

10 February 1966

Dear George:

I just related the story from memory about one of the Generals up the tree. I'm sure it was Danforth who pulled the "bugger out". So ask him which one it was.

The medics that were attached to G Co. were most welcome, we gathered them in amongst us as well we should, but there agains, you not being with a line company, but a headquarters outfit, you would not quite understand the "closeness" one would feel or have with the riflemen, machine-gunners, ammo bearers, etc, of the Fighting Forces.

"Petey Potey" Luolo, was what we called Pete Luoto. He received a piece of shrapnel in his neck and his arm became paralyzed in Normandy. I think he came from Ironton, Michigan. (My wife was reading your letter of February 8, and I tried to remember where old Pete was from, now I reread your letter, and Walt says Ironwood, Bill says Iron Mountain, now I wonder, here is a third town to make your task easier.

I have a company picture, taken when we were in Camp MacKall and I'll see if I can add any names to your list. We had a number of transfers out and then some in, after the picture so I'll see how many I can identify. Better than that, I'll send it to you and you can check your roster with it.

And still no mention of our good S/Sgt. Word -- It's funny, but my mind is a complete blank on his whereabouts in Normandy. I was the Sr. Sergeant when we combined the 1st and 3rd Platoons, hell, I was the only Sgt, when we combined them, so Word should have been there, but he wasn't. (We couldn't find stripes for Danforth)

There was a Luietenant, a little round faced rascal, that pulled a pin on a grenade, let it pop, and handed it to Virg during a little shooting scrape we had with some -- McDonough -- was his name -- German paratroopers, that morning of Purple Heart Lane. He was shot in both wrists later on, the same day, Price was killed--Price, 1st Scout, rifleman, was killed as he approached a fortified house, a potato masher dropped under him and killed him. So this is probably Hasel H. Price. I was within ten yards of him when it happened, acting as second scout when the masher came out the window. Then all hell broke loose--Danforth, Perry, Bradley, Orlowsky, Turk, McDonagugh, was leading the patrol, and there wasn't a thing we could do, Perry had carried a bazooka for the time, but the bateries want dead and he'd dropped it in a cistern a couple days before and our rifle fire was not very effective against a mess of machine guns in a thick walled stone house.

Of all the hiring and firing we had had since I've been sitting on the local Board of Education; it has been with the narcissitic coaches, and all schools seem to run into this trouble, especially with basketball coaches. So it grieves me deeply that -- but what would one expect of a Division Headquarters individual?

I'm sorry -- Eddie Holse was not the medic -- as I remember.

They tied a rope around Turk and led him around for a couple days. He didn't come around for several days until Purple Heart Lane deal and then it was kinda hard explaining whose side he was on this particular manuver.

Try this duty roster on for size with some of the other guys:

3rd Platoon Leader - Lt. Nathan M. Marks with Lt. McDonough as assistant leader. Sgt. Word was the platoon sergeant while Cpl. Sobieralski was the communications corporal.

1st Squad of 3rd Platoon

Sgt. _____ Serowiec
Richard "Dick" Richards, 1st Scout
Walter Turk, 2nd Scout
David Mythaler, rifleman
Tony Pignatello, rifleman
Howard Cavanaugh, rifleman
Eugene Pickering, rifleman
Dock Orłowski, rifleman
Bill Kopp, machine gunner
Pete Luoto, ass't. machine gunner
Buford Perry, bazookaman
Cpl. Virgil Danforth

2nd Squad of 3rd Platoon

John Schadt, Sergeant
Tony Burnett
Frank Goodall
Milo Ludy
Felix Lopachin
James Reynolds
Earl Chellin
Anthony Selemi
Mike Mastrandea
Mike Pushcare
Tony Salazer
Cpl. Gene Morrison

Mortar Squad, 3rd Platoon

Sgt. John Urbank
F. K. Morrison, gunner
Paul Hellinger
Lester Senter
Howard Lewark
Clarence Klopp

Castona, as I said was Company Commo.

Joseph Concepcion Garcia was a corporal in the squad of the 1st platoon under Yacquinto that went down with the plane. My third squad, third platoon was somewhat of a rest area for the troubled, whenever anyone was having trouble with their sergeant they would come to me and ask to be in my squad. At one time or another I had Garcia, Morrison, (Gene), F. K. Morrison, Perry, Clyne, Quick, Cavanaugh, Hellinger, Senter, Lewark, Soberiealski, Wilson, Klusek, Connolly, Flannery, McCowin, plus a few more.

From a distance, I seem to be a pretty good guy, but after they got to know me, anywhere was better than in my squad. (Your latest writing paper reminds me of 1000 franc notes, that we used for toilet paper, that we found in a bunker--enough said!

Do you have a roster of the men K.I.A. in the 101st Division. I know if I hear the medics name I'll remember it -- or if I find the letter I wrote home on July 10, 1944 describing the action to my folks--I'm sure it is in that one.

Well good night you all,

Good luck, As ever,

Jack

Best Soldier
IN THE
E.T.O

1. Name Mr. John T. Urbank Sgt REAR GUARD IN THE
rank on duty? Sgt IN WHAT DEPARTMENT AND WHAT UNIT DO YOU
belong? G/Company of the 501st Parachute Regiment

2. Can you recall anything about your stay in the underground in terms of experiences
and the situation, needs, maintenance, etc? Yes

3. What do you recall of your trip to the Bay of Biscay, France, in 1944?
(Remember Dunkirk?) We Flew

4. Did anything ever happen to you during the trip? Yes

5. What was your worst time? Where was the land? Wharsh -
on land

6. What was the worst time you spent in prison? Yes
Right Fit

7. What did you do during your time in prison? ran

8. Did you stay in any other places? Yes
Li. H. and A.S. + Caston

9. What was the worst time you spent in prison? etc

10. How do you feel about your stay in prison? you were there so
you should know

11. Did you accomplish your goals? Ha Ha Ha

12. Who was the worst person you met in prison? Capt Kraeger
No

13. How did you feel about your stay in prison?
I ran
I had
I stayed hid

14. Did you ever see any other soldiers in prison?
No

14. Can you recall any soldier who served as a radio operator in your company of D-day?

15. Do you know anyone who can help me identify the medic who was killed near Pouppeville at daybreak on D-day. I was twenty yards away at the time?

16. The following men have been mentioned from time to time as being members of G Company. Do you know their present whereabouts? Also check these that you know were in on D-day.

Luther Knowlton *Co day*
Virgil Danforth *D day*
Ralph Manley
Ben F. Stephens
John T. Urbank *D day*
Fred Orłowski *D day*
Raymond Turk *D day*
McIntyre Aiken *D day*

Bill Kopp *(then friend) D day*
Albert Milakeve
Irving Ireland
Donald R. Castona *D day*
Eugene T. Cavanagh *D day*
Lionel Cole *D day*
Wilbur Ingalls *D day*
James Goss

Richard Potter
Joseph Kneebel *D day*
Harold Nolley
Sgt. Tippet *D day*
Warren Rudy *D day*
Paul Jones *D day*
Wilson Boback *D day*
Robert Dulaway

Walter

There was a Stephens but I remember him being K.I.A. He always called me plow step and I was told that he lost both legs in an artillery barrage and died in shock.

Al and I buddied around a good bit but if he was in on D-day - he must of caught a quick one on left because towards the last S. Co consisted of Lt (Bulcher) Knowlton St. Barber - Buf Perry & killed in Bastogne. Jones Orłowski, Virgil Danforth, Turk, Joe Kneebel, Castona, J.T. Urbank, "Vee", plus a few more (K.I.A)

I'm almost sure he was in on D day

Warren Rudy (Big Stoop)

give me this boys address if you have it. He was in my squad!

Jones was in my Squad in Normandy and always gripped when I put him on outpost duty or any other hazardous detail -

Then he became 1st Sgt, (he took about to come to the 50th) and in Holland he ran me out of Co Hqs because I was stealing meat that he had stolen. That night Speerbedel Smith burned down the Co Hqs and my boys and I sat up and watched them evacuate the place. Next morning he asked where was I. - I told him I

Warren's moved to the Army...

John T. Urbank (Sgt) (Third Platoon, 3rd Squad)

George Co/501st

My squad consisted of F. K. Morrison (gunner, both legs broken on D-day jump), Calvin Klopp (killed as he went out of the door of plane by machine gun fire), Paul Hillinger, Lester Senter, and Howard Lewark. Hillinger was killed in Bastogne. Senter and Lewark were wounded in Holland and Bastogne and I lost track of them.

In the marshaling area, the P.A. system had the Spike Jones records -- Black Magic, Chloë, and Moonlight Cocktail and played them for two weeks (or was it two years) every hour for eight or ten hours a day.

We had air corps cooks that were a great relief from the "belly-robbin bastardly feul ups" we had in our battalion mess. Did I ever tell you about the time we had a V.D. inspection and lost our entire cooking staff? They put the permanent K.P.'s on as cooks and they did a fair job for a couple of weeks and then they started to trading our meat ration to their various girls and the sugar for whiskey. But that is another story!

We all had trench knives and hunting knives to strap on our boots to cut ourselves out of our chutes in case of a tree landing. We spent our hours sharpening them, and our bayonets to a razor edge. We played cards, wrote letters that weren't mailed until after D-day. We gave each other short haircuts and some Geronimo haircuts.

We wanted to give Virgil Danforth one, but he said No! and meant it, so I put on a pair of 12 oz. boxing gloves with "Virg" and boxed a couple rounds with him. We had his gloves really tied on good; mine were laced loosely. On a given signal, Hillinger, Senter, Lewark and I jumped Virg, held him down and started to give him a Geronimo cut. While we clipped his one side he started cussing and telling us what he was going to do to us when he got free.

We grew most cowardly then and decided to let him up. He had long blond hair and we really scalped the one side. When he was released by us we just lay on the ground and laughed. He was too much of a gentleman to kick us while we were laying around laughing, and we had the boxing gloves tied on him so he couldn't hit us too hard. He then went to the company barber and he straightened it up some but he was rather skinned on the one side.

So D-day came. Virg dropped into the hedgerows--assistant squad leader with his O3 in the equipment bundle, with the grenade launcher, and all he had for a weapon the first few hours was one of those long old world war I bayonets.

He pulled old "Killer" Taylor out of a tree where he was hung up. Remember everything was code-named--division headquarters was "Kangaroo" I believe and the top general was "Killer Kangaroo".

All during training they told us to let the medics help get "hung up" chutists out of the trees and this fellow kept asking some one to help him out of the tree and everyone was ignoring him, until he stepped old "Virg" and informed him that he was their commanding general and it was permissible to help him out of his chute--such was the price we had to pay for being body guards of Division Headquarters.

Well anyway Virg was creased along side of the skull just above his ear at Pouppeville and when the medics bandaged him they cut all the hair of the long side of his head --the result was a "blond Geronimo"!

We were taken to a quonset hut where we were informed of our mission and our good Captain Vernon Kraeger (I named one of my sons after him) informed us of how each and every one of us would and should be able to lead the company on this mission in case his presence was not there.

Michael Aloysius Rielly, small and red haired, freckled, and Irish was

the company runner, and when Captain Kraeger said this he said, "Oh No, just don't say that Captain!" Kraeger said "This may be so, no matter how our feelings about the officers were, we may lose some."

"That's not it" said Rielly, "I'm jumping right behind you, and if they get you they also may get me, and I sure as hell don't want that!"

"Gee, said the Captain, "I thought I had at least one friend in the outfit!"

Rielly's chute came unstrung and spilled out in the plane before the D-day drop and remember the D+1 incident when three fellows parachuted in--well old Rielly was one of them.

Also the game of hearts seemed to be one long continuous game while we were awaiting our jump into France.

The evening we were to drop into Normandy we had pork chops, green peas, apple sauce, and potatoes, plus bread and the very plentiful orange marmalade remember the yellow peelings in the marmalade? They added a little spice to a commonplace meal!

Our colonel didn't think the greasy pork chops would sit well on our stomachs or on the aluminum floor of the plane so he had the cooks dump them, and we had the balance of the meal (The American soldier is the Best fed, Best clothed, and Best equipped soldier in the World!) And that brings up another complaint--you rascals in Division Headquarters smoked Camels, Luckies, Phillip Morris, and all the good brands while we on the line smoked Wings, Chelseas, Spuds, Raleighs, and any other crap that the boys in Div. Headquarters had no use for.

Back to my narration--we struggled into our harnesses and formed our sticks. The red cross girls were trying to be helpful with coffee and donuts. A navy ensign was attached to our battalion for navy gunnery. He had never jumped before and had volunteered, and when we put him in his parachute, we gave him six weeks of parachute training in six minutes.

"Just make damn sure you hook up and follow the crowd out of the deer!"

Then while we loaded into the plane we were told there would be light flak. There were eighteen of us in our stick -- Lt. Barker, Sgt. Urbank, Pfc Morrison, Pfc Klep, Pfc Hillinger, Pfc Lewark, Pfc Senter, Sgt Castona, Pfc Perry -- "That's half of them, pretty good remembering for twenty years ago!" Well we loaded up and headed up to form all the Vees of C-47's.

Lt. Barker was standing in the door and old "J. T." was standing right behind him watching the lights. It must have been a half hour of circling before we head out over the calm, or so it seemed, English Channel. It seems that we headed over a few islands off the coast of Normandy and some flak came up, and then we headed towards our Drop Zone.

"Holy cow -- machine guns -- antiaircraft guns,-- flares -- burning houses -- barns burning -- and more tracers than you can count hoses full of them sailing up to you, then cracking like strings of firecrackers as they went by. The twenty millimeter stuff exploded above the planes, the bigger stuff exploded way above us. I think we were flying at twelve hundred feet, as soon as we reached the coast; we stood up and hooked up."

The plane in front of us was carrying one half of the First Platoon and received a direct hit and exploded. We lost all the men in that plane. The plane on our right wing received a hit, exploded into flames and peeled down in an arching ball of fire. The first, third, and thirteenth men in that one escaped. That was half of our platoon that went down in that one. Chellin, John Schadt, Brown, Lt. Crouch, and all the rest of the second squad except Gaudreau went down in that plane.

Our pilot, about that time forgot all about getting us to the drop zone and just started circling aimlessly about the area. We were all alone--no other plane was in sight. The red light was on--we were waiting for the green. So at 0135 hours he flicked the green switch and out we went--in to three streams of machine gun fire. Klepp was killed as he went out of

the door. Morrison's chute malfunctioned and he went streaking down. We heard the Krauts yelling, "Halte var dar! American Falshermjaeger". That is my remembering it phonetically.

We had our equipment bundles with phosphorescent cord and the Krauts could see them glowing from where they were, and sent streams of machine gun bullets into them, ricocheting in all directions. My mortar is still there as far as I know! My musette bag with my change of undies is still there also.

I figure at times that -- well never mind -- it was a cow pasture that I landed in--an overpopulated cow pasture at that.

Still those machine guns, three of them, kept pouring tracers over us as we attempted to get out of our parachutes. One could see the shadowy figures of the Krauts shoulders above the hedgerow and the single shots as those trigger happy gentlemen shot at anything that looked suspicious.

My rifle was broken down into three parts, and in a Griswold container. I lay on my stomach, placed a phosphorus grenade in easy reach, lay my rifle trigger housing group under my chest, put the barrel into the stock and forgot where the hell I put the trigger housing group. Did you ever try to find a trigger housing group in a densely populated cow pasture at 1:40 hours in the morning?

With three machine guns sending their white tracers cracking about you I tried cutting my chute harness to free myself from the chute, after I located the trigger housing group and about thirteen piles of self cold puddles of cow manure. I hit a double adapter and dulled my great big Bowie Knife (\$7.50 in our local sporting goods store), so I took my issue trench knife and did the same thing with it -- and tossed them both away. So then I carefully unsnapped the right leg, left leg, and chest snap and proceeded to back away from the Krauts who were still about a hundred yards away. Shooting -- not me, but them Damned Krauts!

To my right I noticed what I thought was one of my men and crawled -- no, wormed my way up to him, clicked my clicker, no reaction, said our password Flash -- no reaction. I debated whether to toss a grenade because I could see it was a soldier and he wasn't acting friendly. (Later, months later, I found that it was F. K. Morrison and he had both legs broken and was in shock.)

I backed away, heard a click behind me, answered the click with my two clicks, Flash -- Thunder -- Welcome. I found a friend. Sergeant Castena, our *comme* sergeant was there. We discussed our present situation. Castena says, "Do you want to charge those machine guns?" I said, "No, not really!"

He says "I didn't want to either, but I just thought I'd ask."

"Alright, lets get back behind these trees and find some place where there aren't so many bullets flying." You cover me and I'll cover you."

So we wormed our way through the cow pasture to a row of trees behind us. Castena got there first and turned left. I must have turned right because we didn't see each other again until a week later at Purple Heart Lane when some Kraut paratroopers were counterattacking and I was hung up on top of a hedge-row with my canteen caught in a barbed wire fence and here came the Krauts shooting and moving into the other side of the field. I'm trying to get back but my canteen is hung in the fence.

Castena unfastens my canteen, grabs my legs, and flops me belly skidding behind the crown of dirt. We then proceeded to beat back the attack.

So I crawled through this cow pasture, and the cow flops I missed while I was looking for my trigger housing group, I scopped up with my helmet, my jacket front and my cartridge belt. I was weeks, no I think months before I finally got the cartridge belt clean. Believe me!

I started moving along the hedgerow and the place was crawling--no running with Krauts. I must have had buck fever because here I'd been trained to kill these rascals for two years and they were all about me, some not more than 40

feet away and I didn't yell Geronimo and start shooting. I just kinda waited and let them walk away.

Or as Colonel Ewell said after the mission, in his Georgia drawl -- "I'm proud of you men, you fought bravely, cautiously and an intelligent fight." And old Aloysious Rielly said "Colonel, you may say cautious but I'm sure as hell saying I personally was cowardly".

I kinda think that the plurality of the Wehrmacht scared our minority of G Company away because I strolled around in the darkness for an hour or so and couldn't find anybody.

By then I was dog tired and so being the country boy that I am, I found a stand of wheat, walked so I wouldn't beat a path into it, curled up under my innocence and slept until dawn.

At first light a group of light bombers churned up a gun emplacement some two or three miles away.

I then proceeded to a road and saw Hillinger scoot across about thrity yards in front of me on the other side of the hedgerow. I yelled "Hey Paul" and we met real quick like. He had been lying in the ditch most of the night with Krauts walking up and down the road, -- companies of them!

Paul and I were kind of easing along from one field to another when we met up with four fellows from the 82nd. They were lost and led by a corporal so they joined us. We went a few more fields and found Howard Lewark, so there were seven of us. Three were equipped with M-1 rifles and four with carbines. Okay, so we need a little more fire power. Let's find a machine gun.

We noticed a number of equipment bundles. All of them contained rations, radio batteries, wire, ammunition, but no machine gun and no mortar so we decided to find out where we were and head to where we were supposed to be.

I appointed a couple of the boys as scouts and they said, "You're getting paid to lead us, so you lead us." I was first scout. Hillinger came next and then Lewark with those four 82nd division fellows.

We finally hit a road junction and got ourselves oriented. We were seven miles from Pouppeville so we headed in that direction.

We had covered about three miles staying off the roads, moving cautiously, being shot at, shooting back and getting away--until we came up to a farmhouse and the boys were pretty well played out, because those three miles on the map had some pretty wide detours around places that had too many unfriendly faces.

Whenever we hit a road in our detour, one of the fellows had a pair of wire cutters and he'd crawl up those concrete telephone poles and cut wires. On one stretch of road we must have crossed four times in four hundred yards and this nut insisted on cutting wires every time we crossed.

I went up to the door, knocked most politely, and a French housekeeper in uniform answered the door. She took one look at my unsanitary likeness and very unhospitably slammed the door in my face.

I knocked a little firmer with my gun butt and the gentleman farmer, white moustache, smoking jacket and all answered the door. "Angliase?" "No--American!" "Etates Unis?", "Oui" (You see I speak the language like a native -- of Peninsula, Ohio.)

This was at about 1500 army time. All we had had to eat was some D ration chocolate and we hadn't bothered to take any K-rations from the equipment bundles in our search for a machine gun. Poor leadership and poorer logistics. Well to make a long story short, he invited us in, we told him where we were heading. He said don't go that way--too many Germans. Go this way--longer but no Germans. Okay -- but first --have a bottle of wine each. Seven drunk paratroopers heading for Pouppeville.

We headed about a half mile cross lots and some kraut in a church steeple cut loose at us with a machine gun and we dove for cover and decided to go back to the French farm and "hole up" in a cider mill there and sober up, rest up, and wait for dark and see if we could travel a little safer that way.

John T. Urbank

2/2/66

G/501st

Bill Kopp will soon receive a letter from me questioning his sudden inability to write. He was our platoon machine gunner, a good one, and one time as we were standing behind a hedgerow, ready to move up, a Kraut with a machine gun raked the area. Bill had the gun on his shoulder and just dropped backwards, the forty-two pounds of light machine gun bounced on his rather emaciated chest and both lay inert. We all thought that he'd had it. When the firing finally ceased, Bill rolled over looked up sheepishly and said, "Boys, when I hit the ground, I really hit it."

Bernie Gaudreau was the thirteenth man in the plane that went down in a slow arch. He was rather badly burned and landed in one of the swamps, luckily, as when he finally got out of the plane it was rather low, and his chute did not give him the full benefit of its air resistancy (is there such a word?). He was from New England and could speak French fluently, and he holed up with a French family, who kept him hid until the area was liberated.

"Pappy" Kraeger was the best! He knew who was doing their best, and who was gold-bricking, and acted accordingly. When we were at Camp Mackall we were supposed to pace off a mile and then figure how many paces it took to make a hundred yards. I paced the mile and ended up with a figure far short of the average. Captain Kraeger informed me that after retreat he and I would get on full field packs and pace the mile again, just so he could show me how to count.

After the first two hundred yards, if my memory serves me right, he apologized and said that he would do the same in front of the company the first thing in the morning. Back in those days I took a forty inch step and could keep it up most of the day. "Pappy" was strickly G.I. and took a thirty inch one.

The cooks we had in the marshaling area, were not our own. They were probably supplied by Div. Hqtrs. -- There again you proved my point. The rear echelon at Div. Headquarters ate steak, while we of the fighting forces weren't even allowed to eat greasy pork chops. But there again, it may have been the religion that was a factor with you all. I understand that A-rabs don't eat pork, and I'm not being malicious they had all kinds at division headquarters.

Ken Oliver was probably in the plane with the second squad that went down (It was from the 3rd Platoon. Here again I'm pulling from memory. Sgt. Ward, Gaudreau and one other man came out. It is most peculiar that no mention of Ward -- or maybe the rascal got himself killed. He was in our platoon (sergeant) and finally in Holland we had a get-to-gether with the Company commander and told him that we were going to shoot the bastard, if they didn't ship him out so far that we couldn't see him. I can't even remember his first name, for two years, he ranked over us, and I don't think any of us could give you his first name.

Did Danforth tell you about William W. Wier, first class fighting man? He and Rafiella flushed a German out of a bedroom during the fight at Pouppeville, and Wier told Mike to guard the door while he enjoyed some of the companionship of the French gal. Mike guarded while Bill--well he didn't even take his boots off. And then Wier told Rafiella to go on in and he'd stand guard, but Mike was a little dubious and left the house. Later when we were relieved to go back to England, we went back to Pouppeville and Wier went to look up his chance companion, there she was, head shaved and very much in disgrace.

Another time just before that episode, Wier was on one side of a wall, and a Kraut was on the other side, they kept jumping up and down trading shots, so finally Wier got tired of this nonsense, shot, remained standing, and shot the Kraut as he came up to shoot again.

Then there was a kid by the name of Bell, he headed for a house at Pouppeville and a German came out, levelled a pistol (P-39) at him and before he could fire, Bell jammed his bayonet into the Kraut's mouth, and out the back of his head, blood gushed, just like when you do the same to a turkey. Bell reached down, the Kraut had suddenly assumed a reclining position, unsnapped his bayonet off his M#1 and would never again wear, or have anything to do with one. When we had inspection, he would take a carbine and be a mortar ammo bearer. These are second hand accounts, I was not at Pouppeville until the day after, but I'm sure Turk, Kopp, Orlowsky, and Danforth will vouch for this. Thank you again for Castona's, Cavanagh's, Coles, and Milakeve's addresses.

We did associate with our other platoons, and I remember Ingalls now after some thought, but you must realise that we had such a rapid turnover after Normandy that you couldn't keep track of them. Like the time we had a replacement delivered to us in Alsace -- and we had some shelling, he was wounded after being in the Company twenty minutes and shipped back to Clean Sheets!

3 Oct 1964

Dear George,

First things first -

In all my forty three years, I have been called 'Jack'.

Once when I graduated from high school, I was called John and all the class as a unit, swelled their collective heads to see just who happened to be 'John'.

I've never received a "Dear John" letter. When you go, you don't go to my namesake.

So much for that!

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Sgt Word, Gaudreau and one other man came out.

It is most peculiar that no mention of Word - or maybe the rascal got himself killed -

He was our platoon Sgt and finally in Holland we had a get together with the Co. Commander and told him that the first chance we had, we were going to shoot the bastard, if they didn't step him out so far that we couldn't see him.

I can't even remember his first name, for two years he ranked over us, and I don't think any

of us could give you his first name.

Did Danforth tell you about William W. Wier, first class fighting man?

Jim and Raffella flushed a German out of a bedroom during the fight at Pauperville, and Wier told Mike to guard the door while he enjoyed some of the companionship of the French gal.

Mike guarded while Bill - well he didn't even take his boots off.

and then Wier told Raffella to go on in and he'd stand guard, but Mike was a little dubious and left the house.

Later, when we were relieved to go back to England, we went back to Pauperville, and Wier went to look up his chance companion, there she was, head shaved and very much in disgrace.

Another time, just before that episode, Wier was on one side of a wall, and a Kraut was on

the other side, they kept jumping up and trading shots, so finally Blue got tired of this nonsense, shot, remained standing, and shot the Kraut as he came up to shoot again.

Then there was a kid by the name of Bell, he headed for a house at Pauperville and a German came out, leveled a pistol (P-38) at him and before he could fire, Bell jammed his bayonet into the Kraut's mouth, and out the back of his head,

Blood gushed, just like when you do the same to a turkey.

Bell reached down, the Kraut had suddenly assumed a reclining position, unsnapped his bayonet off of his M-1 and would never again wear, or have anything to do with one.

When we had inspection, he would take a carbine and be a mortar ammo bearer.

These are second hand accounts.

I was not at Pauperville until the day after, but I'm most sure, Turk, Kopp, Orlovsky,

and Ranforth will vouch for this. ~~That~~

Thank you again for Castonas
Cavanaugh's, Coles and Mulheaves
addresses.

We did associate with our other
platoons, and I remember Ingalls
now after some thought, but you
must realize that we had such
a rapid turnover after Normandy
that you couldn't keep track of them.

Like the time we had a replacement
delivered to us in the Jural sector
in Alsace - and we had some
shelling, he was wounded after
being in the Co twenty minutes
and shipped back to Clean Sheets!

No need to answer this letter -
Strictly informative and
Thanks again

Most Sincerely

Jack -

January 30, 1966

Dear John:

Many thanks for your fine report. I think I can understand how these "long" reports develop. As you start recollecting facts, they begin to tumble one after the other from our dormant memory cells. I can rattle off things real fast. In fact I must type my material because my mind works faster than my hands. The thoughts come piling out and I need to get them down as fast as I can so there will be room for the next one to be released.

When the yellow questionnaire arrived with just a word or two in response to each of my questions I showed it to my wife with this comment -- "This guy must be like some of my students -- he must think the lead in pencils is rationed and wants to do his bit in saving the material." You surprised me with the later response. It was the same way with Virgil Danferth. First, there was a trickle and then the flood came. Luther Knowlton did the same -- none of you guys has much to say about him -- why the "Butcher" tag you guys added to his name. He is in the insurance business in North Carolina. He didn't reply a second time. I have written to Cavanagh and Castena along with Ireland. Wrote to Kepp a second time but with all the "wild" nicknames (if there is truth in them) I doubt that he will answer. He probably steers clear of you guys so the truth will not out in the presence of his beloved. We had a guy in our outfit who got a battlefield commission (and it went to his head) who came to one of the reunions acting real big -- until his jeep driver dropped a kidding remark in the presence of BIG's wife about his running around with nurses in England. He never went back to another reunion. He won't even help on company information for me because he's still sore at the guys and I wasn't there!

The yellow paper was all I had that was suitable to take the rexograph machine I had available to me. It had no special designation. I knew you were kidding anyway.

There is nothing wrong with your writing. One Divarty trooper wrote to me and I spent two weeks deciphering it. He printed his reply to make it "legible" -- wonder what the writing would have been like?

I recall the Spike Jones records also. We were in the same marshaling area whether you guys liked it or not. Cannot understand why you had ~~punk~~ cheps when we had steak -- they must have been punishing your VD cooks. As for ciggies -- I don't recall anything about you guys getting gypped. I didn't smoke then and still don't. It is possible though. No wonder you guys didn't like the generals -- they really discriminated against you guys. Enjoyed your description of Danferth's haircut.

Danferth says the medic from your outfit lives in his home town of Indianapolis. His name is Melley. Ken Oliver says he was a medic in your outfit. He was in one of the planes that had only a couple survivors. Captain Kraeger seems to have been the greatest as far as several of your people were concerned.

One of the characteristics of that jump for most people seems to have been the fact that so much personal equipment was stripped off in the jump -- which I think is a good indication that the planes didn't slow down. I did a somersault between my risers and were they twisted as I came down. How was Caudreau

lost? I think Danforth mentions him as a comrade man who was killed in Normandy. Did you guys ever fraternize with any of the guys from the other platoons? We seldom did? We always felt superior to the other sections in our company but as I think about it--some of our radio operators were pretty frail looking these guys were rear echelon though.

The bundles you guys passed along the road were just what we needed. At that time we were not jumping the full radio set. I jumped half an SCR-300 and a buddy (in another plane) jumped the other half. He lost his half plus most of his equipment. Mine stayed on--maybe I was just better than the rest of you guys at strapping it down--HA--never jumped with combat equipment before. I remember the Holland jump. What a rainstorm we jumped in--it was raining helmets, rifles, gas masks, bandoliers, radio's, M-1's, tommy guns, and one streamer that I observed. I spent several anxious moments dodging equipment. I jumped that one with a full radio set.

I usually try to respond right away with an acknowledgment to each of the guys who come through but everyse--often I also get carried away--like today. Many thanks again for your help. I'm sending you a decal for your windshield perhaps you might like to put it on. I ordered some of them from Association so I could send them to people who don't belong. You asked for Cavanagh's address. Here it is: Eugene T. Cavanagh, Jr., Warren Road, Croton-on-Hudson, New York. Here is the address of your old buddy listed in the Association Directory: Mr. Albert J. Milakeve, 210 Crawford Avenue, West Conshohocken, Pa. Donald R. Castana, 6633 Fountains Avenue, Newark, California. Lionel Cole is from: R.D. #1, Penn Yan, New York. Wilbur Ingalls is also from New York state but you didn't mention him. I also have his address.

Thank you again for your help. You have helped take care of some missing niches in this account. I hope I can do justice to the memory of these boys.

George E. Koskinaki
1391¹/₄ Edmore Drive
Detroit, Michigan 48205

February 8, 1966

Mr. Jack Urbank
Wholesale Opticians
Peninsula, Ohio 44264

Dear Jack:

Am in receipt of your second fine report which arrived on Saturday. Have been busy preparing a list of Company G men from the comments of all the guys who have replied thus far. I note that it contains 66 names so it should help to ring some bells for some of these guys. I am sending you one of these "rosters" in the hope that more will come to light. This is really fascinating detective work.

I work on this material from 0800 to 1000 each morning and then head for school where I have another hour to make my school preparations as well as plan my daily program for the basketball team. Some of the girls are nagging me to set up a date some evening when they can make funge for the boys in Viet Nam. Gripes, there just isn't enough time in each day for everything I would like to do. When I get hot on the trail of a clue for D-day I try to follow it all out so some other things have to suffer.

Bill Kopp replied with a big long report after I sent a second reminder. He certainly provided a lot of help. What is the correct spelling for Pete Luote (Louote)? He hails from up near my home town in the upper peninsula. Kopp says he is from Iron Mountain while Walter Turk says he is from Ironwood. Can you verify?

You described General Taylor "up a tree". Bill Kopp describes Gen. McAuliffe up a tree. Now I've got you! Which is it. I have a description of General Taylor's landing but not one from General McAuliffe. He skipped his landing when he wrote to me last year. Anyway it is funny as hell and deserves a place in "an enlisted man's book".

Perhaps some of the new names I have provided will give you some new recollections. Danforth mentions a Tetreau and a Gaudreau as present in Normandy. Did you have both men in your outfit? Am waiting for a reply from Orlewsky. Turk was knocked silly by a piece of flak. Didn't remember a thing after Lt. Marks yelled "five minutes" in the plane. A big dent was later located in his helmet. Orlewsky located him.

Must be off to school now but here is more "brain work" for you. Thanks again.

February 9, 1966

Dear Jack:

Last night when I returned from one of my basketball games (we lost it to a top team in the last 28 seconds because of the loss of two key players via the personal foul route--with Coach Dave Strack of the University of Michigan looking on) I found a note on the dresser from my sleeping wife to call Harold Nolley in Indianapolis. I had sent him a reminder to give me some info and his "darling" wife pressured him into calling me.

We had a nice 25 minute chat in which I think I have now learned the identity of the medic who was killed at Fouppeville. According to Harold who was one of your George Company medics, this trooper's name was Eddie Mole. He thinks the guy came from Buffalo, New York. Does this ring a bell with you. He stated that both medics were with the company all along. It probably was that you guys didn't "fraternize" with the "pill-rollers."

I am writing to Bill Kopp, Walter Turk, Virgil Danforth, and Ken Oliver this morning to request any additional information that this bit of news might stir from your long dormant memory cells. I hope you can elaborate further on it though I am certainly most satisfied with all you have done. Nolley is now a supervisor at the big Chrysler Plant in Indy.

Thank you again for everything.


George E. Koskimaki

URBANK OPTICAL LABORATORIES
WHOLESALE OPTICIANS
PENINSULA, OHIO

14 Feb. 1946

Dear George

I'm sorry that I cannot give you
any more information pertaining to D. My

my psychiatrist informs me that it
is returning my combat fatigue!

Sincerely

John

URBANK OPTICAL LABORATORIES
WHOLESALE OPTICIANS
PENINSULA, OHIO

15 May 1966

Dear George -

I hate like hell to be "smart alecky" and then have to explain my so called humor.

I had a series of letters all prepared for you concerning my "combat fatigue" and other ills I contracted during my sojourn in Paris, Brussels London and Vienna.

But you closed your questions and my attempt at humor fell in the waste-basket.

I surmised that you all had your pocketbook team going to the U.S. all star finals, and I kept looking for it in the news, but then I guess you must of ran into some referees who were "Tankers" with futton or maybe shop keepers from Phoenix City.

By all means come up to the shop Monday morning.

Better than that.

When you finish your meeting



on Sunday at Cleveland, come over
 to my house and we will put you
 up in the Guest Room, will appear
 and deal you and tell all sort of
 lies and occasionally state a truth.

Now I'm nervous about the
 wife and young ones included, if
 they are coming along.

We have the room and we
 would be more than delighted!

I know that you bring in Dr. Hy
 wouldn't know how to read a map
 so I will draw a sketch on how to
 get here.

Coming south
 on Route 8
 about 6 miles
 past the Turnpike
 intersection is
 Quack Rd



go to
 Peninsula
 take the
~~the~~ Akron-
 Peninsula
 Road towards
 Akron and
 Quack Rd
 is the second
 road on the
 left.
 Now you all
 come - You have
 fun

Quack Rd

May 16, 1968

Dear Jack:

I've been an extremely busy boy during the past several months working on some of the other companies -- especially E Company of the 506th. The former commanding officer sent me a complete roster which was issued on May 1 of 1944 and this has made my job so much easier with that group.

On Sunday of this coming week I am leaving early from Detroit and will be traveling to Cleveland to attend the Northern Ohio Chapter of the 101st Airborne Association meeting at 7:30 that afternoon. Either Sunday or Monday morning I'd like to drop by Peninsula, Ohio and leave your campers picture with you. I want to drive over to Aurora and see if I can locate one of the 902nd paratroopers by the name of Cliff McDowell. May see a guy in Independent from the 1st AA Bn also. In his case, he might just be at the meeting. If I pass through Peninsula on Monday morning I will not take up much of your time. I realize it is a work day but somehow I suspect that Jack Frank has his own business -- being in optical work -- yet you might just be out on the road.

Harry Flisevich who jumped with I Company of 901st is one of the officers of the Northern Ohio chapter and he invited me to their meeting. He felt I could get a lot of valuable information from the guys -- though a lot of them are from the 337th Glider regiment and they came in by sea on D+1 and had so little to do on D-day -- if anything. He also has a 15 minute tape recording made with NBC of his D-day and Normandy experiences. I am taking a tape recorder along with several tapes -- will transcribe his tape and perhaps some of the bull session conversations that come out of their meeting.

Since my last conversation with you I've heard from Raymond Weiss who sent a quick reply to tell me he would prepare some material for me. I've been waiting quite a while for it. Sent him a reminder last week -- also one to Wilson Bobson whom I located through the postmaster of a small northern Michigan town. He called from only 28 miles from my home -- in fact the towns are pretty far apart up there and he was actually in the next town -- small world. Paul Jones promised some info but said it would be delayed because of illness with his mother. McIntyre (Aker) sent a reply and gave me the address for Darwin Moore. Walter Ingalls sent me some snapshots of he and several buddies. Picciello didn't respond and neither did Arnold Blizarsow. Walter Davis sent two responses from California and sent a lot of material on Bastogne. He came into your company shortly before D-day. I suspect he never made it to Normandy though. He wants a questionnaire but I feel he'll be disappointed when he sees the questions pertain to D-day only. He sent photostats or xerox duplications of a roster he had -- the old guys were almost all gone from the outfit.

Jack I still feel you've had one of the best memories I've come across in the division. You are the only one to mention the officer who was shot through both wrists. Just write to Harry Flisevich to tell me what time I'll be pulling in. One fact does trouble me and I hate to disturb you for fear that by talking about the war I've somehow brought up unpleasant memories for you (a brief remark you made in one reply caused me to wonder) and I could not for the world wish to do anything like that. If you think conversing with me has had bad effect please let me know before I come to Cleveland so I won't be

to disturb one's normal way of life. I know that when I first started writing I had several nightmares but am not bothered now. I certainly would understand. It is not difficult for me to send the picture via parcel post -- after all you sent it that way.

Am taking Monday off as personal leave from school. Have only two days off this year when I rushed Worth in October and November when my brother was so critically ill and then for his funeral. I never take off time from school for little aches and pains.

I hope it is alright for me to drop by on Monday morning -- perhaps we could have a cup of coffee together near your place of work. I'll have all my notes along.

Dear People

23rd Nov. 1966

The following is the best I can
remember of the D Day happenings
and being a long-winded individual
I'll write on this fancy stationery, which
I'll be damned if I'll have it typewritten,
because I believe all authors should suffer
to a certain amount, and reading my
writing will be some suffering, believe me!

#1: John Theodore Urbank 35593226

Sgt. Co G. Third platoon, Third Squad
Mortar (60 mm), Sergeant.

nicknamed "Route Step" "How Step"
but mostly called "Jack" (Red Sept) 3 paragraphs
on the road
leaving out
some of the
important

My Squad consisted of F. K. Morrison
Gunner (Both legs broken jump D Day)
Calvin Klipp (killed as he went out
the plane by machine gun fire)
Paul Hellinguer, Sister Senter, and
Howard Swank.

Paul was killed in Bastogne
sister and Howard were wounded
in Holland and Bastogne and
I lost track of them.

= 2. Messhalling Area.

The P.A. system had the Spike Jones Records - Black Magic - Chloe - and Moontight Cocktail and played them for two weeks (or was it two years) every hour for eight or ten hours a day.

We had air corps cooks that were a great relief from the 'Silly Robbin' Bastardly Foul Ups' that we had in our Battalion Mess - Did I ever tell you about the time we had a V.D. inspection and lost our entire cooking staff?

They put the permanent R.P.S. on us cooks and they did a fair job for a couple of weeks and then they started to trading our meat ration to their various girls, and the sugar for whiskey.

But that is another story!

We all had trench knives and hunting knives to strap on our boots to cut ourselves out of our chutes in case of a tree landing.

We spent hours sharpening them, and our bayonets to a razor edge.

We played cards, wrote letters, about weren't mailed until after D day.

We gave each other short haircuts and some Geronimo haircuts.

We wanted to give Vergel Benforth one, but he said No! and meant it, so I put on a pair of boxing gloves with "Verge" and boxed a couple rounds with him, we had his gloves really tied on good, mine were laced loosely.

On a given signal, Bellinger, Senter Swack and I jumped Verg. Held him down and started to give him a Geronimo cut.

While we clipped his one side he started cussing and telling us what he was going to do to us when he got free.

We ~~start~~ grew most cowardly then and decided to let him up.

He had long Blond Hair and we really scalped the one side.

When he was released by us we just lay on the ground and

laughed, he was too much of a gentleman to keep us while we were laying around laughing, and we had the boxing gloves tied on him so he couldn't hit us too hard.

He then went to the Co. Barber and he strengthened it up some but he was rather skinned on the one side -

So D day came Viny dropped into the hedgerows - Assistant Squad leader with his O3 in the equipment pack with the grenade launcher, and all he had for a weapon the first few hours was one of those long old world war bayonets.

He pulled old "Feller" Taylor out of a tree where he was hung up.

Remember everything was code named - Division headquarters was Kangaroo I believe and the Top General was "Killer Kangaroo"

All during training they told us to let the medical help get "hung up" Chulists out of the trees. and this fellow kept asking some one to help him out of the tree

and everyone was ignoring him, until he stopped and they and informed him that he was their commanding General and it was permissible to help him out of his chute - Such was the price we had to pay for being the 'Body' guards of Division Headquarters.

Well any way Virge was creased ~~along~~ along side the ear ^{spine above his} at Fopperville and when the medic bandaged him they cut all the hair of the long side of his head - Result was a 'Blond Geronimo'!

We were taken to a geonset but when we were informed of our mission and our good Captain Vernon Kraeger (I named one of my sons after him) informed us of how each and every one of us would and should be able to lead the co. on their mission in case his presence was not there.

Michael Aloysius Kelly, small red haired, finkled, Irish was the Company runner, and when Captain Kraeger said what he said "Oh No just don't say that Captain!"

Captain Kraeger said "This may be so, no matter how our feelings about the officers were we may lose some."

"That's not it, said Kelly, "I'm jumping right behind you, and if they get you they also may get me, and I sure as hell don't want that!"

"I'll say Captain Kraeger, "I thought I had at least one friend in the outfit!"

Kelly's chute came unstuck and spelled out in the plane before the D day drop, and, remember the D plus one when three fellows parachuted in - Well old Kelly was one of them.

What the game of War seemed to be one long continuous game while we were waiting our jump into France.

#4 The Trip -

The evening we were to depart for Tomorrow we had pork chops, green peas, apple sauce and potatoes. Blue beans and the very plentiful Orange marmalade - remember the yellow jackets in the Orange marmalade?

They added a little spice to a commonplace meal!

Our Colonel didn't think the greasy pork chops would sit so well on our stomachs or on the aluminum floor of the plane so he had the cooks dump them, and we had the balance of the meal - (The American Soldier is the Best Fed, Best Clothed and Best Equipped Soldier in the World.)

And that brings up another complaint - You rascals in Div. Headquarters smoked Comets, Luckies, Phillip Morris and all the good brands while we on the line smoked Wings, Chelcos, Spuds, Rawleys and any other craps that the boys in Div. Headquarters had no use for!

Back to my narration -

We struggled into our harnesses

and saved our skins.

The Red Cross guys were supposed to be helpfull with coffee and blankets. A Navy Surgeon was attached to our Battalion in Navy quarters. He had never jumped before and had volunteered, and when we put him in his Parachute, we gave him six weeks of Parachute training in six minutes -

"Just make damn sure you look up and follow the crowd out the door!"

Then while we loaded into the plane we were told there would be light "flak".

Captain of us - Lt Barker - Sgt Hebank
PFC Morrison, PFC Klopp, PFC Kelling
PFC Swank, PFC Senter, Sgt Astona, PFC
erry.

That's half of them, pretty good remembering for twenty years ago!

Well we loaded up and headed up to form all the Vees of C-47's.

Lt Barker was standing in the door and old J.T. was standing right behind him watching the

lights.

It must have been a half hour of circling before we headed out over the ocean, or so it seemed. English Channel.

It seems to me we were over a few islands of the coast of Newfoundland and some took turns up and then we headed towards our drop zone -

and

Holy-Cow - Machine Guns - Anti Aircraft Guns, Flares - Burning houses - Burns - more houses than you can count - hoses full of them sailing up to you, then cracking like strings of firecrackers as they went by.

The twenty millimeter stuff exploded above the planes, the bigger stuff exploded way above us - I think we were flying at twelve hundred feet, as soon as we reached the coast, we had stood up and looked up.

The plane in front of us carrying one half of the first Platoon

received a direct hit and exploded.

We lost all the men in that plane.

The plane on our right was
received a hit, exploded into flames
and peeled down in a burning
ball of fire.

The first, third and thirteenth
men in that one escaped. That
was half of our platoon that went
down in that one.

Chellin, John Schadt, Brown, St
Crouch, and all the rest of the Second
Squad save Bunker went down in
that plane.

Our pilot, about that time forgot
all about getting us to the drop
zone and just started circling
aimlessly about the area.

All alone - no other
plane in sight -

Red light on, waiting
for the green.

So at 0135 hours he flicked
the green switch and out we
went!

Into three streams of machine gun fire. Klopp was killed as he went out the door -

Morrison's rifle malfunctioned and he went screaming down.

We heard the Krauts yelling "Hatte Var das! American Falshung jagge" that my remembering it phonetically.

We had our equipment bundles with phosphorescent cord and the "Krauts" could see them glowing from where they were, and sent streams of machine gun bullets into them, ricocheting in all directions - My Mortar is still there as far as I know!

My Muzzell bag with my change of underwear is still there, also.

I figure at times that well never mind - It was a cow pasture that I landed in, an over populated cow pasture at that.

Still those machine guns, three of them kept pouring tracers over us as we attempted to get out of our parachutes.

One could see the shadowy figure of the Krauts shoulders above the hedgerow

and the single shots as those trigger happy gentlemen shot at any thing that looked suspicious. My rifle was broken down into three parts, and in a Enamel container, I lay on my stomach, placed a phosphorus grenade in easy reach, - lay my rifle trigger Pousing group under my Chest, put the barrel into the stock and kept where in the hell I put the trigger Pousing group -

Did you ever try to find a trigger Pousing group in a densely populated cow pasture at 1.40 hours in the morning?

Each time someone was seen of them while traces cooking, about 1000 - I tried cutting my Chute harness to free myself from the Chute, after I located the trigger Pousing group and about eighteen piles of soft cold puddles of cow manure, I hit a double adapted and dulled my great big Bowie knife (75° - some real sporting grade steel), so I took my issue trench knife and did the same thing with

it - and tossed them both away.

So then I carefully unslipped the right leg, left leg and chest strap and proceeded to back away from the Krauts who were still about a hundred yards away.

Shooting - not me out them damn Krauts!

To my right I noticed what I thought was one of my men and crawled - no, wormed, my way up to him. Clicked my clips, no reaction - said our password - Thunder - no reaction - I debated whether to loose a grenade, because I could see it was a soldier and he wasn't acting friendly.

Later - months later - I found that it was F. K. Morrison and he had both legs broken and was in stock.

I backed away, heard a click behind me - answered the click with my two clips, Thunder, - Flush - Welcome - I found a Friend - Sgt Castora our Communications Sgt - we discussed our present situation - Castora says do you want to Charge

those machine guns -

I say: "No, Not really"

He says: "I didn't want to either but I just thought I'd ask"

"Alright, let's get back behind those trees and find someplace where there aren't so many bullets flying."

"You cover me, then I'll cover you!"

So we warmed our way thru the low pasture to a row of trees behind us, Costona got there first and turned ~~left~~, I must of turned ~~right~~ ~~left~~, because we didn't see each other until a week later at Purple Heart Lane when some Krant paratroopers were counter attacking and I was hung up on top of a hedgerow with my canteen caught in a barbed wire fence, and I heard the Krants shooting and moving into the other side of the field, I'm trying to get back but my canteen is hung in the fence.

Costona unfastens my canteen, grabs my legs and flaps my belly skidding behind the crown of dirt -

We then proceeded to beat back the attack.

So I crawled thru this cow pasture, and the cow boys I missed while I was looking for ~~the~~ bigger running group. I scooped up with my helmet, my jacket front and my cartridge belt.

I was weeks, no I think months before I finally got the cartridge belt clean. Believe me!

So I'm all alone again.

I start moving along the hedgerow and the place is crawling - no - running with Krauts.

It must have been ~~back~~ back Fever because here I'd been trained to kill these rascals for two years and they were all about me, some not more than forty feet away and I didn't yell "Geronimo" and start shooting.

I just kinda waited and let them walk away.

As as Colonel Cull said after the mission, in his Georgia drawl -

"I'm proud of you men, you fought bravely, cautiously and an intelligent fight"

And old Aloysious Kelly said "Colonel, you may say cautious but I'm sure as hell saying I personally

was cowardly!

I kinda think that the stupidity of the Wehrmacht scared our minority of G.I.s away because I strolled around in the darkness for an hour or so and couldn't find anybody -

By then I was dog tired and so being the country boy that I am, I found a stand of wheat, walked in I wouldn't beat a jerk into it, curled up under my innocence and slept until dawn.

It just light a group of light bombers churned up a gun emplacement some two or three miles away.

I then proceeded to a road and saw Hellinger scuttle across about thirty yards in front of me on the other side of the hedgerow.

I yelled Ray Paul - and we met real quick like.

He had been layony in the ditch most the night with Krauts walking up and down the road.

Companies of them.

Paul and I were ~~hand~~ ^{hand} a casing along from one field to another when we met up with four fellows from the 82nd - lost - led by a Corporal so they joined us. We went a few more fields and found ~~them~~ ^{them} ~~Swack~~ ^{Swack}, so there were seven of us.

They were equipped with M-1 rifles four with carbines.

Okay - so we need a little more fire power.

Let's find a machine gun.

We noticed a number of equipment bundles, all they contained were rations radio batteries - wire ammunition, but no machine gun - no mortar. so we decided to find out where we were and head to where we were supposed to ~~be~~ ^{be}.

I appointed a couple of the boys as scouts and they said - You're getting paid to lead us, so you lead us.

I was first scout, Hellingger came next and the Swack with those four 82nd diva fellows.

We finally hit a road junction and got ourselves oriented.

We were some seven miles from Popperville, so we headed in that direction.

We had covered about three miles staying off the roads, moving cautiously being shot at, shooting back and getting away.

Until we came up to a farm house and the boys were pretty well played out, because that three miles on the map had some ~~very~~ pretty wide detours around places that had to many unfriendly faces.

Whenever we hit a road in our detour, one of the fellows had a pair of wire cutters and he'd crawl up those concrete telephone poles and cut wires.

One stretch of road we must have crossed four times in four hundred yards and the net insisted on cutting wires every time we crossed.

I went up to the door knocked most politely, and a French house keeper, in uniform answered the door.

211
Took one look at my unsanitary
openness and very unrespectably, ~~with~~
slammed the door in my face.

I knocked a little further, with
my gun butt, and the Gentleman Farmer
with white moustache, smoking jacket and
all answered the door.

"Ingraine?"

"No - American!"

"States Union?"

"Oui"

You see I speak the language like
a native. (of Peninsula, C.P.C.!)

This was at about ~~about~~
~~the afternoon~~ - 1500 army time.

All we had to eat was some D ration
Chocolate, we hadn't bothered to take any of
K rations from the equipment bundles
in our search for a machine gun -

Poor leadership and poor logistics.

Well, to make a long story short,
he invited us in, we told him where
we were heading -

He said don't go - that way -
too many Germans.

Go this way - longer but no
Germans - Okay - but fast - have a

bottle of wine - each -

Seven drunk Paratroopers reading
for Pouppeville -

By then we had been trading off
that first scout job and Tom Hitting
was going to lead us right on in,
all the way to Pouppeville -

We headed about a half mile
cross lots and some trout in a
Church Steepie cut loose at us with
a machine gun and we dove for cover
and decided to go back to the french
arm and "hole up" in a cedar mill
there and sober up, rest up and wait
for dark and see if we could travel
a little safer that way.

It has been twentyone years last
June and I havent given it much
thought lately with the family growing,
raising horses (Morgan) Hound (Walker
Fox) game chickens (Round Heads) and
Hunting, Fishing, Drinking Seltzer and
Chasin' the women, but sitting here
writing this does bring back the
memories of just about how it was
then.

11

I'm not apologizing for the length of my narration, just trying to set down as accurately as I can remember what happened that day.

We decided to have one man stand security on each side and then move out, I said I'd stand first watch, I had only drunk a couple swallows of that very dry "Van rouge" - my native French agave,

Since then I cultivated a taste for the stuff - a matter of fact, got 55 gallons of the stuff down cellar right now, French not grape, but dry - well downright soul.

So the boys conked out -

After an hour, I tried to awaken the next guard - no could do - as a matter of fact, I couldn't awaken any of them, Not even the boy from the 8th 2nd div.

So I stood half concealed in the doorway until about 18:00, when I noticed some movement, as a patrol of our fellow 101st Airborne Troopers came into view.

They were from the 506th so we followed them back in time to trade some shots with the American 4th Division that was coming up the

beach.

Hellinger, Swack and I stayed at 506 Regiment Headquarters that night.

I remember rolling up in one of those big Swastika Flaps that I had liberated from the local Town Hall and slept my first full night in Normandy.

Now I'll answer some of your questions on your yellow slip.

Why did you choose yellow for your question sheet? Implied something perhaps?

Question 14

Sgt Castora (old Casarotti) was our Radio operator, but he was out strolling around taking in the apple blossom festivals - so he didn't get a chance on the radio unit much later.

Question 15.

The medic (Bless His Own Soury Soul) was attached to us just a short time before D day and in all honesty I can't remember his name.

Father (Butcher) Knowlton - don't know
and care less!

Fred (Doc) Arlowsky
228 53rd St
Brooklyn, New York

Walter Turk
290 W. Jefferson St
Richland Center
Wis.

60462 Bill (San Fuord) Kapp
Sageau Woods Orland Park, Illinois

These three characters I've sort of
kept in touch with in the last twenty
years.

They were all in on the Peapackville
action where the medic was killed, plus
a number more of our platoon. Killed
that is.

Virgil Barforth - "Doc" Arlowsky Bill
Kapp ~~and~~ Walter Turk and I started
in Casual Co in Toccoa Georgia and
spent the entire war years in Co
G. Third platoon.

There were several more that we were particularly close to.

Buford Perry, Dave Mythaler, Paul Hellenge, but I guess you call these terminated most abruptly:

U's, Orlowstaj, Hanforth and myself have talked to each other on the phone. I guess that's as close as we dared, our wives all believed us plaster casts sent overseas and it would be a shame to disillusion them now.

As for good old Walter Turk - He never said much then, and lucky us, he don't say much now so we visit back and forth.

I feel that I'm holding faith with some of the boys that didn't make it.

I remember more than once hearing Perry and Mythaler say - If any one asks what war is like - I'm gonna tell them in the best way - none of this crap about war is hell - I can't talk about it!

So be it.

So keep their faith -

Thank you for asking JWA.

Who was 1st Sgt?

Vergil Danforth - 1st Sgt

Captain Vernon Kraeger CO. KIA Holland

Lt. Nathan Marks KIA D-Day at Pongerville

Sgt. Cole

Capt Pukerung KIA Bastogne

Sgt Jack T Urbank - mortar Sgt

Harold K. Nolley - medic

Capt. Robert P. Richards KIA at Pongerville

Capt Walter Turk

Cpl. Benford H. Perry KIA with Danforth early

Sgt. Toppeth

Capt Ondowsky

Capt William Kopp

Capt Pete Luoto

Capt David Mythaler KIA Bastogne with long company

Harry B. Brown KIA with Lt. Crouch on D-day.

Tetanus (Mordman) spoke French from Capt.

Moran escaped from plane but did not.

Mordman KIA (Mordman?)

Lt. Luther K... ..

Capt. Stanley

Capt

Lt.

JOHN URBANK malfunctions
F. K. Morrison - German - both eyes broken D-day

Clarence Klopp - killed in door of plane.

Paul Hillinger KIA at Bastogne

Lester Senter - wounded - Holland

Howard Leacock - wounded in Holland

Mike Kelly - chieftain unit during in phase same 041

Lt. _____ Barken

Sgt. Caston

Pvt. Edward Chellin

William

Mr. Larry ...

... ..

T/S

Try to locate

Pvt.

Try to

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18th June 1944

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Sgt. John Urbank - mortar Sgt.

Cpl. Virgil Benforth

Platoon "A" - 1st Infantry

Military Police

Company - 1st Infantry - 1st Division

1st Infantry Division

Company - 1st Infantry - 1st Division

"A" - 1st Infantry - 1st Division

Company - 1st Infantry

1st Infantry Division

X 38

Company - 1st Infantry

Company - 1st Infantry - 1st Division

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Company - 1st Infantry - 1st Division

Company - 1st Infantry - 1st Division

Company - 1st Infantry - 1st Division

female nurse at Poughkeepsie was a Port. named John,
who went to Mass. (She married in Mass.)

Raymond F. Johnson - ex. Marine, ex. Army, ex. Navy
with a lot of military experience, was in the
66th Co. 1st Inf. Div. 1st Army, 1st Div. 1st Army
sergeant. He was "A" grade sergeant and was
in some combat zones, - the Japanese went out on
front and back, etc. He was told to fight to the
last man and last breath and was in it until
over the line, beyond the line, etc.

George Scortino - KIA at Bastogne

Paul D. Johnson - KIA in the vicinity

of Bastogne, etc. KIA at Bastogne

James W. Johnson

Robert R. Johnson

John W. Johnson - KIA in the vicinity

Mc Intyre Aikens

319 043

Jimmie Ross - skraped out back pack - showed in with 1 cent.

"Doc Willie" Weir WIA in 043

Darwin "Doc" Moore WIA in 043

Alfred Whitehead - bitter by rattlesnake - came out to us with

Robert K. ... - got 5 years for AWOL - came out to us.

Donald ... - when ... of ... - with ...

Robert ... - lost ... - ...

Dr. ... - ...

St. ... - ...

Capt. ...

... - ...

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... - ...

Bliss ...

St. ... "Holy ..."

... - ...

... - ...

... - ...

... - ...

... - ...

Harold Nolley - ...

Ernest Robinson

John

William

Deborah

William

John

John

William

John

Robert

John

Donald

William

William

Robert

John

1/2 of ... - transferred out.

Deborah

Donald

Joseph

Raymond

Kenneth

John

John

John

John

Capt. Venkateshwar - Lt. 219 in Bangalore

Lt. Norman Carter

Lt. Nathan Vance - 219 at Pongachan

Lt.

Lt.
Kumar ...

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F. K. ...

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Lt. McDonough - WIA in Normandy.
(Small, round-faced.) Shot in both
wrists.

Pucci - 1st scout rifleman - killed at Purple
Heart Lane. (Hand grenade)

I'm getting more and more sure that
Eddie Hole was the Poupeville medic even
though Urbank says No. Check with Waldmann.

Sgt. Tom Criswell - KIA at Poupeville

Cpl Joe Garcia KIA at Poupeville

Robert Richards KIA at Poupeville near Orlovsky.

^{3rd Plat.}
Verg Danforth - 1st Plat.

Kopp. 2nd squad - 3rd Platoon went down in crash

Get more from Kopp on Gen McAuliffe story.

Part of 1st platoon went down.

Lt. Crouch and Harry Brown on same ill fated plane.

Danforth says Tetreault and Morin got out of plane alive, Telreau from his spoke wrench which helped him get back. Morin was last man in stick. First platoon was in that plane.

Morin definitely was to get out. Men were from a squad of 1st platoon and other had 3rd platoon people.

Plane in front of Urbank's, received a direct hit and exploded. All hands lost on that one.

Plane on our right wing received a hit - exploded into flames and peeled down in an arcing ball of fire. The 1st, 3rd, and 13th men in that one escaped. That was half of one platoon in that one. Chellen, Scholtz, Brown, Lt Crouch and all the rest of 2nd Squad. some Goodman went down in that one.

Medics Green and William C. Gaunt Jr
Harold Hebbard. Harold K Volley Benny Hargis
Put Bohn according to Costin.
Fred Orlovsky sure it wasn't Hebbard - nor one from Co. H.

7/5 Joseph Kuehl
7/4 Irving Ireland
Joe C. Garcia KIA
Capt. Krueger

} went to Poppville

Bernard Gaudreau got out of
one of shot-down planes
Art Moran - other survivor

Fred Orlovsky

Walter Trunk

Lt. Nathan Marks - jumpmaster

Warren Ruddy - broken bone in foot resounded D+4

Merton Squad 2nd platoon

Sgt Hughes (Gunner) killed in Holland

Cpl. Jordan (killed in Normandy)

Bill Weir (Squad leader)

~~William~~ R. Ingalls (Squad)

Lionel Cole (WIA) sent home early asst. squad leader

Robert O. Doloway.

Luther Knowlton 3rd Platoon Officer

McIntyre Aitken - seriously wounded at Budge.

James Goss - lost leg in Normandy

Wilson J. Bobeck -

Pete L. note - piece of sharpshooter's neck - arm became paralyzed
in Normandy.

Darwin J. Moore

15
1
20
men
Collected