

P.O. Box 1861
Sisters, OR
97759

25 May 1992

Mr. Richard D. Winters
117 Elm Ave
P.O. Box C
Hershey, PA
17033

Dear Dick,

BAND OF BROTHERS beat the June publishing date. I picked up a copy about two weeks ago in a bookstore in our old home of La Jolla, California. It is a very interesting book, filled with some things I vividly remember, plus, a lot of information that is new to me. I salute you for your vital role in making the 2ndBn/506th what it became.

Mac, Kelly and Bob Shurter are all gone. "Dog" also had a high turn over rate. The bonds, strongest among the old Taccoa "Mafia", continued to break down during the war as you remember. The "Dog" Company officers who survived the war, as best I can recall, were Mac, Kelly, Bob Brussat, Bob Gage, Rolf Michaelis, Sparky and me. Brussat, and Michaelis, were listed in the 101st Airborne Directory printed in 1988. You know Sparky's location and now mine. I have no idea where Bob Gage might be. Tom Rice is also among the missing.

I served with "Dog" from June, 1944 until May, 1945 when I was transferred to 2ndBn HqCo. I took over the company in August, 1945 and was CO from then until the 101st deactivated in late November. No matter, I usually think of myself as a "Dog" Company man.

It is nice to know that someone else remembers Ritchey as a pain in the ass, that's how I remember him also.

When the 101st cased its colors I went to the 82nd and served with the 505th until Feb. 1947. I went inactive then, resigned my reserve commission as a Captain a year later and enlisted as a Private in the U.S.M.C.. I was commissioned a regular 2nd Lt later that year. After surviving four campaigns in Korea in 1950-51, a stint in Vietnam in 1962 plus other assorted perils, severe and disabling injuries, from a parachute jump no less, prematurely forced me to retire in 1963.

By choice, my second career was as an educator until the same injuries again forced a premature retirement in 1980. Now I write.

Tell me what I can do to help with "Dog" Company memories and I will do what I can in between writing projects.

Regards,

Tom
Tom L. Gibson

Sorry to hear about the death of Jack MacLean, he was a good man - later, a good friend.

117 Elm Ave
P.O. Box C
Hershey, PA 17033
July 17, 1992

Dear Tom:

This is in reply to your letter of May 25th.

For 2nd Bn records, give me your memories and history with the 2nd Bn - D Co. in particular. Tell me any memories, stories, history of D Company during WWII. Then, give me your postwar history, after the 101st was inactivated. I know that, in your case, that will be an interesting chapter.

Band of Brothers was launched on June 4th, as scheduled. Marketing started out slow, but as of this week, took off with a bang. Monday there was a nice review in the Washington Post, Tuesday, brought a beautiful letter from Hugh Sidey with a promise of a review in Time Magazine. Also Tuesday, Steve Ambrose received an excellent letter from Colin Powell - he loved the book.

Our cup runneth over.

Steve is moving on to chapter 18 of the big one.

Put your thinking cap on and get me your story.

Hang tough,

Dick

P.O. Box 1861
Sisters, OR
97759

22 July 1992

Mr. R. D. Winters
117 Elm Avenue
P.O. Box C
Hershey, PA
17033

Dear Dick,

Thanks for writing again so soon. Count me in as a contributor to anything to be written about "Dog" Co, or the 2ndBn, 506th. I have many fond memories about those days but as time passes they are getting very fuzzy. Partly due to the passage of time; partly due to the fact that I have to sort things out. Did I know him in the Army or the Marine Corps? Was it in Europe, or at Bragg? If I can get focused on that then I can remember which war and so on.

CONFIDENTIAL - YOUR EYES ONLY

Two things happened to me in the 2ndBn during WW II that are known only to the men I served with, and, probably the official records. I prefer that the rest of the world not be informed of them at this late date in my life. If all the facts must be related no matter what, my privacy will be invaded and I will be very embarrassed. Let me explain.

First; We were in the marshalling yard in August, 1944 in connection with Operation "Transfigure". The day the op was cancelled, one member of "Dog" Co mishandled a 9mm Luger, an "accidental discharge" resulted, I was standing directly in front and I caught the round.

Second: As a result of that accident, I was flat on my back in a bed in the 98th General Hospital when the Holland jump came off the following month.

That ignominious turn of events so embarrassed me that I have never wanted anyone to ever know about it. I have simply not mentioned it. When the serials started lifting off on September 17th, I began weeping out of a sense of frustration and shame so absolute that it is painful to recall.

I became an infantry private on my 18th birthday, I was commissioned as an infantry officer at the age of 18, I became a parachute infantry officer at age 19. I am one of those guys driven by a "first team complex" so compelling that it has shaped my life. That accidental discharge, which occurred on my 20th birthday, denied me the opportunity to make the Holland jump and I have never gotten over it. I did get to Holland before the campaign ended, and I served in the Bulge, Alsace, and everything that followed until the war ended.

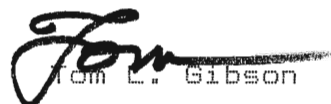
The accidental discharge, and the result, have been things I have tried to simply bury, but, I cannot. I am proud of my WW II service, except for that. When there has been a reason to describe my war experiences in WW II I have simply lied about that part of it. I have just said I jumped in Holland, was wounded there (to account for the gunshot wound scar in my leg) and left it there. For a man with a conscience, those two facts, neither of which I could control, have weighed heavily on me. As to the lie about them, that cross has been a heavy burden.

END CONFIDENTIAL YOUR EYES ONLY

I have had a distinguished military and civilian career since then. I added four more campaigns in Korea, the Pusan Perimeter, The Inchon Landing, the Chosin Reservoir, and finally Operation KILLER in the spring of 1951. I served in Vietnam in 1962 before that became a war. I think that I have earned the right to appeal to your sense of discretion.

Is it so important in the overall scheme of things that this must be laid out for the public to see? If you were telling this to me, about yourself, I would respect your request for privacy. I am a trained historian now, and I write historical articles for publication. Every skeleton in every man's closet is not within the public's "need to know". Please respect that.

Airborne,


Tom L. Gibson

July 27, 1992

Dear Tom:

Received your letter of July 22nd today. Your confidence will be honored.

Your account immediately catches my eye on the accidental shooting.

Your account places your accident before the Sept. 17th jump.

I have a transcript from a Joe Domingas of D Co. where he recalls having an accidental discharge of a pistol hit another D Co. man. This he reports happened in Holland on the Island. That would place the time factor in October or November 1944.

By any chance am I looking at your accident, or were there two accidental shootings in D Co?

Enclosed are a couple of first class reviews I just received on B of B for your enjoyment.

Hang tough,

Tom, now give me your memories, actions you were personally involved in for Bastogne, Alsace, So. Germany.

Dick Winters

Include:

C. Powell

Chicago

Dist

Steve new one.

P.O. Box 1861
Sisters, OR
97759

10 August 1992

Mr. R. D. Winters
117 Elm Avenue
P.O. Box C
Hershey, PA
17033

Dear Dick,

Thank you for your understanding nature and generosity of spirit in regard to my request to keep the details about the accidental discharge involving me out of public knowledge.

I left the 98th General Hospital in England and returned to duty with the 506th in Holland in late October, 1944. The Battle of Opheusden had just ended and the 506th had been shifted over to the East. Its new location was across the river from Hevedorp. "Dog" was in the vicinity of Driel and would from time to time shift back 6 miles or so South to the vicinity of Valburg. The main railroad line to Arnhem was on our right and the 502nd was to our left as I recall.

The remark by Joe Domingas that you mentioned is new to me. I have no knowledge of any accidental discharge involving a "Dog" man at any time during the war except for the one involving me on my 20th birthday on August 18, 1944.

Thanks for the copy of Gen. Powell's letter to Stephen Ambrose. I have great respect for Gen. Powell and Mr. Ambrose should certainly be honored by such a letter. Speaking of Mr. Ambrose, is the information you are seeking for another book by him? Will it concern just the 2nd Bn/506th, or the whole 506th or the whole 101st?

There are so many rich stories that I can remember about my 17 months with 2/506. So many in fact that I hardly know where to start. Does Mr. Ambrose want recollections of a personal nature, of operational comments or both?

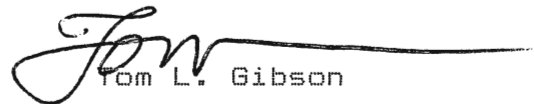
You spoke of things that occurred to people after WW II. That should produce a wealth of information too. For example, do you remember Lt. J.P. O'Shaugnessy, Jr.? O'Shaugnessy (hereafter referred to as "O") appears in the group picture of 2nd Bn officers in our regimental scrapbook. He was in that picture but I am not sure how long he had been with the battalion when the picture was taken. In any event, "O", Jack Foley, Sparky and I all wound up at Bragg with the 505th/82nd Airborne after the war. "O" became an Aide to General Gavin before I left the Army. Later, in reading a book about the Vietnam War, I came across a story concerning a "red headed former WW II paratroop officer" who won the Air Force Cross in Vietnam. It described how this officer, now a LtCol in the Air Force, had won his medal. A VC attack on an airfield, Ben

Ho I think, left unexploded ordnance scattered all over the field. "O" volunteered to neutralize it by wiring all the various bombs and what not together in series and detonating it. With everyone else observing from cover at a safe distance, "O" strolled out, calmly wired all the hot stuff together, returned to a covered position and blew it all. At any time when he was doing the wiring any of the unstable ordnance could have gone off merely by his approach. Have you heard that story before?

Please give me some guidance as to exactly what, and how much, is desired and I will turn to.

Thanks again. I sincerely hope nothing more need be said about my 20th Birthday present.

Warm regards,


Tom L. Gibson