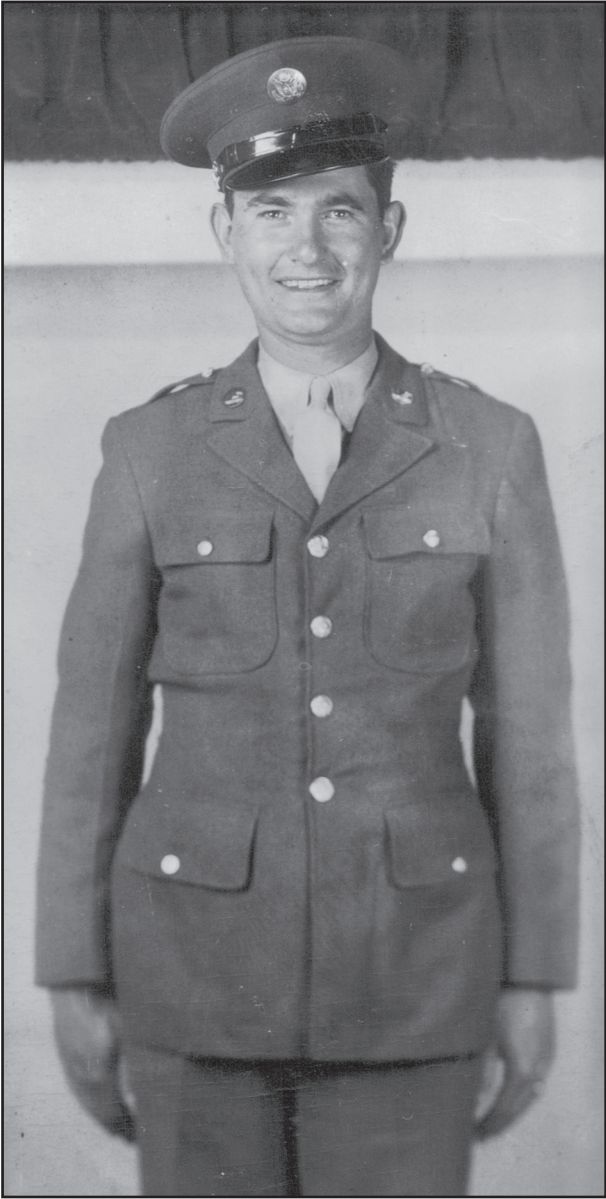


THE WAYS OF WAR

MY EXPERIENCES AS AN ARTILLERY MAN
IN WORLD WAR II



BY THOMAS ELSEY GEORGE



Thomas Elsey George, 1943

About the Author

Thomas Elsey George was born in Carlisle County on December 28, 1918, to Edward T. and Mary Elsey George. He attended Chenault School in Carlisle County until he was eight years old. When the family relocated to a farm near Miller City, Illinois, he attended Willard Grade School. His high school years were spent at Olive Branch, Illinois, where he graduated as valedictorian of the class of 1936. Difficult financial times brought on by the Great Depression prevented Mr. George from attending college.

In 1937, his uncle, Terrell Elsey, helped Mr. George obtain a job in Indianapolis, Indiana, cutting leather parts for work gloves. Three years later, he moved to Detroit, Michigan, and was employed at Advance Glove Company until called for active duty in the U. S. Army.

His 3-1/2 years in the European theater are highlighted in this book.

Following his discharge from the Army, Mr. George returned to Detroit where he worked in the Chrysler and Briggs Body Shop. In 1947, he married Viola Foren and, in 1952, joined Ford Motor Company, where he spent the remainder of his career.

After his wife's death, Mr. George married Ruby Jo Allen, a native of Bardwell, Kentucky in 1967. When he retired in 1974, the couple returned to Bardwell where they still reside.

Mr. George has long been active in community affairs. He serves as a deacon of Bardwell Baptist Church, is a charter member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 5409, and is a member of the Bardwell Masonic Lodge.

He served for ten years on the Carlisle County Senior Citizens Board and as chairman of both the Elsey Cemetery and the Old Bardwell Cemetery boards. For several years, Mr. George wrote



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a popular weekly column, “By George!” for the Carlisle County Courier.

Mr. George has two sisters, Evelyn Wilson and Mona Moyers, who both reside in Bardwell. A brother, Bill George, died in 1996. Another brother, J. T., and a sister, Kathryn, died in childhood.

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In the late 1930's, I was working at the Indianapolis Work Glove factory in Indianapolis, Indiana, when I was called to register for the Draft. The world was in crisis: Germany had invaded many of the European countries, launched its first air attack on Great Britain in October 1939 and, seven months later, conquered France.

At the time of my draft call, I had just been laid off at the Glove factory and traveled to Detroit to look for work. When I saw in the paper that a glove company in Detroit wanted a glove cutter, I applied for the job. The foreman said they would be getting a new press used to stamp the dyes and cut the parts for work gloves but there was no job available at that time. I did get a job at Gar Woods Company, a plant that made big dump truck bodies where I made \$5.37 per night working on carburetors.

I had been working there about three weeks when I was called back to work at Indianapolis. Since my uncle had gotten me that job in 1937 following my graduation from Olive Branch High School in Olive Branch, Illinois, I felt obligated to return. I had learned the job very quickly. I had taken two years of typing classes in high school and had to work about that fast placing the dyes and stamping out the parts for work gloves. I cut the parts for 36 dozen pair in eight hours. We were paid 15 cents per dozen which allowed me to make around \$5.40 per day.

In 1940, after I had been back at the Indianapolis factory for about two months, I received a call from my cousin in Detroit advising that the new press had arrived at that glove factory and a job was available. I discussed my relocation with my now married uncle. I sure hated to tell him I was going to quit and go to work for the Advance Glove Company in Detroit but once I made my decision, things happened quickly.

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I worked my usual shift at the Indianapolis plant one Friday, caught the bus to Detroit the next morning, found a place to room and board, and reported for work on Monday.

The work at this plant was like play compared to the Indianapolis plant. I cut 28 dozen pair per day and made \$2.70 more per day in wages. I never regretted my move. During this time, I roomed with Ralph Owens, a Bardwell, KY, native who later went into the U. S. Navy.

The world situation continued to deteriorate. In December 1941, the Japanese attacked the U. S. at Pearl Harbor, and the United States declared war on Germany. Thus, on March 18, 1942, when I was drafted into the U. S. Army, the United States was fighting two wars on two fronts.

One week before I was to be inducted, I rode the bus to Paducah, KY, and spent the week at home with my family, then returned to Detroit. I reported to downtown Detroit and a group of us were taken by buses to Fort Custer, Michigan. We were sworn into the Army, our hair was cut off; we received our uniforms, and were sent to the big Mess Hall where we were assigned to a barracks to sleep. Following breakfast the next morning, we were called by name and told where to report. We had no idea where we were going or into what type of service: tanks, infantry or artillery.

I was loaded into a train with 150 other draftees and sent to North Carolina to the 938th Field Artillery Battalion which was comprised of men from the Pennsylvania National Guard. We rode on the train two days and two nights. We arrived in Monroe, North Carolina around 8 a.m. to find a band playing a welcome for us. Here we started our Army life. We were loaded onto trucks and taken to Camp Sutton. When we arrived where we were to take basic training, we

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Basic Training

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found floors with a pyramidal tent laid out. Six of us were to put up the tent. There was always a sergeant or corporal with us. I had never seen such a tent much less put one up, but we started. A long pole was in the center and there were shorter poles for each of the four corners. By the time we got them erected, it was time for lunch. We had pork roast, potatoes and beans. I had been living in rooming houses so this food tasted OK to me but some of the guys did not want to eat it. There was no choice however: we ate it or else.

That afternoon, we were all marched over to “the Medics” which were in a big building. This building and the one housing the PX were the only buildings: the rest of the camp was just row after row of tents. We were given shots – 12 in all over a time. We began taking training every day, marching and trying out for the positions where we would be placed.

One day, the first sergeant in charge of our basic training had the corporal line us up and he gave a talk. As I have said before, most of what we had to eat for dinner and supper time was roast, potatoes and beans although we did have some canned fruits, mostly fruit cocktail. “Well,” the sergeant said, “I have a letter here that one of you wrote to President Roosevelt to complain about our food. Let me tell you now you are in the Army now and you will eat the food provided for you. If I hear of any more letters being written, I will have your mail censored.”

For the first two months I was in the Army, my pay was \$21. From that was taken \$6.60 for life insurance and around \$2 to have my clothes cleaned. We wore 100% wool shirts and pants but for work days, we wore our cotton fatigues which we could wash as well as our underclothes and socks. We had to purchase our toothpaste, shaving cream and anything else at the PX. At this time things were cheap but that \$21

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was gone by the end of the month. I did manage to go to the movie when a new feature came on, which cost 25 cents each time.

One day, we were called out, ordered to put on nothing but our raincoats, and lined up. The Army doctor assigned to the camp and his corporal arrived to give us what they called the “short arm exam.” We pulled back our raincoats and displayed our private parts which we had to hold while the doctor inspected us. One soldier was so dirty that the doctor called out for our sergeant to send a man with this soldier to the shower and see that he took one. We had a building for showers but the toilets - or latrines - were the old out-house type: a hole in the ground and a small building around them.

Our basic training lasted eight weeks. We went out on the firing range, each of us was issued a gas mask and a rifle and we were shown how to clean and care for the rifle. On the rifle range, we were shown how to hold the rifle with the strap on it. We lay down in a prone position and fired the rifle at a target that had been set up a specified distance in front of us. We were also taught how to throw a grenade for use in combat.

I had not lived at home since I was 18, so I was not homesick but some of the fellows were and when the weekend came – Saturday at noon – we were given a pass to go into Charlotte, NC. My friend, Cary, and I were able to get a pass every weekend that we were in basic training. We always went into town to the USO. One time, a man and his wife invited us to go home with them. The next morning, we had a good breakfast and he took us out to his farm. Well, I had grown up on a farm so this was something to see. He had a Plymouth automobile he let us drive around that Sunday

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afternoon. We enjoyed that. All we had to do was leave it at the garage where he had it stored.

Most weekends, we would get a room in a hotel and go to the movies, looking for girls to take with us. Sunday morning, we would have a big breakfast in the hotel dining room and go back to camp that afternoon on the bus. After eight weeks of Basic training ended, we were assigned to the batteries where we would spend the next years of our lives.

I was assigned to the 938th Field Artillery A Battery (a firing battery) and was placed in the Communications section. We used field telephones – a telephone encased in leather to protect it from the elements. It had to be treated with a Duffin brand of protectorate which we rubbed onto the leather to make it waterproof. We also had a field switchboard. I became acquainted with the men I would live and work with for the next 3-1/2 years. In the



Cliff Stotler

Army, you went by your last name so I was called “George”. My buddy was (Cliff) Stotler from St. Louis. (Floyd) Hetrick was a big German man from Lancaster, PA. Kokruda was from Johnstown, Sanjelo from New York and (Howard) Reid, radio operator. There were around 20 in our section. We laid telephone wire from our headquarters battery to our battery position in combat and to each gun. We had four guns in A battery; B and C battery each had four guns. There was a headquarters battery and a service battery. This made up our battalion.

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As time passed, I became more used to life in the Army. After about three months, I was given a furlough to go home. The bus ride from Charlotte, NC, to Paducah, KY, took about a day and a half since the bus stopped at every wide place I the road. Everyone at home was glad to see me. I went to Illinois to see my old friend, Harold Upshaw and his wife, Velma. I also saw some of my old schoolmates from Olive Branch High School.

All too soon, it was time for me to take the bus back to Charlotte and Camp Sutton. When I arrived at camp, we continued to train each day and go on field problems. Our Colonel Coburn took us one Saturday to Concord, NC. This was where the towel industry had factories. We put on a parade for the town, driving through with the big trucks that pulled our guns, also jeeps and one quarter-ton dodge trucks which we used in the communications section. We would see the girls and had a big time. On some weekends, Stotler and I had passes and went up there to see some of the girls. We were not far from Fort Bragg, NC so one weekend; the colonel took the whole battalion which was a big convoy of trucks and jeeps. While we were there, I along with Stotler, Hetrick and some of the other guys took a walk down one of the area roads. Before we knew it we were behind the infantry firing range. We took cover by the side of a nearby lake. When they let up firing, we made a quick exit. This showed us what bullets sounded like.

We were told our outfit was moving to Camp Blanding, Florida. We loaded all our equipment on flat cars and took a train ride to Florida. Camp Blanding was an old army camp with barracks to sleep in and a big building with mess hall and latrines inside. We were living it up now. Some of the fellows that had been in the National Guard said we would never go overseas until the officers McAdo and Ingersol

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were transferred out of the outfit. We were there two months and, like at Camp Sutton, we had classes and trained every day. On weekends we could get a pass and go into Jacksonville, Florida. One weekend, our battery which had 105 men was taken into the USO to a big dance. We all had a big time. After about two months, we were told we were going to Fort Sill, Oklahoma to fire for the artillery school.

We loaded up on the train all our equipment and away we went. When we arrived at Fort Sill, we were again in tents out in the open and it was freezing: 20 below zero. We would go out on the firing range and fire our guns – 155 howitzers.



A howitzer being fired

I was on a telephone taking commands from an officer who was training to be an artillery officer. He would look through field glasses and see where the projectile hit and call out commands to shift to right or left or to raise or lower the elevation. At night, we had to sleep with all our clothes on because it was so cold. Although we had cots to sleep on, we had no mattresses. Each man had two Army blankets and a big comforter but it was hard to keep warm. There was a building with a shower and a big stove in it that burned coal. We would fire that stove up so hot it would be solid red and warm enough to take a shower.

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COMMUNICATIONS: Back from left; Howard Reid, Ray Wilson, Cliff Stotler; front from left, Thomas Gannon, Lloyd Hetrick and Tom George.

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We stayed at Fort Sill for around two months then shipped back to Florida. What a relief to get out of that cold. Of course, the Army was getting us used to the hot and cold so we could handle whatever weather we encountered when we went into combat.

Things were progressing at the usual pace now that we were back in Florida. I would go operate the battalion switchboard that had several lines going into it and out to the colonel. When McAdo and Ingersol were transferred out of our battalion and we received other officers, we knew we would soon be shipped overseas. We did not know if it would be to Europe to fight the Germans or to the Pacific to fight the Japanese. I was hoping like everyone that we would go to Europe.

When the time came for my furlough, I took the train to Birmingham, Alabama, and planned to take the Illinois Central train to Cairo, Illinois. When I got my furlough papers from the first sergeant, he said, "When you come back, report to Camp Gordon, Georgia, for we will be moved." Everyone knew we were going overseas into combat.

I rode the train from Jacksonville to Birmingham, only to find that the Illinois Central train had already departed for Cairo. I had to get a room in a hotel and wait until the next day to take the train for there was only one train going my way. I arrived at home in due course and everyone was glad to see me. After visiting my folks who now lived on a farm near Bardwell, KY, for a couple of days, it was time to go over to Illinois where I saw my old buddy and his wife, Harold and Velma Upshaw. They introduced me to a girl who attended their church – Miriam Cooper. She was their pastor's daughter. I wrote her letters all the time I was overseas.

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Tom George on last furlough home before going overseas.

I also went to see one of my old girlfriends from Olive Branch High School – Elsie Miller. We went over to Kentucky to see my sister Evelyn, and her family. While we were in Kentucky driving around, Elsie said to me, “Let’s go over to Missouri (just across the river from Cairo) and get married.” As I have said before, I knew when I got back from my furlough that I was going overseas and I didn’t want a wife to worry about so I told her, “Wait until I get out of the Army.” Later on when I was in combat in France, I received a letter from her letting me know she was married.

Time came for me to head back to Camp Gordon, Georgia. My final furlough was over. I knew I was going back to go overseas but I did not let my parents know. When I arrived at Camp Gordon, I had to ask the guard at the gate where the 938th Battalion was located. I found A battery and all my Army buddies who were glad to see me. Things went on as usual. I had an impacted wisdom tooth that needed to be pulled so I went on sick call over to the Army dentist. He was an Army major, a high rank. He exam-

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ined my tooth and discovered it was growing in at an angle, pushing at my back tooth. He and the Army nurse tried to pry it out. No luck. I was wringing wet with sweat and the Army nurse was frowning seeing that nothing happened. Finally, the major split my gum which is what he should have done first and removed the wisdom tooth. He sewed the gum up.

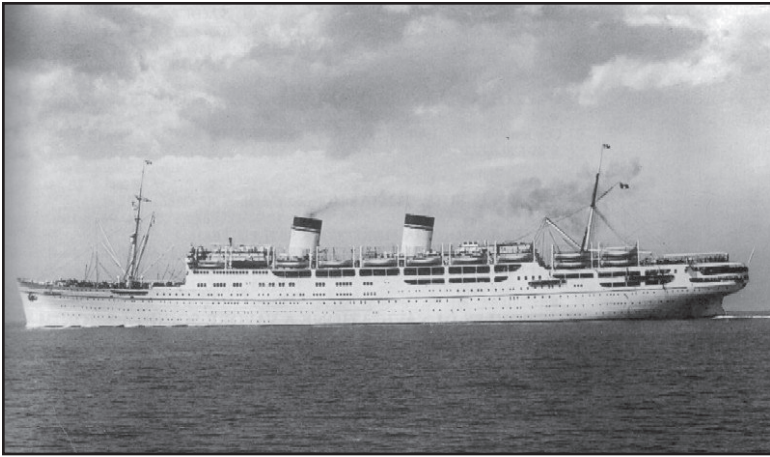
I should have been put in the Army hospital for I could feel my heart beating in my jaw. It swelled up and I could eat very little: regular Army food was not for someone with a swollen jaw. I should have gone to the first sergeant and asked to go on sick call again; perhaps then I would have been sent to the hospital. But I sweated it out and in a week or so we were told to prepare to move. We were going to New Jersey then to the New York port to go overseas.

We were loaded onto trains with our barracks bag which held our clothes. This was a big bag. We also carried what was called a musette bag that held our mess kit, shaving cream, comb and other articles. We arrived in Washington, DC early in the morning. The first sergeant said to me, "George, you stand guard at the door and don't let anyone enter or depart from that coach." They made sure no one left that train for we were moving very slow.

We arrived at the port in New York and began to board the ship that was to be our home for the next 15 days. That ship was a mammoth thing standing there waiting for us to go aboard. We were carrying our big barracks bag on our shoulders. The stitches in my gum busted loose and left a gaping hole in my jaw.

As we were boarding on the ship, our first sergeant stood there, called out our last name. For me, he said "George." I answered "Thomas E". That record verified who was on that

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USS Monticello

ship. If it sank the boarding papers were left behind when we sailed.

We went up to the top of the ship and saw glass enclosed quarters, thinking, this is not too bad. But it was a field hospital with all the nurses.

We were herded down the steps, down, down about four decks, to a compartment. I would call it a room actually. The bottom bunk was about six inches off the floor, with another bunk on top, leaving just enough room for the bottom man to crawl in. The ceiling was about only 6-1/2 feet tall. The name of the ship was the USS Monticello. It was a captured Italian luxury liner. When Italy surrendered, ships were brought over to New York to be outfitted to transport troops overseas. The compartment only had one air duct that blew air in. Whoever was by the vent was OK. One soldier gave another soldier \$100 for his bunk by the air duct.

There was a big steel door where we entered the compartment that was manned by a Marine with a rifle. If a torpedo

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hit he was to close and lock that door as all the compartments were watertight. If you were inside, too bad for they had to save the ship. I had been used to hot weather for remember there was no air conditioning then. It was 120 degrees in this compartment.

I went on sick call to the Navy to get my gum checked. They said it would heal by itself and to take it easy. As time would have it, my gum was not healed so I did not have to go on KP (to work in the kitchen) with about 15 of the other fellows in our outfit. I wish I could have gone with them for they did not have to stay in that sweltering compartment with the rest of us. They helped out in the kitchen.

There was only one dining area on that ship and there were 11,000 troops including Navy personnel and the field hospital staff with all the doctors and nurses. We only had two meals a day. It took us about two hours to get up the steps to the dining area, eat and then go back down to the compartment. I had lived on a farm and hauled hay when it was 105 degrees but the 120 degrees in that closed compartment was almost unbearable. Several of us broke out with heat rash and the medics treated the rash by lining us up every morning and spraying us with some concoction.

We were allowed two hours up on deck every day. That was nice. I used to go to the front of the ship and watch the waves. One day when we were up on deck we heard this terrible noise and the ship shuddered. We immediately thought that torpedo had hit the ship. Our colonel was given orders for his men to go below but he said, "My men are staying on the deck". We later heard that the generator on the ship had blown up. We stopped dead in the water. The convoy sailed on and left us there in the middle of the ocean bobbing up and down like a cork. Two destroyers sailed around us, for

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the day before the convoy had been dropped depth charges as German submarines had been around the convoy.

A sailor had been killed when the generator blew up. His body was brought up on deck in a canvas bag placed on a board and some sailors and the chaplain held a service, then they slid his body over the side of the ship into the ocean. That was a burial at sea.

It was a funny feeling for us to be on that deck with the ship so still in the water. After four hours the alternate generator was hooked up and we took off, hurrying to catch up with the convoy. Our unit slept on the deck that night. We just lay down where we were.

The next day, we were ushered back to the hot compartment. We had to take showers in sea water and with that rash it really burned but I suppose the water helped. Fifteen days after leaving New York, we landed at Oran, North Africa. The French were in command there. That night the German planes bombed the harbor but we had already made it to the city.

We camped in an open area at the city's edge and waited for our guns and trucks to be unloaded. Colonel Coburn was given orders to move our battalion by truck 500 miles to Binzerte, North Africa. The trip took several days. We were able to see Africa firsthand. The natives lived in camps in tents. They ate sheep, goats and camels. You could smell those camps miles before you came to them. The men rode Arabian horses.

At last, we reached our destination. The city of Binzerte looked like Florida with palm trees and nice slate roofed houses. There were no people here as Rommel "the Des-

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ert Fox” who had fought in Africa had been defeated and his men captured and shipped back to the U.S. where they were placed in camps for the duration of the war. I know they were glad to go for they were now out of the war.



Naples docks

At this point, we were loaded on Liberty ships along with our guns and equipment and sailed to Naples, Italy. The war in Italy was being fought right outside of Naples. We were in a storm crossing to Naples but made it OK, and docked alongside a ship that the Germans had sunk. We made our way from our ship to Italian soil by walking on the side of the wounded ship.

That night we were put into a school building. We were sleeping in the hallways when a big horn below and we were told that German planes were heading for the port in Naples. We were herded into a railroad tunnel not far away from where we stayed as the German planes bombed the harbor. I assume some of our ships were damaged. The next day we were allowed to look around Naples. It was a sorry mess. When the German army moved out they damaged the water supply to the sewers so there was no way for the people to use their bathrooms. The children were using building hallways for toilets. Two days after we landed, we were told our big guns and trucks were ready and we were to go into combat outside Naples, Italy. This was what we had trained for in the States: now we would soon see what it was all about.

We moved into an olive orchard and discovered that these trees were about the size of our persimmon trees. I remem-

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Landing Ship Tank

ber the big howitzers being set into place and firing. We were out in the open. I wondered what would happen if we were fired on. We had four guns in A battery which I was in. Then there was B and C battery with four guns each. All 12 guns were called a battalion. We were the 938th Field Artillery battalion.

We did not stay in this position very long as the Germans were falling back. We moved out of the valley with a big mountain separating us from the Germans in the next valley. Our guns could sit by a hill and fire over us: the projectile was fired using powder to push it out of the gun. I knew we were

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now in combat and dug a slit trench: a hole in the ground that I could jump into for protection. We had not been in this gun position very long when several planes appeared overhead. We could see they were American planes but they unloaded their bombs on the road below us about a quarter mile away. I jumped into the slit trench and lay face down. The ground bounced up and down from the concussion of the bombs. The planes were supposed to have bombed in the valley on the other side of the mountain. Instead, they hit an American ordinance company that was on the road, killing 270 of our troops, one of the many tragic “mistakes” of the war. It was here I saw what can happen in wartime. We were lucky we had not been fired upon by the Germany artillery when we were moving into place.

We were in the Fifth Army. Mark Clark was our general. Lieutenant Colonel Coburn was our battalion commander. In Battery A, Captain Ridgeway was top officer. During two months of combat, we supported the 6th corps and the French Expeditionary Corps fighting along the winter line and the drive to the Rapido River. Suddenly, we were pulled out of the line and sent back to Naples. Why? We were to load an LST (Landing Ship Tank) and sail up the coast to Anzio where the 3rd infantry division had made a beach-head landing behind the German lines. After landing, they had moved 30 miles inland, securing an area nine miles deep by 15 miles long. We were to go in and help out with our big guns.

We boarded those LSTs at 11 p.m. and started up the coast 30 or so miles from Naples. I lay down on one of the sailors' bunks and was asleep when the combat station's horn blew for the sailors. It sounded like the horn on a Model T car, only four times louder. The Germans had some PT boats around but they never attacked. The next morning around

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8 a.m. we arrived at Anzio, a small Italian town with a nice beach where we unloaded. The 3rd Division had supplies here as well as other outfits that were unloaded from the LSTs. We were waiting for orders to move out. We had our guns, the howitzers and we all carried our carbine rifles. We heard a whistling sound and knew what it was for we had been around artillery coming from the Germans. When the shell hit on our right, it sure made a noise. We found out that the Germans were shelling the harbor with a railroad gun. It fired a 500-pound projectile. The Germans kept the gun in a tunnel, rolled it out to fire a few rounds then pushed it back in the tunnel out of sight of our planes. This gun was not captured until we pushed out of this beachhead five months later.

We had orders to move out. It was quiet. The Germans were bringing up men and supplies as well. The infantry and tanks were holding a line around the beachhead. We were going to a position in the middle about five miles from the harbor. I noticed a graveyard had been started. It contained five white crosses.

We were moving in after five days when the 3rd Division landed. We pulled off the road into a large area of small trees and bushes and made a road through them. The Germans held three mountains about 20 miles or so from us. I knew we were going to be in for lots of shelling for we were just coming out of combat in the mountains.

The guns were put into position. No-one told us what to do: we all knew. The sergeants over each gun had the men to dig a big hole about shoulder deep and the guns were put into this hole. One end was left sloped so the gun could be moved into the hole. I was with the captain as telephone operator. Slaughter, a guy from St. Louis, wrote down all fire com-

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Anzio - The Landing - January 1944

mands that were given and Lieutenant Bartlett was over the guns. Lieutenant Harness was forward observer. He would go up with the infantry.

We arrived at Anzio on the 31st of January, 1944. We were digging everything in for we knew that the Germans would try to push us off the beachhead. The guns were dug in. The men had dug holes back into the bank of the hole containing the guns and had put logs on top of the dug-out, then dirt on top of the logs. When we first dug the battery headquarters which was a pyramidal tent, we dug holes around the inside to lie in when we were shelled. After a few days we would fire our guns for the infantry and tanks which were positioned a few miles in front of us. We were in the middle of the beachhead and things were getting hot (as it's called in combat when you are being shelled by the Germans). We decided with the captain and Lieutenant Bartlett who were with us in the tent to dig three foot wide holes into the bank where the tent was dug in. I put logs and anything I could

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use to cover the hole then put dirt on top of this. Lieutenant Harness also dug out a place.

I had been on the telephone steady day and night taking fire commands from headquarters battery located behind us. In those days, overlay maps were taken by airplanes. When the infantry was going to attack or they were being fired on, they would call back and our headquarters men would give us orders over the phone to adjust.

It would be like this: I would take the orders over the phone and give them to Lieutenant Bartlett who was over the guns. He in turn would give orders by another phone to each gun. I would report the fire command. It would be on No. 1 adjust. That was our No. 1 gun. Shell HE. That was high explosive. Fuse quick elevation 250. Lieutenant Bartlett would repeat this to the sergeant on No. 1 gun. They would then fire.

Up with the infantry or tanks, whomever called in for fire. They would call to shift the guns right or left or to raise or lower the elevation and ask for battery 4 or 6 rounds. We would fire our guns and when they fired, a puff of white smoke came out of the end of the gun tube (barrel). The Germans, since they were on the mountains, could spot our location their artillery would fire on us. This went on round the clock.

More and more equipment was brought up from Naples and the Germans surrounded us with ten divisions. I asked Slaughter to take the telephone one night as I just had to get some sleep: I had been on duty without a break for two days and nights. The next morning Lieutenant Harness, who came back to our area each night to sleep (during the day he was up with the infantry with two other men), said to me, "George, I thought we would get it bad last night." I asked,

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“What happened?” He said “Go outside and look.” Three feet from where I lay three rounds of 88 artillery projectiles had hit. If they had moved the guns one notch, I would have had it.

Lieutenant Bartlett and I used to go down to the kitchen truck together for breakfast each morning but this morning he left before me. The kitchen truck was about the length of one block from our tent. We heard the shells come in and knew they were hitting nearby. The shells hit around the kitchen truck, for later when I did go to eat breakfast, the ambulance had taken Lieutenant Bartlett to the Field Hospital back near Anzio. He never came back. We had no way of knowing if he died from his wounds or was sent back to Naples and back to the States. If he had recovered, he would have come back to our battery.

In a couple of weeks another first lieutenant took Lieutenant Bartlett's place. I do not remember his name. Stotler, who was the switchboard operator for our battery, went to the hospital with pain in his back and discovered that one of his legs was five inches shorter than the other. He was sent back to the States and later discharged. I was then moved up from PFC grade to a T-5. I wore a corporal's stripes on my arm with a “T” under them which showed I was a technician. I was now the switchboard operator for the Battery.

The Germans adjusted their guns in the air. They would fire one round in front of their target and within two minutes the next rounds would come. At least we had a warning of what was to come. We adjusted our guns on the ground.

Palm Sunday came. First Sergeant Devers sent a truck to transport the men who wanted to go to church to a crossroads two miles away. On one side of the road were the Protestants

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and on the other side were the Catholics. There were several chaplains and approximately 700 to 800 men. Knowing how the German artillery worked, I had no doubt that so many men in one group provided a good target for the Germans who were in the mountains looking down on us. I heard the sound of a gun coming from the mountains. Something told me they were firing on us. Sure enough, next came a round of artillery. They did not adjust for I suppose they could see their target: so many men in one group. The chaplains yelled "Disperse!" We all hit the ground or jumped into a hole if one was nearby. I looked to my left and saw a dugout in a small bank of dirt. I jumped for the doorway. Another round came in and a piece of shrapnel (a shell that has burst into pieces about the size of your fist) hit the bank right behind my rear end. The guys who were in that dugout said, "Boy, you were lucky!" I think the Lord was watching over me. After the Germans fired about six rounds, they did not fire again. I suppose they knew it was Sunday and let us be.

Days went by. We shelled the Germans and they shelled us. On the 17th of February, 1944, the Germans tried to push us back to the sea. Lieutenant Harness who was up with the infantry said wave after wave of German infantry attacked our infantry. So many Germans had been killed, they were walking over their dead. We had our orders to fall back with the infantry if they fell back with the tanks that were in front of us. That day we knocked out 11 German tanks. One of the artillery units, the 141st from Louisiana, was picked to fire and hold and be captured but everything held. Ships were in the harbor to take the ones out who made it back. Five times that day orders were given to evacuate but we held. Never again in those five months did the Germans try to push us off. Things fell into a routine: we would shell the Germans and they would shell us. Major Sidell from Headquarters Battery was with us in these 72 days when we were in this gun posi-

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Ranger Regiment shortly before most of the men were killed

tion. He would count the rounds of artillery that came in on our battery position. In those 72 days, he estimated 10,000 rounds came in on us from 88s to 180s - from small guns to the largest. They never did shell us with the big railroad gun. If we had stayed there much longer they would have for we did a lot of damage to them.

One day the Ranger Regiment of around 700 men was to make an attack on Cisterna, a small town to the right side of the beachhead. The Germans let them come almost to the town then cut them off. I remember we fired for them and the Rangers put up a terrible battle but only three men returned. All the rest were killed or captured. About a week after this, we looked in the air and on the left side of the beachhead came six of our big four-motor bombers. They were really low. We wondered why they would come in like that instead of straight from the harbor to head for Cisterna where the

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Air Attack - Cisterna

Rangers were lost. This route put the bombers flying right over all the German guns: the 88s were anti-aircraft guns that could shoot straight up or straight out as artillery.

We watched the planes and said someone in the air force was not using good sense.

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The Germans waited until the planes were over the middle of the beachhead in front of our guns. They were probably over our infantry and tanks when the Germans cut loose with those 88s. They shot down three of the big bombers. One of the three pilots got out. The other two were shot down with the men in them. However, the other three did get to the target town of Cisterna. Later on when we pushed off the beachhead and saw what those three big bombers had done: leveled that little town destroying German trucks and equipment.

Such was the way of war.

After sitting in that gun position for 72 days, 30 of our men were in the hospital. We never did get too far away from our position unless we went by truck back to the harbor. The service battery brought up supplies.

We had an order not to use the projectiles with a certain number on them. This ammunition was made in Kentucky and was labeled as too dangerous to use. Once, we had a call from the infantry to fire so many rounds of artillery and we were forced to use that ammunition. It caused one of our guns to blow up and one of the men on the gun had his leg blown off below the knee. The sergeant on the gun sustained an open wound that never healed.

In addition to the 30 men in the field hospital, some soldiers had been sent back to Naples. There they saw a man who had lost one eye and an arm. He said, "I had to give this up to get off that place but I am glad I am gone." Each time the shelling stopped, we would come out of the dugouts to see the damage. Reed would always say, "Are you nervous in the service?" How true that was. After sitting in this gun position for 72 days we were all glassy-eyed, and when we

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went any place to the mess truck or to any place else where the battery was located, we were always looking toward the mountains: we knew the Germans were looking at us.

Our first sergeant and captain went over to where the British were located on the left side of the beachhead and found us a gun position in a valley between two hills. We moved at night and luckily were not shelled. My, was this ever a place of peace from where we had been. Our gun position was against this hill. Of course we all dug in dugouts but we were never shelled there although a German plane came out twice at night to bomb us. We were here until we pushed off the beachhead.

My heart got to where it would race really fast so I went over the hill to the British medics where our first sergeant had told anyone who was sick to go. The army major in the British Army was really nice. He checked my heart, asked me if I had received a letter from home, if everyone was OK, how my girlfriend back home was. I told him everything was fine. He said, "Son, in this war some of us should not be here in all this and you are one of them."

I went back to my outfit and in a few days my heart stopped racing and I was OK. It was here that we received C rations from World War I. It was stamped on the crates. They had been stored in France. We complained about having nothing to eat. We were asked, "Do you want ammunition or food? We only have so many ships to supply this beachhead." We ate the rations for two weeks then went back to food that was more up to date.

All the civilians had moved out. There were some horses running around loose and some of the guys wanted to get something to drink. Adams, who was from eastern Kentucky,

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said, "I know how to make a still." Some of the men went out to the barn and found some wheat and oats that had been used to feed the horses. They brought the grain back and put it in water to let it sour into what is called mash. Adams proceeded to make a still. He was able to get some copper tubing from the guys who took care of the trucks. He wound this tubing around. The only thing they had to put the mash in was a five gallon water can. They attached the copper tubing to the water can and then heated the can. The steam from the mash pushed through the copper tubing and drops came out the other end making what was called "white lightning" or whiskey.

The guys took their canteen cups and caught the liquid. Everyone was getting drunk. I was watching from up on the hill and saw the water can blow up. One of the fellows from the guns was burned on his face, not too bad but enough that he had to go to the field hospital.

Later, we all had a laugh. The captain had to put on the report to the hospital what caused the soldier to be burned. The captain wrote that he was shaving. I know the doctors in the hospital thought he was using hot water.

On the beachhead all the artillery guns had been firing at different times to confuse the Germans but the time had come for us to push off. Another division had been brought in and we were going to join the rest of the army moving through the mountains. Word was passed down from headquarters that this would be the time to go. Our guns were to fire so many rounds then hook up to the trucks and move to the chosen location. The whole beachhead of infantry, tanks and artillery were to move. The men had been picked to go and others of us were to move the next morning to catch up with the guns and others who had moved that night. What a sight

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it was to hear all the guns firing at one time. They kept firing; the infantry and tanks were in close support, pushing the Germans back.

By the next morning when we caught up with our guns they were outside the 15-mile perimeter of the harbor where we had been held for over four months. I always looked for a safe place to set up the switchboard if it was needed but we were moving so fast that word was coming down by radio. However I did see what had been used for a wine cellar so some of us spent the night there in case we were shelled. We were not shelled and we moved out the next day. Some of the fellows who were moving ammunition said the Germans had put a direct hit on that wine cellar later so it's a good thing we moved.

Soon we joined the rest of the 5th army that had been fighting in the mountains. We were near Rome which had been declared an open city. The Germans moved through it and set up a line some miles on the other side. We arrived in Rome on June 5, 1944. On June 6, the Normandy invasion was made into France from England. The whole of the 6th Corps was pulled out of the line of fighting. It consisted of 45th, 3rd, 1st armored divisions and all the artillery that went with them: I would estimate approximately 60,000 men and all their equipment.

We were told we had participated in some of the heaviest fighting in the Italian campaign on Anzio beachhead. As I said before, when we arrived on the beachhead on January 31 and went by the cemetery, I saw five white crosses. In the time we spent there, we had lost some 7,000 men and the British had lost more for they did not like to wear their helmets. No-one knew how many Germans were lost.

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How good it was to lie down on the ground there in Rome and know you were safe. We were allowed to go into Rome and see St. Peter's Cathedral with all the paintings on the ceilings. The Catholic men went to a mass officiated by the Pope. I took a bus ride around the city and saw all of the famous buildings. Some of them went back to Napoleon's day.

After a few days we were told by our officers that we would move back to Naples with the entire 6th corps. A day or so before we were to move, Franklin, one of the men in one of the gun crews, had gone out in the city, found some of that Italian wine and come back drunk. He proceeded to holler and yell. The captain came down with the first sergeant and looked at him. He said, "Sergeant, put a guard on this man and if he does not stop yelling, shoot him." That sobered Franklin up. Of course the guard would not have shot him but knocked him out with his rifle butt.

In the army from time to time we had things to laugh at.

We loaded up and rode on one of the main highways back to Naples. Italy is a narrow country from Naples to Rome. When we had fought our way up to Rome, we went through the fields and small towns which were destroyed with artillery and bombs. It was good to see the roads and fields on our way back to Naples. We camped over the country side near the city but with the whole 6th Corps, we covered lots of the area. We were able to go into Naples and see what the city looked like now. I went to the USO to get a doughnut and cup of coffee which was supposed to be free but I was told it would be 15 cents. That was about all I had for we had not been paid. We were paid with money issued by the army but in Italy, the currency was the lira and in France (where we were later sent), it was the franc.

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Unloading near St. Maxime, France

We were told by our officers that we would be going on an invasion of southern France. Approximately two months later, we were ready to make the invasion. Our gun crews had a skeleton crew, only enough men to operate them. All others were the same. Our communications section was cut down from around 20 men to ten. The rest of us would go as infantry. This made us all stop and think for we had heard what a time the men had on the Normandy invasion. But in the Army you do as you are told and as infantry we would go.

I remember we were to be loaded on a British ship and as we were coming up to board it, some of the guys said, "What is that I smell?" I said, "That's sheep cooking!" And was it ever a strong smell. When we had our meal, it was boiled sheep and boiled potatoes with bread: that was their food on that ship. Well, I liked sheep for back home we had eaten lots of mutton (as we called the sheep) but it was barbecued. I ate plenty of it that day and had a good meal. Some of the

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fellows only ate potatoes and bread, but I had learned in the Army to eat what I was served.

We sailed and it did not take us too long to arrive at the shore of France. On August 15, 1944, we landed with the 45th Division near St. Maxime. The units on our right flank were going ashore in the LCI's C landing craft infantry but were receiving heavy fire and would have to turn and go back out. We landed and met no opposition. We had to wade in from our boat. They stretched a big rope from the craft to the land and in we went. Water was up to my chin. Gomez in front of me was only about five feet tall and he said, "George, my feet are not touching the bottom." I told him, "Pull on that rope!" We had our musette bag on our backs so that caused him to float. I always thought he could have drowned himself and me with him but we made it.

We were now on French soil. We walked two miles inland with those wet woolen shirts and pants. We were exhausted after the march. We camped there and waited for our guns and trucks to be unloaded. We were looking around the beach and saw a Frenchman cutting the back leg off a dead horse that had been killed by the shelling. He was going to eat him.

We saw one of the big guns the Germans had used near the beach. It was made by Bethlehem Steel in the United States. The German army also drove Ford trucks. I suppose Ford had a plant in Germany before the war.

We were now in the Seventh army and what we were to be called as we were fighting was the "Champagne Campaign". We were to drive north to join the Third army; the 938th battalion supported the 6th Corps, breaking through the Vosges Mountains. We supported or I should say we fired artillery

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for the 3rd, 45th and 100th divisions.

We were always on the move. Wherever one of the above divisions was in trouble and needed more fire power, we were called upon. We moved mostly at night. The captain and first sergeant would go and see where we were to move then we went. The men in the communications section would say, "Let George go in front, he can see in the dark." The army fed us lots of carrots and I ate lots of them.

We were in total blackout. Our flashlights were covered with red paper. You could see how to read a map by holding the light almost on top of the map. I could see the small limbs on the trees. We were not in one place for very long.

We were considered to be a good outfit by the divisions we supported with fire from our guns. Some of the outfits would use our guns instead of theirs to fire in close or on walking barrages for this infantry. We never did have a projectile fall short on any of the men. In a walking barrage we would fire then the infantry would crawl up, especially if the Germans were dug in. Then we would fire again and they would crawl up until they were right on top of the Germans who were dug in on top of the hill. Our infantry would then kill them. Such are the ways of war.

It was now late in November and we moved to support the 15th Corps as they were attacking toward the Maginot line. I remember the big gun emplacements the French had. The guns only pointed one way - toward Germany. But when the Germans attacked France and defeated them they went around behind the gun emplacements with their tanks and captured the French.

Thanksgiving and Christmas came. If possible we always

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had turkey and dressing and all that good stuff. Farney, a corporal in one of the gun crews, was told by the first sergeant to go to the kitchen truck and bake pies. He could make some of the best pumpkin pies you ever ate and his mincemeat ones were good too. He had worked in a bakery as a civilian.

December 7, 1944 was our first time to enter Germany. We drove a spearhead 30 miles into Germany with tanks, infantry and artillery. Once we got this far, the Germans cut us off in the back and there we were. What did our officers do? We started to retreat or as it was called a “strategic withdrawal”. A line would hold and the rest of us would move back about five miles and then the ones left of those who had been holding the Germans would fall back to the next line. We did this night and day and believe me, we all feared that we would be captured. The 14th armored division was put into action. On our left flank for two days and nights all you could hear was the roar of the tank battle with the Germans.

Later we went through the town of Hagnau. It was completely destroyed. American and German knocked-out tanks were abandoned everywhere. One of our trucks was turning around here when it backed over a mine. I was not very far away when I heard it go off. One of our men who was directing the truck was killed. His body was laid by the side of the road for grave registration to pick him up later. Most of the time in battle the grave registration men would pick up the dead U. S. troops as soon as they could, haul them back in small trailers behind jeeps. They covered the bodies with a tarp.

Every time I saw the grave registration crew I remembered how puzzled we were when we were assigned mattress covers before we left the States. We found out why. If a soldier was killed, he would be buried in it.

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We did not see too many bodies lying around but one scene stayed with me for a long time. We were moving right behind the tanks and infantry when over to one side of the road we saw a jeep. Beside it up against a small bank were three dead Americans. One was sitting up with the small Bible we all carried in our shirt pocket opened on his lap. He went out into eternity looking at his Bible.

At last we were able to pull back and not fear capture. We were in this one position. I was standing guard at the captain's tent when I was relieved by another man. I went back to our section and found everyone in turmoil. Seems that Haynes, one of the men who was supposed to be one of our truck drivers, had pulled his rifle on another soldier. Of course Haynes was drunk and the rifle was not loaded for we never loaded them unless we were in a tight spot and thought we might have to fight if the infantry fell back. Someone grabbed the rifle from Haynes. He was one who should have been in the section 8 hospital. That was where the nutty guys were sent. He always kept the water can on the side of one of the trucks full of wine and was drunk half the time. We were now in combat near the city of Strasbourg, France. General DeGaulle was in charge of the French.

The Germans had launched a big attack and we were right in the thick of it. Hitler had given this attack the name of Unternehmen Nordwind (Operation North Wind). He had brought up lots of armor, infantry and everything needed to fight a big battle. We had the upper hand with our fighter planes but his men put up a heck of a battle. We had the 70th, 45th, 2nd armored, 3rd, 12th armored and 36th divisions. Some of the men in these divisions we had fought with at Anzio said this battle was as bad as Anzio but at least we moved and were not tied to one spot.

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By the end of January the attack had been halted. This battle was fought in the part of France that was called Alsace. This battle was almost as bad as the Battle of the Bulge but we lost fewer men.

In March of 1945 the 7th Army which we were a part of returned to attack toward the Rhine River. On the 31st of March we crossed the Rhine on a pontoon bridge. I remember we went through the German town of Manheim at 11 o'clock that night. We were right behind the infantry and tanks. Buildings were burning on the sides of the streets.

We pulled into a small park in Manheim after we had crossed the Rhine River. The next day, some outfit was firing rockets over our head. That was the first time they had been used around us. It was a funny experience hearing them go off. We were now in Germany and their army was pulling back, back into their homeland. Our planes were bombing their cities and railway system. They were a country about to be defeated. Of course Hitler was a dreamer and instead of surrendering to the Allies and to the Russians (for his armies were fighting on two fronts) he kept fighting. I do not see how the men in the armies were able to take such a beating.

We moved out of Manheim supporting the 100th and 103rd divisions. I remember mother sending me a package. In it was some popcorn. We were in this small town so Hetrick the German fellow who was in my section and I proceeded to pop some. The old German man whose house we were in had never seen popcorn. We gave him some to eat and I gave him a handful of the grains of corn. Hetrick explained to him how to plant it. I always wondered how it came out. We were moving, moving night and day. Sometimes we would stay a couple of days in one place then move on.

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I remember this small German town where we were setting up a gun. Our captain would give the people in a house two hours to move out and we could occupy the house. I always looked for a safe place to set up the switchboard if it was needed so I went to the basement. This was a nice brick house with a door to the outside from the basement. The old German man who lived there had about 20 bushels of Irish potatoes and a 300-gallon barrel of wine. Some of the men found a small stove, put it in the basement and started frying potatoes. Others opened the wine barrel and two days later when we left they drained the wine barrel into bottles. I felt sorry for the German couple who lived there. They were staying with their neighbors. But such is the way of war.

We were pushing our way through Germany, always on the move. Another time, we set our guns up in a town and fired over the top of a house which caused the tile on the roof to move. Next morning the old German man brought his daughter out to climb the ladder and replace the tile. We all watched.

We could see that the end would be soon for the German army. We were after the German 9th army. They were pulling back toward Hitler's retreat called "Berchtesgaden" up in the mountains. We followed them for two weeks. They were taking a terrible beating. Our planes were strafing them, killing their horses in their harnesses (they pulled a lot of their guns and supply wagons with horses). Our bulldozers just pushed them out of the road. What a terrible sight. We had crossed the Danube River and were on our way toward Austria. We set our guns up in the last gun position in Fussen, Germany on the border of Austria.

On May 8th, 1945, the war ended.

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Trout in Jetzendorf

Trout that we caught in Germany after war was over in Jetzendorf, Germany. Tom George, unidentified soldier, W. E. Shoemate, Guthrie, Okla.

What a feeling to know we were no longer in danger of being shot. The last two weeks of the war were hard for you knew the end was coming and hoped you could make it. We pulled back to a small town and for two days and nights we did nothing but rested and ate. Later we moved to Wolfhausen, Germany to guard the labor camp that Hitler had established there. Most of the inmates were women the Germans had brought from other countries to work in the nearby plants. Later on most were shipped back to their home countries.

The 938th battalion was now on occupation duty. The war was still underway in Japan They were sinking some of our ships with suicide pilots and big battles were being fought in the Pacific. Plans were being made for the invasion of Japan.

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It was estimated that one million of their soldiers and ours would be killed.

I was told to see the first sergeant who told me I was to be transferred into the 20th Armored division. I was to be their switchboard operator along with their regulars. I had no infantry training and here I had been in combat for 14 months, had suffered from being at Anzio and now I was to go on another mission. I sure was down. Such is the Army. To them, I was just a number just like all the other soldiers who were going.

It was a great a relief when Truman ordered the atomic bombs dropped, ending the war with Japan. I really believe I am alive today because the war came to an end.

I do not know how long the 20th armored infantry had been in combat. Another man and I were transferred out of the 938th. We arrived at the small town where they were camped. The town was named Jetzendorf. They had a brewery and I suppose a bakery and church. This was like all the small towns in Germany. Some count or countess owned the land around the town. Here, a countess owned it.

One of our men received a roll of fishing cord and a box of hooks from his sister. The soldiers who liked to fish fished in the stream in the valley. It was about 20 feet wide and grass grew out from the bank. Trout hid there. We baited our line with a grasshopper we caught in the grass and let it float. Out came the fish and we caught them.

One of the guys and I went with two of the girls in this town. They were the mayor's daughters. The one I went with was named Dorothy Burkhart. Their mother would cook the fish we caught and fix tomatoes and homemade bread for us.

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We sure were living it up.

I came back one night after eating fish and visiting the girls and found a sergeant I did not know waiting for me. He asked if I could drive a three -quarter ton Dodge truck. I told him I could. He said “Be ready in the morning. We will go in convoy to the place where we will be boarding the train and go through France to the harbor to board a ship for home.”

This was good news to me. We boarded the ships and sailed for New York. I was sent by train to Camp Atterbury, Indiana as this was near my home in Kentucky. I had gone into the Army on March 18, 1942 and was discharged on October 18, 1945. As I was leaving camp, loud speakers were encouraging us to join the Army Reserves. Not me. I only wanted to get back to civilian life.

I rode the bus to Indianapolis to my uncle’s house, stayed there with him and his family one day, then rode the bus to Paducah, Ky. I had called to tell my folks that I was coming home. My mother, dad and my uncle met me at the bus station. Mother said, “Why he looks the same!”

I may have looked the same but I would always remember my days in the army, the friends I met and especially the days of combat and the horrors of war.

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REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
MINISTÈRE DE LA DÉFENSE
SECRETARIAT D'ÉTAT À LA DÉFENSE, CHARGÉ DES ANCIENS COMBATTANTS
CONSEIL RÉGIONAL DE BASSE-NORMANDIE

DIPLÔME

de reconnaissance de la France envers les soldats des armées alliées, engagés dans les combats du débarquement en Normandie et de la Libération 1944-1945

à M *Thomas E. George*

1944 1945

Le Président du Conseil Régional de Basse-Normandie
Vainqueur du Calvados
Jean GARRIC

Le Secrétaire d'État à la Défense
chargé des Anciens Combattants
Jean-Pierre MASSERET

Le *mardi 31 août 2004*

French Commendation



American Campaign



European African
Middle Eastern Campaign

Medals from the War

THOMAS ELSEY GEORGE



World War II



Army of Occupation



Good Conduct

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SUPREME HEADQUARTERS
ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
Public Relations Division

8 May 45

This copy has been
transmitted to MOI London
And OWI Washington for
release to Combined U.S.
and Canadian Press and Radio.

SHAEF RELEASE
No. 1453

VICTORY ORDER OF THE DAY

Men and women of the Allied Expeditionary Force:

The crusade on which we embarked in the early summer of 1944 has reached its glorious conclusion. It is my especial privilege, in the name of all Nations represented in this Theatre of War, to commend each of you for valiant performance of duty. Though these words are feeble they come from the bottom of a heart overflowing with pride in your loyal service and admiration for you as warriors. Your accomplishments at sea, in the air, on the ground and in the field of supply, have astonished the world. Even before the final week of the conflict, you had put 5,000,000 of the enemy permanently out of the war. You have taken in stride military tasks so difficult as to be classed by many doubters as impossible. You have confused, defeated and destroyed your savagely fighting foe. On the road to victory you had endured every discomfort and privation and have surmounted every obstacle, ingenuity and desperation could throw in your path. You did not pause until our front was firmly joined up with the great Red Army coming from the East, and other Allied Forces, coming from the South. Full victory in Europe has been attained. Working and fighting together in a single and indestructible partnership you have achieved a perfection in unification of air, ground and naval power that will stand as a model in our time. The route you have travelled through hundreds of miles is marked by the graves of former comrades. From them have been exacted the ultimate sacrifice; blood of many nations – American, British, Canadian, French, Polish and others – has helped to gain the victory. Each of the fallen died as a member of the team to which you belong, bound together by a common love of liberty and a refusal to submit to enslavement. No monument of stone, no memorial of whatever magnitude could

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so well express our respect and veneration for their sacrifice as would perpetuation of the spirit of comradeship in which they died. As we celebrate Victory in Europe let us remind ourselves that our common problems of the immediate and distant future can be best solved in the same conceptions of cooperation and devotion to the cause of human freedom as have made this Expeditionary Force such a mighty engine of righteous destruction. Let us have no part in the profitless quarrels in which other men will inevitably engage as to what country, what service, won the European war. Every man, every woman, of every nation here represented, has served according to his or her ability, and the efforts of each have contributed to the outcome. This we shall remember – and in doing so we shall be revering each honored graves, and be sending comfort to the loved ones of comrades who could not live to see this day.

Dwight D. Eisenhower.



Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.

Winston Churchill

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World War II by the numbers . . .

Number of Americans serving in World War II	16.1 million
Average amount of time each U.S. military serviceman served overseas	16 months
Estimated number of people serving worldwide	1.9 billion
Estimated number of U.S. soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines killed in battle	292,000
- U.S. troops who perished outside of battle	114,000
- U.S. troops wounded	672,000
Deaths, in total, sustained by U.S. forces	405,000
U.S. military deaths as % of U. S. population	0.4%
Estimated deaths sustained by Polish military	123,000
- French military	213,000
- British military	373,000
- Chinese military	1.3 million
- Japanese military	1.3 million
- German military	3.5 million
- Russian military	11 million
Estimated number of British civilians killed	93,000
- French	350,000
- Japanese	672,000
- German	780,000
- Polish	5.7 million
- Russian	7 million

