stuffed my back letters in my pocket and having a little time, I decided to drop you a line.

They put the Kassel-Paris leave train up an hour without telling us, so of course we missed it. It makes a long supper stop in Karlsruhe so we drove down there after

our own supper, making it in just an hour via the autobahn. We've been seeing and doing everything, and I've had a real good time.

Twice I've seen de Martini here; he left with Manning late in September and ended up in Paris in finance. With his 57 points he'll probably be leaving soon. Naturally, he likes it fine, but who wouldn't want to be stationed here? All six of us from the 818th on leave here are ex-100th Divisioners, and five are from the POE group.

Every week I'm learning where more and more of the old outfit are. Allburn passed me in a jeep last week and I learned he is in MG down toward Heidelberg. Meade got skanovitched to Chief of Staff section, 7th Army Hq. Talk about rear echelon! I suppose you know by now that Jimmie is in the honor guard platoon of his regt. Hq co. Allburn said he went back to the co. on the Sunday before Thanksgiving, and Huff was shipping the next day. Also, I suppose you know O'bie was elected president of the Century Assn with all the other 398th candidates. By the way, I have your Sons of Bitche ring and regt insignia; let me know if I should mail them or if you'll stop. The day you did call I was in such a fog I didn't think of it.

The weather has been cloudy during our stay here but there's been no rain. The first part of the week it was warm enough to go in just Ike jackets, but I'm wearing my mackinaw now.

Back at the company we're all fixed up for winter with parkas, sweaters, gloves, and the like. There's been no snow yet, but travelers back to the division say Stuttgart and Pforzheim have had it already. At any rate this year won't be as bad as last.

By the way the latest drive by our company is on uniforms, so try to wear a tie when you come to visit.

Sunday, 1 Dec. - Mannheim

Back home again, arriving this morning. The boys say you were here to visit while I was gone. Too bad I missed you. Come again though. There is some rumor of the company moving, possibly. I hope we can stay here because the set up is good and the news of your locations is just trickling in.

Flash! Two of the boys from your outfit were just here to see Chabot and they know you were here to see me, and I know you're only in Weinheim instead of up the line.

Beaucoup mail came while I was gone so I must close on this one. *Schnell* on down soon.

Yours,
Smitty

Mannheim

10 Dec. 1945

Dear Beth,

This is quite an occasion for writing, and I may be brief but hope to cover everything. First of all, I suppose you remember two years (is that correct?) ago tonight, my first at New Cumberland. And last year was my last at the 51st Sta. Hospital before leaving Dijon for the 2nd Repl. Depot at Epinal.

I suppose you have heard about Gen. Patton being in the accident. It occurred less than a mile from our co. and our co. took charge of the investigation. I am sending a S&S with that, as well as three other interesting and coincidental articles. The sedan was sitting in our motor pool until tonight and I appropriated the 15th Army insignia off the back of a road map from inside. I suppose less than 15 minutes after the accident it was stripped and the star plate (red plate with silver stars equal to the general's rank, on the front and back) was first to go. In case you haven't heard, Patton was quite seriously wounded and in the hospital at Heidelberg. This morning some of our patrols had to locate a surgeon (three sedans of brass) from the Frankfurt autobahn to Heidelberg. We all think that too much fuss is being made over it. As hard boiled as it sounds, I don't feel any sorrier for him than he felt for me last year.

I am now working in the police station as one of three on a permanent crew. I am "blotter man"—keeping sort of a diary on the ins and outs of patrols, prisoners, etc. and assistant desk Sgt. It's inside and quite interesting.

Some time ago in S&S there was an article telling about a 7th Army oratorio group putting on *The Messiah* in Heidelberg. Foster, who was assigned to an engineer outfit near H., thought I'd be interested in singing, and after inquiring at Special Service and later ending up talking to the director, I decided to go tonight. A bus left from the Special Service "Truman Hotel" downtown at 7:00 and I got a ride right back to my door with the organist at the church downtown. They are already along in the rehearsing, but I was able to fall in quite well. They practice at the University, and it seems so strange when one thinks of it. Jim Boortz, who you saw in our choir at Bragg, was there and Foster. The 397th and 99th were also well represented. The women are WACS, nurses and discharged civilians. More about that later.

In case I haven't already mentioned it, I have the following letters from Mother: 395-401 and 403. I didn't know Betty Dickson was out of the ANC. I had another letter from Lee Sistare today, and he thinks the 21-month rule of

not being shipped overseas may get him transferred again since he wouldn't be much good to the army after he finished the course. His address is:

Tec 5 Lee C. Sistare 33581391
Co. A, 5th Trng. Gp. 1st Bn.
C/C Cntr., Holabaid Sig. Dep.
Baltimore, 19, MD

With my camphor stick for my lips I haven't needed other hand lotions. Please tell Mother that all the arrangements she has made in her letters so far sounded fine with me.

As you may realize, it is quite late so I'll close. Ditty and Mother's boxes of Nov. 15 both came. The letter of Nov. 17 (I think) telling of the contents of the boxes shipped from Schorndorf never came. May I have a repeat on the contents and your reactions, please?

Love to all,
E.

Mannheim
11 Dec 1945

Dear Beth,

We all think winter is really here because last night there was a trace of snowfall, and this evening we see a bit more on the roads. I slept late this morning and spent the afternoon until 4:00 when I went on my police station job, getting a bath, haircut, etc. The work is quite interesting and I am learning the ropes easily.

Please tell Mother the recopied letter to Mr. Holter has been sent and I was very careful with my penmanship.

Today the only mail was Mother's of Nov. 17, which I reported yesterday as still among the missing. The mail is all poor now and I can't make a decent comparison on V and air mail. I'll try to watch it the next few days.

Allen Frawley lives in Portland, Oregon, and his name is in my little black address book where he signed it just before we left Bragg. Mother copied it for me after VE time.

Very few over here resent the MP's openly in their attitude, but we all cuss them out (even now some of them) among ourselves. There is absolutely no comparison between ourselves (or even the pre-arrival-from-the-100th company) here and the station complement ones at Bragg when you visited. That brand is about the most despised thing in the army, and just before we left they had to put Div. MP's on the Division area bus line on Sat. and Sun. at Fayetteville.

I must to bed.

Love to all,
E.

Thinking about you during all the holiday activities. Letter 392 finally came.

Seckenheim
21 Dec. 45

Dear Beth,

Yesterday was rainy and we found it very convenient to be inside except for going to eat. After supper we stayed down at the Show School auditorium to wait for the bus or truck for Heidelberg rather than walk back to the house, which is several blocks distant. Nothing came for us for more than an hour and finally Fred Katz, the director, asked for someone who could drive to get a $\frac{3}{4}$ ton truck from the motor pool.

One of the boys who lives in our house obliged and we arrived about a half hour late. He rehearsed the overture and bass solo arias and went over each chorus once.

Shortly before we began to sing I turned around toward the back of the auditorium in the new music building of the University and saw Huff sitting there. Of course I could scarcely believe my eyes, but I decided to take a chance that it wasn't a ghost anyway. He is taking a four-day course here in S.S. City on vocational guidance and had been over to the 818 on Wed. and even was in our house before but didn't find us because we practically live in the parlor on the second floor.

He came back on the bus with us from Heidelberg and we ate at the diner. Then he and I carted his stuff over here from the transient billeting place and he put his cot up in my room. Before and after we went to bed we reminisced and, believe it or not, we never went to sleep until after 4 a.m. The first time I ever saw him was the occasion of my return to the company in December of last year—the 19th up on the hill by Bitche.

Today of course we were quite lazy and tried to catch up on our correspondence. We called up Harry Wannamaker and he dropped in for a few minutes just at suppertime. This morning was clear and cold, but suddenly it must have remembered this was the first day of winter because it became gray and dark the rest of the day.

7:33 p.m. We just heard over AFN Munich-Stuttgart that Gen. Patton died today. The S&S today said he spent a bad night Wed. and we all thought he was developing pneumonia. He and Gen. Patch in adjoining armies (3rd and 7th) and both

died with the same thing so close together.

I feel pretty good about the point score dropping to 50 the end of the month. I guess the next slash will include us down to 45. Of course those between 50 and 55 aren't on their way home yet.

Since Monday I haven't been back to the company for mail, but I'm going to try to make it tomorrow or bust. We have a rehearsal in the morning at 10:00 and we'll be leaving here about 9:15. Imagine we'll be at the Capitol Theater where we're to present it.

Well, more later.

Love to all,

E.

Seckenheim
23 Dec. '45

Dear Folks,

Dinner isn't until 12:00 so I am taking this little interlude to drop you a line. We arose at 8:40 and dashed to breakfast which is served 8:30-9:00 on Sundays. It is several blocks so we used up some time just going and coming. Church was at 10:00 at the Cooks and Bakers School down the road. Chap. Hill had the service and had asked me to direct the singing and Foster to play. We were a little late, but it was nothing serious.

This afternoon is Gen. Patton's funeral in Heidelberg and we are planning to go in, just in the spirit of the occasion.

10:30 p.m. Well, we are back from a full afternoon and evening. As it turned out, we went to eat at the place where I stopped, and went immediately to the Strassenbahn stop to go to Heidelberg. You'd be surprised how the activity simply ceased. First of all, the electric train went just to the edge of town instead of to Bismarckplatz, quite a Market Square. None of the streetcars in town were running, and just where we got off there was a jeep with a sign "Funeral Information." Just Foster and I were together and we went where we pleased. We had thought of going up to Christ Church where the service was being held, but all the activity around the railroad station (Hauptbahnhof) prompted us to stay there. There was a guard every five yards dressed in the jacket and helmet and armed with an M-1 rifle. We got there at 2:00 and the funeral wasn't to begin until 3:00. It was almost 4:00 when the procession reached us. I've never seen such a collection of brass in my life! Gen. McNarney was there, Gen. Burress, and others with 1, 2, 3 or 4 stars. The 504th M.P. Bn was just as busy as bees. The photographers, S&S men, and everything were flying back and

forth. Tonight we heard that the church wasn't full and we could have gone there. Chap. Hill was an usher, and we'll get his story later.

We understand that when the body was lying in state in a house near Gen. Keyes' quarters, they wouldn't let any GI's in to see him and the MP's on guard were the only ones to sign the register.

I don't know your reactions at home about all of this and if it doesn't seem in style you probably will want to keep it to yourselves. Ever since the accident occurred, I have heard lots of criticism (and have offered some myself). I realize it sounds a little out of line when he has passed on, but everyone felt that too much fuss was made over the whole affair.

Two special trains were to be used to transport the family and official party. His wife being flown and the specialists being escorted around didn't help things any. I learned while I was chaplain's assistant how they have the services for GI's killed during the war. At regular intervals the division (not the regimental) chaplain of the appropriate faith went back to the various cemeteries and held group services and a report was submitted to the unit chaplain. How impersonal!

Today the whole route from the church to the station was lined with guards and when all the ceremonies are finished a company from each division in the ETO will have taken part. The 84th Division band played and came down the street playing "Onward Christian Soldiers" at about 60 beats per minute followed by Chopin's "Funeral March." Then there was a troop of armored cars. The hearse (which was a converted half-truck) turned off before it got to us to go into a side street to the station. Then came all the brass in their Packards and Cadillacs. After we left for the Red Cross they gave what sounded to be an 11-gun salute.

We were to be at the theater today at 6:30 to get into our white satin gowns with collars like hoods for degrees worn on academic gowns. It went off swell, and we sang to a full house including the 7th Army All-Star Football Team whose game with TSFET All Stars was postponed from today until tomorrow.

After the performance we all came out here to Seckenheim for a buffet supper at our mess hall. It was really quite nice.

I just got the Bucknell program in a letter from Jane yesterday when I stopped for my mail at the co. and I'll send this one back now.

I got the following mail yesterday: Mother's 411-417, cards from her, Pop & Mom, both girls, Ditty, G'pa & Ma, and Mrs. Pachman. I'm glad to hear Aunt Margaret is improved and will drop her a line.

I'm not finished writing yet so I'm closing. More later.

Love to all,
E.

Seckenheim
28 Dec. 1945

Dear Sis,

This evening we have just finished eating your delicious Stroehmann's fruit cake, which I wrote we were saving until the holidays. It was very good and kept wonderful. Neither the traveling nor the move here hurt it at all.

I suppose you all want to hear about our trip to Schorndorf. Chap H. had business concerning his battalion with one of the batteries in Karlsruhe (they're all spread out). We left here at 9:30—I had to get up "early," 8:10—and arrived there before 11:00, staying for dinner at the transient-ness "B" Btry runs. I thought it would be strange if we didn't see someone we knew, and there we saw Lt. Poaster, tenor soloist in the Messiah, on his way back to his outfit, and a boy named Marcus who visited one of the other singers in our house here. Both the visitor and the visited were in the 100ths 325th Medical Bn at one time and one in VI Corps Hq in Esslingen now.

We arrived Stuttgart about 2:30 and Schorndorf at 3:15. There are only nine American soldiers in the town, all connected with the Railroad Transportation office. The Bogers were glad to see us and we were the same. I hadn't been there for more than two months although Chap. H left only two weeks ago and Foster, about the 1st of December. Herr Boger was working and didn't get back before we left, but we saw Frau B. and Erna and Sigrid. We had coffee and cookies besides two kinds of pie-like cake (such as I used to have when I lived there) before we left at 5:15 to eat supper in Stuttgart. There were four of us including the driver from Chap. H's Bn. With eating and the roads being somewhat unfamiliar we didn't get back until 11:00.

Do you know what outfit Miss Laubach's nephew is in? I suppose he has gone home by now or will shortly. Let me know though, just for the sake of interest. By going home, I mean I suppose he has more points than I, or doesn't he? The Cohen boy that was in Paris with us is not the same one that was in the hospital at New C. with me.

I plan to add more to this tomorrow, but before then I want to say how so many of us are talking about the girls we used to go to school with getting married. I had occasion to mention about Earl Carson to some of the boys and we all

feel that we're better off now (than he), almost ready to be discharged and having survived the war sound in body and mind. We've certainly had a chance to get a stand-back view of our first 18 years that ought to help. I feel Earl should have gone on to school—thought he was at Bethlehem Steel just because of the war.

29 Dec., 1945 -Well, today was rainy but not cold. I got up in time for breakfast and took Foster's and my laundry over to my landlady in Kafertal. The laundry here is closed this week it seems.

I got back just in time for a rehearsal at 10:30, which was halted when Lt. Gansz had something to attend to. We stayed at the studio until dinner time and some of the boys tried to contact their outfits. Later in the afternoon we went to call on Chap. Hill to make sure about tomorrow.

Tonight we saw "Incendiary Blond" at the Ka-Li Theater in Heidelberg, going in on the OEG and catching a ride home. Tomorrow we must get up in time for breakfast, so good night.

No mail since last Sat. The storms aren't helping.

Love to all,

E.

Seckenheim
3 Jan. 1946

Dear Beth,

Here we sit in our room, serenaded by the radio pursuing our literary interests after a quiet day. This morning we got up just in time for dinner because our rehearsal was postponed until this afternoon. The weather was crystal clear but with no muck or wet soil the dust is pretty bad.

We weren't out of the kuh-dorf (cow town) at all today. If this doesn't make any sense it is because Foster is asking me questions about the song we are making up to the tune of Lili Marlene about the slow Strassenbahn. This evening he took some pictures inside, which should be very nice if they take right. We have on our New Year's Eve hats and are quite clucky-looking.

I suppose you feel quite alone having to face the tribulation of mid-years all by yourself this winter. Well, next year all three of us will be toiling, and you'll have Latin to contend with. Time marches on!

Although I am not at all worried, after two weeks almost a little mail would be nice. Dear knows when anything big will happen around home, and the daily tidbits,

especially with Christmas vacation to report on, will be quite interesting.

How much snow have you had at home? Have they blocked off Glynn Ave. for the kids? I still haven't seen any, although we did last year the week between Christmas and New Year's. Do you ever see or write to Frank Witman these days? Must write a couple back letters now.

Love to all,
E.

4 Jan. 1946

Dear Beth,

I am happy tonight if nothing goes wrong because when Lt. Gansz called my company today they told him they'd release me so I can be transferred here. Previously, the letter he sent asking for my release was disapproved because "concerned enlisted man desires to remain with this organization." I haven't been back to the co. once in the three weeks since I left, except for mail once—when I didn't see a soul except the mail clerk, so we don't know what gave them that idea. Maybe they were trying to protect me since my wishes and intentions weren't really known and my being away was only temporary—although I privately hoped never to go back.

This was another beautiful, cold day and we rehearsed both morning and afternoon on an old one, "You're not the kind," arranged by Lt. Gansz and "Star Dust." We have received two reinforcements this week, both of whom sang in "The Messiah." When we are up to strength there will be seven of us, and we're constantly looking for more.

This afternoon we finally got a shower squeezed into the schedule and ate supper on the same trip. Tomorrow we want to go into Heidelberg and send you cablegrams about our new address so things will start coming more directly.

This new one is:

Pfc, RES 33 _____
20th Special Service Co.
APO 209, c/o PM, NY

Good night for now,

Love to all,
Brother

Seckenheim-aur-Neckar

6 Jan. 1946

Dear Folks,

Tonight everyone is rather burned up—in our house, at least over the news via AFN and *S&S* that "Redeployment Is Finished by Point Scores." In other words, the ones in the ETO will no longer be ladled off at the rate (?) available shipping could take us home because of "military necessity." Yet it was practically guaranteed all the time since V-J that those with 45 and above would go home as those with more points were cleared out. A lot of people thought that those with less than 45 (down to a certain number) would go before the rest had to be replaced. Just as I wrote the *Phila. Inquirer* about that article that Auntie M. sent me, there are lots of us over here with no kids at 12 husky and undeserved points per, who were in the war—even though it was the tail end—and still don't have enough to be out or even definitely on our way yet.

That article talked about the occupiers being mostly young 18 year-olds, homesick with no holdover feeling of hatred. Then in today's *S&S*, Gen. McNarney says "There are no replacements..." One or the other is wrong. I know a few have come, but why can't a nation of 130,000,000 supply enough in a year to completely turn over the personnel even if only the 18-25 year olds are taken?????

Some of us think that the pressure this thing will put on will serve to pass a peacetime draft law to get us replaced, which act would also delight the "blanked" brass. As Chap. H. says, "There are just two kinds of people—regular army and the other kind." You should hear the re-enlistment ads on AFN, "Every day is 'E' Day for travel" is the current one. The E means enlistment. The other night we heard a longer one extolling the virtues of the "90 lazy, goldbricking days at home." Can you imagine anyone playing up things like that??

We rather feel that the same cast who was in the *Messiah* this season will be here for next year. We don't mind so much having a little extra time added on, but I personally mind the non-recognition and the idea that will be wide-spread that redeployment is finished.

Did you ever know that packages can be sent now up to 11 lbs.? We read it in *S&S*.

We were to Heidelberg yesterday and visited the castle and the movies and today went to a concert at the Red Cross. I'm hoping to get mail this week.

Well, more tomorrow. Love to all,

E.

Seckenheim
10 Jan. 1946

Dear Sis,

We didn't rehearse today and decided to sleep late, which we did. After dinner we went to Heidelberg after some pictures and continued out to the 7th Army CP to visit the ice cream fountain. It was there that I ran into the mail clerk from the 818th who said they've been holding all my mail instead of forwarding it as I thought. And here I've been without mail for three weeks minus two days.

So I ate as early as possible this evening and beat it right over to Kafertal after it. There must have been more than 20 letters and 19 packages. I'd taken a barracks bag along and that filled very fast, so the mail clerk put the rest in a mail bag and brought me over on his way to the movies. Very nice, don't you think? Of course he's a Pennsylvanian, from New Tripoli, near Allentown.

I read all the letters in order have the following from Mother: 418, 421, 422, 424, 425, 427, -8, -9, 431, and -2. So this would make sense I've delayed this long in saying I was shocked about Uncle Bill. And he apparently the less serious, too. Was it his heart? All along I've been wanting my mail because the quietest time at home seems to have plenty happen in it. One of the 15 or so *Suns* I got today told about him too. I feel bad for Aunt Margaret, being left alone so many times already and not being able to do the normal functions as a wife. Mother says she supposes I got the air mail; and of course it hasn't come yet, as the many gaps in the numbering system show.

I'll bet Aunt Margaret wondered what the heck because I wrote her twice as soon as I heard of the accident, which was on Sat., Dec. 22 when I called for mail for the first time at the 818th. I'm going to write her again tonight.

I took so much time reading the mail tonight that I don't have time for as long a reply as the occasion demands. I believe I sent the S&S home that told about Ben Bowman, although it didn't mention Wm'sport. I surely felt sorry for him and his folks, especially since he survived the war and was back in "safe" PA. He wasn't part of our gang and not exactly our type in WHS but he was in my classes at least two of the years and according to his picture seems to have grown up. Except for the irregular mail I'd hear of Uncle Bill, Albert Jenkins, and him in Dec...I hope to comment on the letters more later...

Love to all,

E.

Seckenheim
13 Jan. 1946

Dear Beth,

Just now seems a good quiet time to write while the others are engaged in things besides conversation so I thought I'd get my letter home off my chest.

Yesterday was somewhat disappointing in a way. There was to be one of those Manila-Paris-Frankfurt demonstrations in the afternoon at Heidelberg, but it seemed to fizzle into nothingness. Perhaps those in some of the units were read some sort of "consoling" message that we didn't hear. At least our house was well represented; when we found nothing to help along, we went out to the CP for some ice cream.

Last night at 9:00 AFN gave the results of the conference between Gen. McNarney and the GI's that met yesterday afternoon. Most of the things he said were very reasonable. Among the statements and questions of the GIs were: We feel that there is an important job here, but after all this time there ought to be someone else to do it. Why should those formerly protected by a deferred job not be eligible to relieve us? Why can't the WD supply his (Gen. McN) requisitions for replacements?

I hope they put everything discussed, insofar as we heard it last night, in the papers at home. He said that until a man is inducted the army has no say over him and until that time it is the real(?) selective service that is responsible. I realize that I didn't want to come in the army when I did, and probably wouldn't now, but there's no sense in closing the books while there are so many here whose length of service and experience is so much greater than anything they've ever thought of concerning a permanent peacetime affair. It's too late already to replace us so that our time would be no longer than that of the new ones coming, but every day helps. It's not too late to be thinking about getting those home who are stuck here in occupation (under 45) but who came here anywhere from 15 months ago to a month or two before VE. There were lots of divisions and replacements that came after the 100th and they imply that our leaving the theater will be like scraping bottom.

Oh yes, Gen. McN said (contrary to some "conservative" papers at home) that the demonstrations did do some good, but they might be detrimental to our national prestige in the eyes of occupied and allied nations. But many feel that since no one was refusing duty or orders that it only served to heighten our American way of doing things.

This has been a pretty grown-up letter for you, but this surely is important, and our everyday activity

sometimes is hardly worth mentioning.

Love to all,

E.

P.S. I think I've been skimping on requests, so please send me something to eat. Please fill enclosures with my other stuff. E.

Seckenheim
15 Jan. 1946

Dear Folks,

When I sat down to write, I didn't have much to say. We went to see *I Love a Bandleader* at the Ufa-Palast Theater in Mannheim. We came back on the 8:12 Strassenbahn and stopped at the newly-discovered snack bar for coffee, sandwiches, and pie. We landed back at the house just before 9:00 and learned from those here all evening that important redeployment news would be given in the 9:00 news. So now I have something.

Well, this just goes to show you that things are different both with me and the army than they were two years ago. A brigadier-general, Assistant Chief of Staff in the G-3 (plans and training) section of USFET Hq., read the bulletin explaining the WO's new demobilization policy. He stated that he was directed to read this over a theater-wide network of AFN stations by the theater commander (Gen. McNarney). This BG began by introducing himself and giving the words that "USFET" stands for. We all feel this shows the importance of the issue as the army looks at it--no press release for an AFN announcer to make, no sir, a brig.-general reading it in person.

He gave every figure and symbol, including the paragraphs and sub-paragraphs, and said the text had been sent to all major commands. The part that mainly concerns us is that 47 thru 49 pointers are to be discharged or on shipboard about the middle of April. The complete list was given from 55-ers to 40 pointers. This is the first time that those below 50 have been mentioned at all in Europe, and even stranger when those below the original occupational score dividing line are considered. All the times referring to a particular group mean that the personnel will be discharged or on shipboard when the date given arrives. However, the dates may vary two weeks or even more. 55 and up, middle of Feb.; 53-54, end of Feb.; 50-52, middle March; 47-49, middle April; 45-46, end of April; 40-44, end of June. This means that they went below the close-out force score five points to get men for shipment that previously included only 45-ers.

You remember that before, I said that you could expect

me home sometime in the calendar spring (Mar 21-June21). I privately hoped to make it early in that period, but after the let down in September, I didn't want to commit myself. This will probably be in the papers at home so I couldn't keep it a secret. This may not work out any better than anything else the army's done, but they must have thought about this a good bit before they announced it.

I will try to call from Heidelberg when I get my currency control book so I can get a money order. Have you sent any pictures since last Easter? No mail today although mine is being forwarded.

Love to all,
E.

Seckenheim
19 Jan. 1946

Dear Sis,

Not so cold today, but more raw and hazy. Yesterday was very typical with two rehearsals and nothing but staying in the house at night.

Today we were up in plenty of time for our 10:00 rehearsal and finished before dinner in enough time to get the *Stars & Stripes* read. Right after dinner, 6'8" Dick (Slim, Utah) Bateman and I went after our laundry. Mr. Bateman is State Superintendent of Schools for Utah.

Then some of us went for a shower and upon my return I dressed and shined my shoes. Then I decided to go to Heidelberg and visit the large 7th Army library. I stayed all afternoon and thru the supper hour. During the time I almost finished one very interesting book about the army something like *See Here, Private Hargrove*.

Mother writes me about what Mildred Steffen says and does. I can't imagine that she has grown up enough to talk so much. But that's what people always used to say when they hadn't seen us for some time.

We had a little excitement both yesterday and today. Yesterday a 2 ½ ton truck caught fire near the transient mess and scorched a nearby house. Tonight about an hour ago, a two story outbuilding about a block down the street caught fire and two GI fire trucks rolled up. Never a dull moment!

Tonight Foster and I called Chap. Hill's outfit and found he has already gone to school in England. He had been expecting to go about ten days ago and must have gone in an awful hurry (perhaps flew from Frankfurt) because he didn't say goodbye to us. At any rate tomorrow we are going to either Mannheim or Heidelberg for church.

I am just about ready to serve fruitcake and cocoa or tea so I must go. Good night for now,

Love to all,
E.

Seckenheim
21 Jan. 1946

Dear Grandma,

I suppose you are glad to know that a month of winter is gone already and the days are just that much longer—a half hour on each end. We had a quiet, but nonetheless active weekend.

Saturday evening when I returned from Heidelberg, Foster was on "CQ," charge of quarters, at the Show Studio office. It is my turn tonight since all our bunch has it this week. No doubt everyone employed here as we are gets his turn at it sooner or later. At any rate we called Chap. Hill's outfit to see if he was still here; they replied that he had already left for school in England. Ever since Foster, he, and I have all been here in Seckenheim he has asked us to help him with the Sunday service, which aid we were happy to give. However, I enjoy the larger service such as one might visit in Mannheim or Heidelberg as they usually use organs besides having a larger congregation. So, yesterday morning I got up for one of my few non-combat Sunday morning army breakfasts. We just go into the dining room by the 9:30 deadline and didn't waste any time so we could catch the Strassenbahn at 9:55. In the meantime picking up the S&S, we got to Mannheim in good time and were among the first to arrive in the church.

If I don't inadvertently seal this envelope I'll send you enclosed one of the bulletins. The chaplain was a new one to me from the 1st A___(?) Division. He is supervising the Mannheim area service because one of the two who held it jointly when I first came here has gone home to be discharged, and the other is on furlough in the States. His service was short, but had many of the responses and things I am used to but don't often use in the army. We were out in plenty of time to get the 11:22 train back and spent the intervening time until dinner doing a few things around the house.

After dinner we caught a ride to H'berg in one of the many ambulances this company has for hauling sh___(?) and their baggage around. The ambulances, you see, are enclosed and heated. We went to see a picture well worth any of your time, *Where Do We Go From Here?*, which I saw once at Mannheim. Very amusing.

We came back here just in time for supper and afterwards "splurged" by going to Mannheim to see *Mildred Pierce*, said to be very good by those who I feel know, but

not the type one sees just for entertainment. We came back in another of our ambulances and got ourselves something to eat at the Snackbar before retiring late.

This morning and afternoon we slept late (I mean practiced-slept fairly late this a.m.) and I am getting a fine chance to catch up on things tonight in the peace and quiet with only the telephone, which hasn't rung yet, and those inquiring for dance bands to disturb me.

Your letter of Dec. 31 came last Thurs. as I already wrote home once before. As I have said before, I feel well outfitted this winter, especially for the kind of life I am leading. So thank you, but I think you've done your last knitting, I hope!

Will close to begin another. Love to all, E.

Seckenheim
25 Jan. 1946

Dear Folks,

After two days of rehearsing on "Great Day," I am writing this before we go to supper and then to Mannheim to see the stage play, *Arsenic and Old Lace*. We saw the movie at Bragg during the summer of 1944 and now we'll get a chance to compare it with the play.

Yesterday and today were both beautiful although below freezing. Last night we had to practice and again this morning at 10:00 besides a very short one right after dinner. There was some little excitement among a few of the group, especially with the CATs, when someone said Gen. Keyes was outside. I even surprise myself a little at times when I think that I actually believe (and not just feel I should believe) that there's no use of "snapping to" just because of what metal ornaments one wears on his epaulets. Anyway, the general stayed only a few minutes and except for observing his reactions with interest (as well as I could with him in the rear of the place) I didn't act a bit different than if he'd never come.

We heard a juicy tidbit on the radio at 3:00 when they told about a representative from Michigan, I believe, saying that there is a scheme afoot to reduce the armed forces to virtually nothing and that the demonstrations over here were Communist-inspired. He referred particularly to the Paris "GI liberation committee" which advocates fewer rights and privileges for officers and a change in the court-martial system. If advocating those changes is Communism, then I am a Communist; or any other label people like to throw around. We read once before of the advisor to one of the military affairs committees saying much the same thing. Despite these detrimental remarks by some, you've heard the opposite said

by many others; you know how much of a "thermostat" I am when I believe in something, especially if I am part of a very clannish group (300,000 or so). So, I am very proud of the GIs and the way they stuck together although my activity during the demonstrations was entirely limited to letter writing.

Last night the mail was all direct and Mother's 445, -6, and -7 came. I also heard from Auntie M and Jane and saw clippings concerning the 82AB Division parade in NY and the "Fighting Divisions" column of the *Sun* that told about the 100th.

Suppose you've already read about 36th Division's denunciation of Gen. Mark Clark. We don't know much about the circumstances, but we know our opinion of those in Army Group echelon who say to do thus and so.

Well, goodbye for now. Do you think any of my clothes will fit? 33-33 pants, 15 ½ -33 shirts, 10 ½ C shoes?

Love to all,

E.

Seckenheim
27 Jan. 1946

Dear Ditty and all,

We are listening to the Hour of Charm, which comes recorded over AFN at 8:00. This is a program of all-operatic songs which you probably heard several weeks ago. At least they talked of the opening of the "Met" in the future tense.

They mentioned Offenbach who wrote "Tales of Hoffman" and was best known as director at Opera-Comique in Paris. It was there that I heard "Cavalleria-Rusticana"; they played the Intermezzo from it on their program tonight.

Yesterday we had no obligations so in the afternoon three of us took off for Heidelberg. First we picked up some photos, then we saw an old movie. Following that we visited the library in the new building of the University until it was almost time to get the last Strassenbahn at 8:00. During this time we also found time enough to stop in at the Red Cross twice.

We stopped at the snack bar to pick up sandwiches. When we came home we made punch from canned lemon juice, dyno (?), and orange juice and had our little lunch. We stayed up until midnight listening to the radio, surrounded by practically everybody in the house.

I guess the various vitamins at the late hour didn't agree with me too well since I was plagued with indigestion. This morning I don't feel so well and the others went to church in Mannheim without me.

According to the bulletin they sang only "Sunday School" hymns or such others that have been very much overworked in the past 16 months. At Esslingen the VI Corps used to mimeograph hymns from the chapel hymnal which gave much better selection. Is there a hymn in the Methodist Hymnal with the tune name "Quebec?" They are listed in the rear. It is one our choir sang at Bragg and I want to copy it if it isn't available at home.

I ate dinner and supper today and feel very good now. We went to Mannheim to take pictures today but it was really too dark. Tonight we are in.

Love to all,

E.

P.S. No mail since Thurs.

Seckenheim
Jan. 31, 1946

Dear Grandma,

This has been a very hard day in comparison with most of the ones we've had here. This morning we worked on our song "Penny Arcade" for Great Day. We really made progress; yesterday morning was the first time we went thru the whole thing. The harmony is so close (like the Pied Piper on the radio) that we really had to learn our parts and keep our own notes in our heads.

Yesterday afternoon we worked on other difficult spots with one of the accompanists and did the same thing plus trying for style and rhythm this morning.

In order to let the director of the show plan the staging for the scene and the motions for the pantomime, we sang most of the afternoon, concluding with making a recording just before supper.

This recording permits the group to rehearse their dancing without us attending every session. We still have room for progress as we learned or was proved when they played the recording back for us. The song doesn't take up a whole side so we did it again on the other side; this type of recording is made to be used only a few times and they'll have twice as many playings of it this way. The second time Fred Katz (of *Messiah* fame), the composer and teacher put in the ending which we haven't learned yet, and Loretta (the CAT who sings with us) put in a high obligatto part, and we boys said "Hallelujah!" at the very end. The funniest part was that the technicians continued to cut the recording after we were finished and picked up our remarks, In the dining room they played it several times, and despite it being interesting, we are terribly tired of hearing it.

Last night we went to the Capitol in Heidelberg and met

Lt. Gansz on the Strassenbahn. He'd got on at the stop in the center of town and we at the station (Bahnhof). It turned out that he was going to see *Anchors Aweigh* too, and we all went together. The picture was very long, but between shows they found time to pass the box for the *March of Marks*. They surely have pushed it hard over here. Most of us gave according to our consciences into the company box at the beginning of the campaign, but I guess it is the same thing back home.

Just after I started to write this (between supper and the time everyone was ready) we went to the local theater to see *Bring in the Girls*. As usual they were very corny and glamorized the services.

There was no mail at all today; we seem to be in one of those weather slumps. Well, there's always a tomorrow.

Love to all,
E.

Seckenheim
2 Feb. 1946

Dear Beth,

No shadows here all day long so maybe our winter won't be too much longer. We had the morning off and practiced from 1:00. They got thru the whole thing from the beginning to a certain point two different times and we got along very well. It's much harder to hear the piano when it's down in the pit. We did quite good on our number when one considers that we didn't warm up at all to get in the mood beforehand.

I forgot to tell you on Thurs. that my second request for transfer, the one that we feared had become lost, finally showed up. It'll finally result in the 7th Army cutting the orders assigning me here. Lt. Gansz says I'll be put in the 424 Band, which is just an administrative title for an outfit much like 20th S.S. There's really no change and I'll be doing exactly the same as before. It's nice to know that things worked out. I never really thought up until just before I sent the cable that I'd be able to stay on.

Last night we saw our third picture of the week, at the Schloss Theater in Heidelberg this time. It was *A Thousand and One Nights*, one of those extravaganzas, but very nice to see. We got out early enough to come back on the Strassenbahn and went over to the snack bar before coming back to the house to listen to the radio.

There was no mail tonight but two packages from Auntie M and one from Jane, mailed Jan. 8 and 9 and coming directly here. The first class is surely behind and it's almost a scandal in the ETO with everyone complaining.

I'm going to sort some junk now in preparation for sending some stuff home.

Love to all,
E.

Seckenheim
4 Feb. 1946

Dear Folks,

I am writing this at the auditorium while waiting for the rehearsal to start. The girls were having costume fittings this morning so the rest of us or at least We Three had the time off.

Saturday night I got up the wooden hill to bed at a decent hour so that I was able to get awake by myself at 8:25. The deadline is a little after that so I didn't have to hurry so much. Of the various combinations that sometimes go to church only Foster and I were going. I always have the church bells, which ring for minutes on end, to thank for getting up on Sunday.

Every once in a while we take bread back to the house, so after I got dressed and poked some life into the fire (and Foster) we had toast with honey and Nescafe. I have finally learned that it takes longer to do things than I plan so we just comfortably made the 9:55 Strassenbahn. That always gets us there in plenty of time and we were almost the first ones in the church. We had sat down with an 818 Div boy who came on the same truck with me from Schorndorf. We weren't there long before one of the few left in their choir came down and asked Foster and me to sing the hymns with them.

Considering they were from the too-much-used field hymnal, we used very good ones: "Jesus Calls Us," "Eternal Father, Strong to Save," and "Now Thank We All Our God." With the various readings and rituals this 1st Armd. Div. chaplain uses, his service is still quite short. I enjoy singing the Gloria Patri and using the Apostles' Creed (I usually boom out with "spirit" twice), but Chap. Hill's service was just as long with more of a sermon and extemporaneous prayer. We're all saying how glad we'll be to be home again.

It didn't rain at all yesterday although we're in the midst of a rainy spell. Today is very wet again. Anyway, the worst yesterday offered was heavy clouds. I was glad because the Commodores, now reduced to a quartet, were making their debut at the Rubble Haven Red Cross in Mannheim. We left right after dinner (we came back here to eat) and enjoyed the little program. We knew all the songs although they'd gone under a little refurbishing.

We had a camera with us and took a few pictures of the worst-looking part of Mannheim. Then since we had been invited to the 59th Depot for supper we walked over there and took some more pictures (the rest of the roll) before it began to get dark. As you can imagine we are quite a garrulous group and after supper it was no time at all until it was late enough to come home.

We picked up some sandwiches at the snack bar and came back to the house. The fire was almost out so it took some time to get hot water. Then to bed. This morning I had a haircut. Will wait until later to close so I can report on the mail.

Received Ditty's package of Dec. 31 and Mother's No. 449 of Jan. 16. Love to all, E.

Seckenheim
6 Feb. 1946

Dear Ditty,

Another rainy day—spring must be here early this year. Since tonight was free from rehearsing we went to the Ka-Li in Heidelberg to see *Snafu*. Robert Benchley and Vera Vagreen were in it, but they weren't especially comedians. We thought they treated some of the subject material very cornily, but I guess that's to be expected part of the time from Hollywood.

Our show is rumored to be opening about the 17th and with that in mind (I'll probably go to a carrier outfit right from Great Day) I've packed up some souvenirs and things that have been sent to me like extra woolens. Three parcels were sent today. I've numbered them in the upper left-hand corner right under the return address. No. 1 is a manila envelope of clippings—some from *Suns* and others from papers over here. No. 2 is the box my history book came in and contains letters I've saved. These first two were both first class and No. 2 will be registered or insured. No. 3 is part of the music that was sent to me here. I've kept a few copies of each number but have sent the bulk home. There'll be enough movement in the next two months or so (including the storing of some of my stuff when we go on the road) that I want to get rid of everything I can. Some I've just held on to although it was destined to be sent eventually; other things I've just recently decided on.

Although I've addressed all these first three to Mother, the junk is just personal and won't need to be cared for like the woolens and things I'm sending later will have to be. So please just lay them up on the third floor.

The senator who is getting everything stirred up about our starving the Germans is affecting mostly us GIs. What a

silly thing—to trust the (ex) enemy better than the Allies. Anything to draw attention before election!

I see where Indiantown Gap will be discontinued as a separation center after March 1. So it looks as if I'll go to Ft. Meade. Wouldn't it be funny if I'd see Marion first on my way home.

Now for a bit to eat. No mail yesterday or today. Two letters sneaked thru from Mother in two weeks.

Love to all,
E.

Seckenheim-am-Neckar
8 Feb. 1946

Dear Sis,

Unless this letter is a little faster at bridging the Atlantic than most of the others during the past two weeks, you probably won't get this before you go to Baltimore-am-Patapoca. Last night we were blessed by just a trickle of mail again and I heard from Chap. Hill, who is going to school in England at Cambridge. Also Mother's air-mail of Jan. 17 and 18 arrived (No. 450 & 451). What little comes is in order, but how slow.

The one of Jan. 16 which came on Mon. (No. 449) was in answer to mine of Dec. 26 which means almost six weeks for a reply in contrast to the record of 15 days right after I got in the 818th.

I guess by now you understand my daily schedule and activities pretty good since that's almost all there is to comment on. All of us who are classed as musicians are to be in the 424th ASF (Army Service Forces) Band, which, as the Rubble Haven news puts it, is just a clearing house for those who are member of bands or combos and others like us. Our CP and orderly room is in the transient mess just a block away from where we live and also within the compound. Unless the thing is really a separate outfit as far as supply and mail is concerned we probably will continue to get our mail at the 20th S.S. Co. It doesn't make any difference since the whole thing is one big family after all.

We also will eat with the 751st F.A. men who run S.S. City as permanent personnel. The funniest thing is that Lt. Gansz is the C.O. of the affair. I don't see how he can do much more, but there probably isn't much actual administrating connected with it. Of course we'll go on the road with the show in about two weeks and probably be out

until we are sent to our carrier outfits.

I see you finished work yesterday. No doubt this will be the last you'll hear from me to 754. Be sure to let me know right away when you get there.

Love,
E.

Here is a map of the place...

Western Union telegram
Heidelberg
Feb. 12, 1946

POSTAL CONFUSION DELAYING ARRIVAL OF YOUR LETTERS WRITTEN WEEK PRECEDING JANUARY 26 FULL CIRCUMSTANCES CONCERNING BUCKNELLS FEE UNKNOWN SEND REGISTRATION FROM HOME BELIEVE REMITTANCE MADE ONCE DURING SUMMER PRECEDING INDUCTION.

EMORY

Seckenheim
Feb. 12, 1946

Dear Beth,

I am writing this in the library in Heidelberg, where I have come this afternoon because the show is being practiced in scenes; thank goodness I'm not one of the principals.

My main reason for coming here today was to send a cable from the Western Union place—I figured it would be faster than from the Red Cross. I sent it at 1:40, so I'm interested in learning when it arrived.

Last evening we had the first appreciable amount of mail since two weeks ago last Thursday. I have had mail from home, ETO, and forwarded from the 818th several times. But the amount came nowhere near making up for the times that nothing arrived.

So it is that Mother's Nos. 458 and 459 of Jan. 25 and 26 came last night plus the combination letter-Valentine No. 462; but, the last previous one received by me was written on Jan. 18, I think. So all these instructions about me sending to Bucknell have not yet arrived. Hence I sent the telegram asking the folks at home to send the \$10.00. I hadn't even considered planning for sending any money

because we sent a registration card with \$10.00 sometime between when I was notified about the scholarship and the next fall when I came into the army. So until these letters arrive, "it's all Greek to me."

Mother writes, "Patients are both good tonight." Who is the other patient besides Aunt Margaret? I'll doubtless know these answers by the time they could be answered again.

The main thing I can't understand is why Mr. Holter never replied to my letters I wrote long ago. Of course he may have never received it.

Ditty's handkerchiefs and the tie came yesterday and we thank her so much. Foster wrote a note last night.

I sent home boxes no. 4 and 5 yesterday which contain woolens, music, literature, etc. They are both 4th class. The others, one of which I wanted sent registered or insured, wasn't but two of these five are first class.

I'll not close this until I see about the mail tonight. I want to get the 4:30 train, which will land me about 5:00 at the mess hall.

Love to all,

E.

Mother's 463 came today. The enclosed Page-Holter letters are OK. I'll learn more about it when the Jan. 19-24 letters come if they weren't lost in a plane crash (?)

Seckenheim
Wed., 13 Feb. 1946

Dear Auntie M,

Your letter mailed Jan. 29 managed to be one of the few creeping through to us in the past three weeks. Twice this week we had fairly average receipts, but the other times nothing but the barest scrapings.

I have reported on all your boxes but the two which came recently, the packing lists for which I enclose. Imagine being able to get stuff by going to the refrigerator, cupboard, or basement.

It sounds very strange to hear you talk about snow falling and the surprise it brought. Today we had a brief flurry which melted as it fell. Through fair weather and fowl, warm and cold, we haven't had a bit of snow on the ground this winter in Mannheim.

The clippings about the division were very interesting and I'll be anxious to see the whole line-up mentioned in the regular column in the *Sun*.

I suppose the arrival of our higher-pointed friends makes you feel our absence all the more as per your remarks about Powell. Somehow, especially since we have almost

definite dates for our coming home, the waiting doesn't seem so hard. The accounts of demobilization are just so many figures for us because we only know of those who have left our ? (in the ever-changing group) and those whom we actually hear from who tell of their discharge.

I am very sorry to hear of your having to move. Very much like my leaving the division. Is the jr. high part of the senior high building, or separate? I see I must undergo a re-orientation when I visit you—and I plan that school will still be going forth.

The mail from about Jan. 20 to 25 has been sent by ship due to the bad weather. The instructions from home concerning the Bucknell application and it itself have been delayed, and Mother's inquiry as to if I had sent them the registration fee was all Greek to me. So I sent a rather lengthy cable yesterday saying that I knew very little about it.

We are in the front phases of rehearsing for *Great Day*, and it should open in a little more than a week. After a little bit of traveling on the road with it we should be going to a carrier outfit.

I guess this is all for now.

Love,
E.

Seckenheim
14 Feb. 1946
Valentine's Day

Dear Folks,

A beautiful day like many of those last year during our month in Lemberg. We luckily have been able to enjoy it all since we got up "early" at 8:15. The object was our third and last trip to the dentist. Yes, we went to a civilian. Foster wanted me to go with him the first time last week, and I had him look in my mouth. He saw two cavities; one very small one in the front on the upper jaw and a larger one in the left lower rear. By now there is a very nice enamel filling in front and one of the usual type in the rear. He also found a very small one in the back this morning. All is fixed now. Foster had a couple fillings and two bad wisdom teeth pulled and Ed had just one small filling.

To review army dental history: I never had a bit of work done until the week before we left Bragg for Kilmer. That stretch must have been about a year; but there wasn't too much wrong. They've had countless dental surveys for us, and one of these was made in Feb., 1945, at division rest in

Sarrebourg. I think they filled one that time, but only three months later, in May, one was bad enough to need pulling. So, nine months later, I feel relieved to know that so little had to be done and it's all finished.

You probably wonder why I went to a civilian. Being in a separate little company, we don't have all the facilities that a regiment or division provided, although there is a unit that we would be sent to. This way the whole project was completed in a week and each time we waited only a few minutes. When I get home I will go to Dr. Van V. right away to get one put in and have a real good checkover.

This afternoon we are taking it easy and expect to go to a show tonight. Will you please send me some long, business, plain envelopes so I can send some clippings and folders right up to the last minute.

No mail last night—I'll hold this until we see later.

Love to all,

E.

P.S. My bill was 25 marks (\$2.00)

Mother's 464 and Valentine from Ditty. Glad to hear pictures are coming.

Mannheim-Seckenheim, d. 16 February 1946

On the American soldiers in our house!

Because You must understand this letter, I make little sentences.

In the office by the school-house has the lady sayd to me, that I must give up my pass. Nobody do know, why it is. I think, that bad Germans (communists, who are enemies of our house and home) were on the work.

You all in the house were good to me and I have all done, what I could.

I was no Nazi, not in the Hitler-party and not in another organisation.

Many thanks for Your friendliness to me.

So you keep myself in good remembrance.

Perhaps might You Americans take more care of our house, then the envies Germans.

- Else Feuerstein

Seckenheim
Feb. 18, 1946

Dear Folks,

Tonight at supper I heard news that changed my whole chain of plans for the immediate future. Lt. Gansz stopped at my table and told me that the 818th MP's called up today and said that they are going home (I understand with only 47 pointers) and wanted to know if I wished to go with them. Although Ed Gallagher left this morning with 49 points for his carrier outfit in Bad Mergentheim, I had by no means expected or considered something so early.

I contacted the company and they said that the processing of the unit officially began several days ago, but the worthwhile things like physicals, etc. won't begin until Wed. So, I am going back tomorrow sometime. It looks as if the sweating I did concerning my transfer was worth the delay that caused it because I can return and be with the few 47 pointers and go home with an outfit I was associated with in some manner other than purely "carrier."

The police functions have already been taken over by another unit so there'll be no MP'ing as such although there might be a rough period or two before we get on our ship or before I get out of Ft. Meade (?). The 1st Sergeant said they expected to leave Mannheim about the last of Feb; I don't know where we'll go from there but the paper said last week that the 7th Army carrier units will mostly leave from Le Havre. Some go to Bremen these days but not to Marseilles so whatever we do (as if it mattered) will be new to me.

In keeping with the policy of using area APO's, the 818th's is APO 168. Of course, send no more packages but you might continue to write until we get to the port. I have no idea how long it will take from when we leave Mannheim until we get aboard ship. The 100th hung around disgustingly long in Marseilles, but some outfits have good luck.

About writing: I think I'll have you continue letters until I ask you to stop from the port. Until we leave here I'm having Foster get my mail and I'll pick it up or he'll take it over to Kafertal. After that I'll have the mail clerk address it home.

Today I got Mother's of Jan. 24 and Feb. 1 from the Capitol Theater. I presume by this time that the entire situation concerning Bucknell is straightened out and I can ignore the registration cards they sent me with a Veteran's Edition of their Bulletin.

I have a lot to do and pack so will close. I know I'll be writing for some time yet. Of course you wouldn't put anything about this in the paper.

More tomorrow if I find out anything.

Love to all,
E.

Western Union telegram
Heidelberg
Feb. 20, 1946

NEVER TRANSFERRED FROM MP GOING HOME VOLUNTARILY WITH 818TH
SOON STOP BOXES PRESUME EVERYTHING OK WITH BUCKNELL NOW
REJOINED COMPANY TUESDAY.

EMERY SMITH

Mannheim
Feb. 22, 1946

Dear Beth,

This afternoon I had the urge to go over to Seckenheim to see how I'd made out in the mail since the last time. It turned out to be a fine opportunity because most of two weeks' stuff arrival: Mother's of Feb. 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 9th (pictures), 10, 12, 13th. G'ma's of Feb. 2, and Spacky's valentine.

I think the pictures are fine and am so glad they came before we left here. I don't see too much change in the ten months since the last ones were taken. So glad to see the park and the fronts of the houses.

Later I shall go through all of the letters again and answer the questions and make comments. It's about 9:45 now and I just came back from Seckenheim about 40 minutes ago. This was a legal holiday in the ETO and I don't know if we observed it or not. At any rate we did nothing today toward our processing.

It is quite a paradox that when I am back here where I don't even have to walk but downstairs and out back in order to eat, I've got up for breakfast all three mornings. It seems that as long as one puts off in his mind the process of coming home, the journey simply remains in the dark, dim future. But being in carrier unit the normal duties or activities are suspended and everything is directed towards coming home and it seems to make us all the more in a hurry.

Surely it is interesting to observe how the thing we've looked forward to since before we were inducted really happens. Well, we shall see.

Last night I went to the 59th Depot to take them some pictures for one thing and let them know where I was. It turned out that they had seen Foster at the movies on Wed. and already knew about it. Everyone uses their friends'

progress in the "pipeline" to judge their own dates approximately.

We went to the Red Cross (Rubble Haven) for a time and I got home via a jeep from their motor pool about 10:30.

The house over at No. 9 McNair St. in S'heim is quite deserted with only a few there who lived there or belonged there and were out on the road when I went at Christmas.

I think by the time you get this you should not write anymore because the best time for the arrival of a reply has been 15 days. These days, even if you stop with the one written just before you get this, some may be sent back—not to you as the writer but to me at 754.

Several flurries of snow today, but nothing on the ground. Remember 11 years ago when we went to AC on an excursion and you and Mother stayed; Ditty and we two big kids got off the train Sat. a.m. in about 15 in. of snow.

Be seeing you,

Love,
E.

Mannheim
Feb. 24, 1946

Dear Folks,

This turned out to be not such a bad weekend after all. I am very glad because it's more important to keep busy now than before even. Yesterday morning I went downtown to the Mannheim PX upstairs over the Ufa Theater for the last two weeks' rations. They handle it that way nowadays instead of passing the stuff out to the units. It is a very efficient system except for the necessity of traveling around.

Things seem to be very dull but no one seems to mind our being gone a lot. So yesterday afternoon I took clean underwear and soap and towel over to Seckenheim to take a shower. It was high time and we have no good facilities around here. I ate supper then of course, but we had no mail. I came back on the last Strassenbahn at 8:20 and composed the letter to Mrs. Davis in the rough.

This morning I was up at 8:45 (although I could have used more time) and left the house about 9:15. If I were on time I was going up to #9 McNair St. and stay for a few minutes before going down to the next train a half hour later. My tardiness put me on the one that gets us to Heidelberg about 10:50 and the other two—Foster and Jack Fredricks, who was in the "Christmas Carol" puppeteers, got on in S'heim with me. The service is the last that 7th Army is responsible for and Chap. Jenks said if he is there again it will be only as a visitor.

During the singing of the first hymn Foster spied Huff two pews ahead of us so the four of us—two Methodist and two Episcopalian—stayed for the communion. The same four went back to Seckenheim for dinner and again to H'berg. We heard that the *Messiah* was being done today, but in the excitement of this past week I forgot.

We got to Christ Church (where Gen. Patton's funeral was) and found nothing but standing room. The seats were all "reserved" and sold out so we stood in the balcony at the extreme left front of the church where we had a good view of the orchestra and chorus. The orchestra with the sopranos and one of the men's parts was in the choir loft at the back with the other singers in our balcony at the rear. The performers were in an L-shape.

The performance was 2 ½ hours long, but very good and worth it. They're doing it again Tues. Eve. After coffee and donuts at the Red Cross we went to the evening service as per the bulletin, mostly to hear the Chapeliers, all ex-100th men now with 1st Armed Division. Chap. Barker was acting 100th Division chaplain for a time last fall. About 8:15 Huff started back to Eberbach 30 km east of Off. and we three got a ride on the autobahn, the S'heimers getting out at the proper place. I walked across the river and came on the street car, arriving at 9:00.

Love to all,
E.

Tues., Feb. 26, 1946
Mannheim

Dear Auntie M,

Yours of Jan. 21 came last Fri. when I made one of my frequent trips over to Seckenheim for my mail. While I think of it, if the family already hasn't written you, you should stop writing. Everything that goes to 20th SS after I leave here will be sent home to me and the same procedure will be followed on the one or two that might come here (818th).

I have faithfully described all the boxes I've received either by elaboration or by sending back your list as in the this case.

It looks as if I shall not make a trip (I know I won't) to either England or Switzerland. "Everyone" has been to Paris so I'm glad I accomplished that, but fewer visited Brussels, which leave center is now entirely closed. So I haven't visited some of the better-thought-of places despite many hundreds—thousands—of miles on the Continent. Even in Germany, I have confined my travels to the area between Mannheim and Stuttgart and southeast from there almost to Ulm and the Danube. This was produced by the curious

combination of our division being in reserve at the end of the war, remaining in the west; and the little moving the 100th did was ? by the 398th.

I don't know why I've ambled so, but your mentioning Switzerland brought it up. But it was far more important to me to have the good set-up of doing practically nothing over in Seckenheim for two months. The everyday good deal always seems to mean more than the occasional breaks.

So, I got two good breaks while I was in the army, both because I tried to get them (although I had to use more effort on my own in the Messiah deal).

I have given up trying to call home from Heidelberg since the would-be-call-places began lining up earlier and earlier. Being back in the 818th, of course, makes it nigh unto impossible. I wouldn't have thought twice about spending the \$12.00 but it will come in handy for something else, I guess.

We are proceeding with processing, including the turning in of excesses and re-issuing of shortages in equipment and clothing. We come home somewhat lighter than we came over with: only one set of fatigues and heavy underwear, no weapons, musette (?) bag instead of pack, no helmet or liner, etc.

We are really having re-orientation films; the joke about the POE processing being done later in reverse for the trip home was no joke. The one we saw yesterday was called *It's Your America* and dealt with a returnee on a ___ ship describing his experience from induction on, through flashbacks. It was supposed to remind or show us how much we've changed and bigger we've become; also to encourage us not to fall back to country or township boundaries—not in so many words, of course. I didn't get the whole idea as well, as it was meant for us because, due to low voltage, the machine ran slow and the voices were almost guttural.

We'll have to talk the car situation over when I come but I know that one non-owned car isn't enough for our family. Through high school I was behind in all that and I surely mean to be average in college if not to make up a little for what I missed since I was 16.

I don't know when we'll leave here but it shouldn't be too much longer.

Later: We saw the same film just now as we did yesterday, even though our names were checked off the roster then. The obligations for the day seem to be finished.

During part of today we've had soggy snow, which melts as it hits the ground, just like all the other that's fallen here this winter.

Hope to see you soon, and remember, don't write anymore. We went to the Messiah in H'berg on Sun. Fine performance.

Love,
E.

Mannheim
March 2, 1946

Dear Beth,

Both last evening and tonight I got away early enough to go over to Seckenheim for supper. Last night Foster and I went to the show in S. to see *George White's Scandals*. Tonight I found out that Ed Gallagher, who went to his carrier unit the day I heard the 818th was trying to contact me, was back for a visit. His outfit is going to Antwerp and like us expects to go this coming week. Their shipment number and plans seems to be about the same as ours. I'll probably know more definitely later, but when you're looking in the paper about us, keep an eye open for the 2nd Field Artillery Bn as well.

Early this afternoon we got paid so tell Mother I expect to send a money order on Monday. We rather planned to wait until we got to the port, but I guess they changed the plan and we'll get American money there.

They've been checking the roll once a day, usually in the morning so I may not be able to get out tomorrow. Foster urged me to present myself early and join them for church in Heidelberg, but I said if it appeared to cause any trouble at all, I wouldn't do it. With our leaving so close, no one wants to mess up.

Occasionally, a letter comes to the 818th for me and this morning I found one from Red Witman. He was still in the So. Atlantic, on Ascension Island or whatever and expected to be "getting out" in another five weeks when the letter was dated, Jan 23. He said he hoped to write me next from home and when I write to him at Sunbury I'll tell him the same thing.

There was no mail tonight but last night I got Mother's 478, 479 and 482. The article about M. is very good. I haven't heard from her and would like to before I leave here, but I realize how busy she must be.

For almost the last two months I've been writing home every other day and in between corresponding with others—like people from the church or other "casual" letter-writers.

I guess I haven't heard about the surprise dinner at the Village Tea Room, but no matter; the many voices will be giving good descriptions soon.

Foster sings 1st tenor; it's a little high for him. You remember at Bragg he sat on the first row ahead of me.

"Great Day" has been almost entirely recast as far as GIs are concerned and still won't open for a week. Foster has 45 points (two months less service) and is still in Seckenheim.

I guess by this time you know to stop writing.

Love to all,

E.

Mannheim

March 4, 1946

Dear Folks,

Things are shaping up very well but the army is still subject to change. Contrary to my expectations, I was able to get out on Sunday morning and was away all day. Jack Fredricks, who with Slim Bateman went to their carrier outfit last week, was back for overnight so he and Foster got on the same Strassenbahn I was on.

The bulletin implies that 7th Army had the service but the 130th Station Hospital chaplain was in charge. We found Huff afterwards, but since he had already been invited to dinner by a boy from his Benning Co. (who sang in our choir there), he didn't go with us. So we three got a ride back with Lt. Gansz and another 2nd lieutenant from 20th SS, who was a battlefield commission from the 399th.

Huff joined us about an hour before suppertime and we talked through the supper period and until we went for our respective trains which pass in S'heim. He of course was getting his unit's truck in H'berg and I was coming home.

Today was surely a busy one. I got up for breakfast because I wanted to take a little extra wash over to Frau Kenter (in whose apt. I used to live here) so it would be finished in time.

We had a Co. meeting at 10:00 when they very nicely condensed nine hours of lectures into about 45 minutes. After it really makes no more difference, everyone seems to finally get the proper attitude.

They also told us that from tomorrow noon on, we are restricted to the Co. area. This was in keeping with our tentative leaving from here at 7:30 a.m. Wed. and from Mannheim at 9:00. Just now I learned that we are going with another unit on Wed. afternoon. So although we hope for the best and don't let setbacks bother us we hardly dare to think of getting through every feature on the minimum times.

This afternoon I went to the PX and Seckenheim and stayed for supper, arriving home just a short time ago. Foster expects to come here for supper and we won't be able to get the mail (if any) from the 20th.

Today I got a package from Auntie M, and a letter from her and Mother (480).

Still raw, drizzly weather here. I hope Mother thinks it's all right for me to sing in the choir my first Sunday home if it's early enough in the week.

Love to all,
E.

Camp Tophat
Antwerp, Belgium
March 9, 1946

Dear Folks,

Here we are in what amounts to the first "army camp" for any of us in the 100th for almost a year and a half. They advertise it here as the last stop in the ETO. We left the Co. area in Mannheim about 1 p.m. last Wed. with half the Co. going at a time in trucks from a QM outfit. I went on the second load and we had three jeeps from the relieving co. preceding us with all sirens screaming.

Sunday: I've never felt so important in my life. We had five cars plus one other which they said belonged to Leopold III of Belgium, in which rode the officers and certain EM which had a lot in common with the officers. We were to leave the Mannheim station at 2:00 and finally started at 2:15 after coffee and donuts. Our coaches varied in style, age and comfort, but ours was surely no beauty. It was divided in half and had nothing but wooden seats, being third class. The seats were perfectly flat with perpendicular backs, so the blankets and sleeping bags we had came in good as cushions.

It was 4:45 p.m. until we left the Mannheim yards, south of the city, and by that time we had been switched around many times. We turned east and crossed the Neckar (also N-37 and the OEG) between M'hm and Seckenheim and turned north again to pass through Kafertal about a half mile from the Co. As it grew dark we made arrangements for sleeping and soon I was on the floor on my sleeping bag with a blanket for a pillow. Before long the car became so hot due to the steam being finally turned on that we had to open windows to get our breath. My sleeping right by the steam pipe didn't help things.

We went through Mainz and crossed the Rhine near there about 9:00. At 11:00 we were at Bad Kreuznach and stopped for the first meal at Homburg (in the Saar) at 3:30 Thurs. morning, remaining there until 5:45. From 8-8:30 we were in Saarbrücken, very ugly from war damage, iron, steel and coal industry and the time of year. At 9:45 we went through the last little town in Germany about 3 km from the French border.

Stopping at Thionville at 12:30 p.m., we ate dinner and

supper there, not leaving until 7:45 p.m. I noticed at Homburg that the train was much longer and there was a sign on it (taken from a co. club) saying 2nd F.A. Bn. That's the outfit to which Ed Gallagher went and a week ago when he visited in Seckenheim he said that they were to be in Antwerp the same day as we. I looked for him at the first two meals but didn't see him until Thurs. afternoon. We visited in each other's cars and discussed the trip. They had picked us up in Mannheim yards, having come from Bad Mergentheim via Heilbronn and Heidelberg.

The second night (Thurs.) was more comfortable and I slept from about 7:00 to 7:00. During the night we passed through Songuyon at 11:00 and arrived at Charleville to eat again at 2:15 Fri. a.m. I had been through both of these last named places when I went to Brussels last March. We stayed there only an hour and got to Givet about 6 a.m.

For one reason or another we didn't leave there until 1:30 p.m. From then on the trip was somewhat faster. Givet is in France on a little neck reaching along the Meuse River. After a mile or so we were in Belgium. Crossing the border was very interesting and confirmed my idea that the houses in Belgium are better-built and -looking than in France. The trip down the Meuse River was very nice although the weather was cloudy and chilly. We haven't seen the sunshine for about two weeks. We stopped at Namur from 2:45-4:00 and an enterprising captain from the 2nd F.A. got the R.C. to bring us coffee and donuts.

A little below Namur we left the valley and cut across country through some little towns until we stopped for Brussels a little after 7:00 p.m. We stayed there only 40 minutes or so but it was about 11:30 when we got off in Antwerp.

The unit that runs our section of this camp met us with PN operated trucks and whisked us away through a tunnel (probably under the Scheldt River). Our officer that came on the advance party met us and told us where we were to stay. By the time we had secured our places to sleep (in 15-man, winterized tents) and had coffee and donuts, the barracks bags had arrived.

There are patches of snow on the ground, more than we've seen all winter. The land is very flat and sandy. We can hear ships continually and see an occasional one pass (nothing but the stacks and mast). The air is very cold and penetrating, and I feel colder than any time this year.

Yesterday morning (Sat.) we filled out various forms such as people are bothered by only when they are GI's. We also cleaned up after being so filthy; there is a wash building and shower in the locations I've marked "L" on the map. I really live almost in the center of the printed A. The kitchens, showers, officers' quarters, etc. are of these

Nissen huts—semi-circular made from corrugated metal. The theaters, PX, etc. are of a larger type. I saw *State Fair* since I've been here and enjoyed it even more than the first time in Heidelberg. There surely are some grand songs in it. I suppose it has been home already.

The most interesting experience I've had since coming here or leaving Mannheim happened on Thurs. morning when we were stopped at the German-French border after leaving Saarbrücken. A train stopped on the next track headed in the opposite direction, loaded with replacements. Everyone else was calling around to see if anyone was from near his home town. I think Lewistown and Scranton from PA were represented. But in the meantime my asking about PA caused one of the boys who had been riding in our car all the time to ask me if I said (to the other train's occupants) I was from W'msport. I told him yes, and he said, "I'm from Sunbury." His name is Long-Bill, I think—and he was inducted and went to New C. the day after me in each case. After some time in Ft. Belvoir he came over here in an engineer outfit and when everything was converting to infantry he was put in the 100th (B, 397th). When everything "converted to the MP's," he was put in the 504th in Heidelberg and came to the 818th to come home.

He doesn't know the Witmans, but he does the Henningers and Bill Kinney who was at camp (MTC) with us. With Lt. Metzger from Muncy we really have the Susquehanna Valley well accounted for. It surely is grand to find someone who knows something about one's home area.

No one seems to know how long we'll be here. The S&S says one thing. The rumors go from one extreme to the other; and we see points around quite a bit higher than we have and some who've been here a long time. I expect that we won't know until 24 hours ahead of time; but being a small co. is a definite advantage since they can slip us in any little nook.

Friday night we got to bed very late so everyone tried to get lots of sleep last night. So I didn't go to church until this evening. My 150 Belgian francs left over from my Brussels part last year came in handy. We turned all our marks in yesterday and won't get the greenbacks until just before we board the ship. At the same time we could order Belgian money in 100 franc lots, but my saving habits provided me with some without waiting until tomorrow.

I'll write again soon and keep you posted. Everything seems to be caught up on as far as news goes. Of course our mail stopped when we left Mannheim.

Hope to see you soon,
Love,
E.

Camp Tophat
Antwerp, Belgium
Mar. 12, 1946 (Tues.)

Dear Auntie M,

The writing will not have improved in this letter since I am writing on my knee in the Red Cross. The family has perhaps told you a little about our wanderings lately, but I shall give you a synopsis and continue from there.

We left Mannheim last Wed. aft. (March 6) and got off the train just before midnight on Fri. It was quite a rugged trip (and you complain about the Pennsey!). According to the map, the distance in a straight line is about 225 miles. We came a roundabout way because of the scarcity of bridges over the Rhine, but I feel the mileage was under 300. On two occasions, we stopped for seven hours each. I won't go into detail because a very complete account has been sent home and I still have to mention it to some of the boys still in Deutschland. So I'll answer all your questions when I see you.

We don't know when we will leave here yet, but as yet we are not assigned to a ship. It will probably be a week or more, depending on shipping availability. Everybody has his opinion, but no one really knows, and no GI is better informed than the people who are supposed to tell him things.

Suppose you realized by this time what a carrier unit is. To review, it is an outfit already established and functioning, which is picked to go home and be deactivated upon arrival in the U.S. In the process, those who aren't in the point category that is included in the decided bracket are put in other units, and the outfit absorbs others within the given category—in our case, 47-51.

Today was beautiful and spring-like, and we saw the first sunshine in weeks. I hope some of our days at sea will be as pleasant so we can enjoy being on deck.

It is, of course, very sandy and flat here. Something like Bragg only more so. We can hear ships all the time, which teases all the more.

Hope to see you soon. Some feel we Pennans. will get out at Dix; I had thought Meade since the Gap is closed and M. is in our service command. It's "bei meer egal," though.

Lots of love,
E.

Fact Sheet on the 100th Infantry Division

Special Information Section
Office of Technical Information
Headquarters Army Ground Forces
Washington, D.C.
26 January 1946

Nickname:

Century Division

Shoulder Patch:

Patch consists of a blue shield on which are superimposed the Arabic numerals "100," in white and canary color, within a border of white.

Slogan:

Success in Battle.

History:

In Oct. 1918 Brig. Gen. W.B. Cochran was assigned to Camp Bowie, Tex., to organize and command a 100th Infantry Division. Activation plans were cancelled a month later, however, when the Armistice was signed.

Activation Date:

15 November 1942. Ft. Jackson, S.C.

Inactivation Date:

26 January 1946, Camp Kilmer, N.J.

Training Under Army Ground Forces:

The 100th was activated at Fort Jackson, S.C. It trained at Fort Jackson under the XII Corps of the Second Army. In Nov. 1943 the division went to the Second Army maneuver area in Tenn. for two months of winter maneuvers. Early in Jan. 1944 the Centurymen moved again, this time to Fort Bragg, N.C., and continued training there until departing for overseas.

Left This Country:

September 1944, for the European Theater of Operations

Overseas Training:

Trained only briefly in France after debarking, for it was at the front within eleven days from time of debarkation.

Battle Credits (Division):

Rhineland and Central Europe

Awards:

The 3d Battalion of the 398th Infantry Regiment was awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation for action near Bitche, France, from 17 to 21 Dec. 1944.

Commendations:

Division received commendation from Maj. Gen. Edward H. Brooks, commanding general of the VI Corps, for its actions in capturing Raon L'Etape and Schirmeck. Gen. Jacob L. Devers, commanding general for the Sixth Army Group (now commanding general of Army Ground Forces) commended the division for its action in repulsing enemy assaults in the area of Rimling. Maj. Gen. Wade H. Haislip, commanding general of the XV Corps, commended the 100th for its action in helping to destroy the major part of two German armies during the month of March 1945.

Commanding General:

Maj. Gen. Withers A. Burress has been commanding general of the division since its activation. Gen. Burress was born in Richmond, Va. on 24 Nov. 1894. Following graduation from Virginia Military Institute in 1914 he went to France with the 23rd Infantry Regiment and took part in action at Chateau-Thierry, the Aisne-Marne offensive, and the St. Mihiel offensive. Returning to the U.S. in 1919, he became an instructor at the Infantry School and in 1922 became professor of military science and tactics at Virginia Military Institute. Was graduated from the Infantry School in 1925 and from the advanced course of that school in 1928. Was graduated from the Command and General Staff School in 1931 and remained there as an instructor. Following graduation from the Army War College in 1935 he returned to Virginia Military Institute as professor of military science and tactics. In Oct. 1941 he became assistant commandant of the Infantry School and in 1942 was assigned to headquarters of the Puerto Rican Department. He assumed command of the 100th Infantry Division upon its activation in Nov. 1942.

Component Units:

397th, 398th, 399th Infantry Regiments; 374, 375th, 925th (L) and 373d (M) Field Artillery Battalions

Combat Highlights:

The division first went into action near Rambervillers, France, on 1 Nov. 1944. By 9 Nov. the 100th had relieved the 45th Infantry Division and from that time on until the beginning of March 1945 it was never once out of contact with the enemy. In a few short weeks the Centurymen contributed to the breaking of the enemy's defense line in the Vosges Mountains. Early in Dec. 1944 the 100th began its long battle for the city of Bitche, a fortress nestled in a valley formed by a number of high hills. The hills housed the four strongest forts on the entire Maginot Line—Simerschoff, Schiesseck, Otterbiel, and Grande Hohekirkel. The division occupied Reyersviller on 13 Dec. and with its capture the last obstacle before the Maginot Line was removed. Every inch of the Bitche area was being defended vigorously by the Germans, however. After days of fierce combat Fort Schiesseck was taken on 20 Dec. Four days previously, however, the German winter offensive had started in Belgium and the 100th, along with other units of the Seventh Army, were ordered to defensive positions. The division moved to high ground to the south of Bitche and by 22 Dec., the front had become quiet with both sides employing defensive tactics. The period of

quiet relaxation broke on 1 Jan. 1945, however, when the German counteroffensive crashed the Seventh Army front and was aimed directly at the 100th sector. The division repulsed initial thrusts near Rimling. A week later the Germans made a more determined effort to gain that town, but the division held its ground. Now the enemy began a drive on the Centurymen from two directions, Bitche on the right and the area of Rimling on the left. But when the Nazi offensive had ended, the 100th's sector protruded ahead of all the rest of the Army line. When the attack shifted to another area on 10 Jan. the 100th was ordered merely to hold its position. The division rested for many weeks, then, on 15 March 1945, it launched a history-shattering drive. As part of the Seventh Army, Centurymen jumped off on the drive which was synchronized with Third Army action to wipe out all German resistance in the Rhineland south of the Moselle. High ground northeast of Bitche which was once considered impregnable was taken in a smashing onslaught and on 16 March the division climaxed its powerhouse play by marching into the city. With the entrance of Century Division troops into the city some 200 years of military defensive history was shattered, because the city had never before been taken by such a frontal assault. Bu the 100th did not hold up. It moved northeast generally along the German border between the towns of Dietrichingen and Wlaschbronn in fast pursuit of retreating enemy elements. This launched a 60-mile lightning drive through the Siegfried Line and the arrival outside of Ludwigshaven on the Rhine River by 18 March. In April the division continued to smash at the enemy, battling for Heilbronn. In April, in conjunction with the First French Army, the 100th encircled Stuttgart and launched action which resulted in its capture. By the end of the war in Europe, Centurymen had pushed even deeper into the heart of the Reich, but subsequently were withdrawn to Stuttgart once again to occupy that city. The division arrived in the U.S. in early Jan. and was subsequently inactivated.

Heroes:

1st Lt. Edward A. Silk of Johnstown, Pa., was awarded the Medal of Honor for action 23 Nov. 1944, in France when he braved enemy bullets to single-handedly neutralize a strong German farm house position killing four and then capturing 12 after his ammunition had been exhausted.

T/Sgt. Charles F. Carey, Jr., of Cheyenne, Wyo., was awarded the Medal of Honor for action 8-9 Jan. 1945 near Rimling, France, when he destroyed a German tank, captured 16 Germans in a house and rescued two doughboy squads after the Germans had overrun part of his battalion position.

PFC Mike Colallilo of Duluth, Minn., was awarded the Medal of Honor for action near Untergriesheim, Germany, 17 April 1945, when he killed or wounded at least 25 of the enemy as he formed a one-man spearhead for his unit.

1st Lt. Paul F. Loes of Cascade, Iowa, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for action near St. Remy, France, on 4 Nov. 1944. When a well-concealed machinegun nest stopped his unit's advance, he crawled across open terrain, charged the entrance of the gun emplacement and single-handedly destroyed the enemy crew of four men.

Sgt. Robert W. Senser of Mt. Rainier, Md., was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for action near Rimling, France, on 9-10 Jan. 1945 when he remained at his post to direct the fire of supporting artillery even after the enemy had infiltrated to a point where they were within grenading distance of his position.

Cpl. Robert L. Ethridge of Rome, Ga., was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross

for action near Thiaville, France, on 8 Nov. 1944 when, despite savage enemy fire, he manned the machinegun on the ring-mount of a truck and knocked out the crew of an automatic weapon position, thus saving the lives of seven comrades who had been pinned down by enemy fire.

PFC Charles W. Hoak of Hunker, Pa., was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for action near St. Remy, France, on 6 Nov. 1944. When his unit was pinned down by enemy fire, he charged the enemy position. His action so demoralized the enemy unit that they surrendered.

Additional Sources of Information:

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The Story of the Century: The 100th Infantry Division in World War II, Michael A. Bass (ed.), 1979

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Glossary

A-12 – written test taken to determine Army eligibility

A.C. – Atlantic City , New Jersey

AFN – radio station in Munich (comes in just where WRAK in Williamsport does on the dial)

AGCT – Army General Classification Test

ASTP – Army Specialized Training Program

ASTRP – Army Reserve Specialized Training Program

BTC – Basic Training Camp

C.A. – Christian Advocate

CP – Command Post

D.P. – Displaced Person

ERC – Army Enlisted Reserve Corps

HE – High explosive

IRTC – Infantry Replacement Training Center

KP – Kitchen Police

MYF – Methodist Youth Fellowship

New C. – New Cumberland

OD – olive drab

OP – observation post

P.M. – Popular Mechanics magazine

POE – Port of Embarkation

P-P (or P+P) – Prisoner-Police

PX – Post eXchange

S.C. – Student Council

Spacky – the Smith family dog

STAR – Specialized Training and Reassignment

Sv. Co. – Service Company

TD – Tank Destroyer

V-5 – Navy's Aviator Training Program

V-12 – written test to determine Navy eligibility

WAC – Women's Army Corps, an auxiliary of the US Army

WHS – Williamsport High School

WP – White phosphorous

WRAK – A Williamsport radio station

YM – YMCA

YW – YWCA