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*See page 171-172 of original
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Dear George:

I feel I can call you by your first name even though we don't know each other. We must have been close by 51 years ago. I was in the 501st from Dec. 1942 to June 8 1944 when I was wounded. The reason for this letter - Medic Edwin Hohl. I've been meaning to write ever since I saw something in probably the 101st Newsletter to the effect you had located his family and had contacted them. One of my regrets is that I never made any effort to contact them. Of course I had no idea where he came from.

Here is the story - I was in "G" Company, a T/4 and Capt. Vernon Kraeger's radio operator. I jumped at 0125 -- the reason I know is that my G.I. wristwatch broke at 0125. I had to cut my way out of my chute with my jump knife (which I still have). I linked up with some guys and eventually found myself in a group which included General Taylor, Capt. Kraeger and others, one of which must have been you. It was early A.M. and we moved toward Pouppeville. On the road toward town I was on the left and Capt. Kraeger was on the right. At a bend in the road he signalled at something ahead (invisible to me) and started running and firing. As I made the bend the 4 or 5 Germans were already falling. We moved on, and sometime later, stopped. Bullets were flying around. I remember I was crouched on the left side of the road when Major Legere -- just opposite of me -- was hit. There was a lot of noise. Bullets I think hitting a cart of cans or something where he was laying. Medic Hohl got to him and immediately started to work on him. I remember the major hollering "Don't let them take it off" or something like that. The next thing I knew, Hohl, who was crouching just rolled over -- no grunts -- no noise -- just rolled over silently. I called to him -- he was only 8 or 10 feet away -- "Hohl, are you OK?" a couple times with no answer. I saw other GI's of course but he was the first I saw killed.

As I said before -- one of my regrets -- Hohl, I'm sure had a family, and I am sure they would have appreciated knowing about his death. I was watching him work and I saw him die. It was immediate. I don't believe he knew what hit him. Of course as you already know, shortly thereafter the German garrison surrendered and later we made contact with the 4th Division. If accounts I read later are correct, our group was the first to make contact with the seaborne troops.

Just a little personal info that may or may not be of interest. I kept my SCR-536 radio awhile but we never were in platoon contact so I discarded it. Move now to June 8th. I guess about 10 A.M. I got nicked in the leg by a shell explosion but I was O.K. I found myself operating an SCR-300 for LtCol. Ewell, whose radioman had been wounded.

I guess it was 11.30 AM or so but we were outside a 2 or 3 story house with a big Red Cross on the roof. A number of us were standing around the back of the when a shell exploded and a piece of it (which I still have) destroyed the sight [of] my left eye. I was treated by a German medic in the cellar of the house. He poured sulfa powder in the eye and said "Nicht Kaput!" but he was wrong. I won't bore you with the rest of the story but June 8, 1944 ended my service with the 501st. They were a good outfit -- and of course the 3rd platoon of 3rd Battalion was best!

A friend's son who is interested in the 101st loaded me a book, "The 101st Airborne at Normandy." I'm reading it and I believe the house pictured at "Dead Man's Corner" is the house I referred to above. After reading the book and thinking a bit, I decided to write to you.

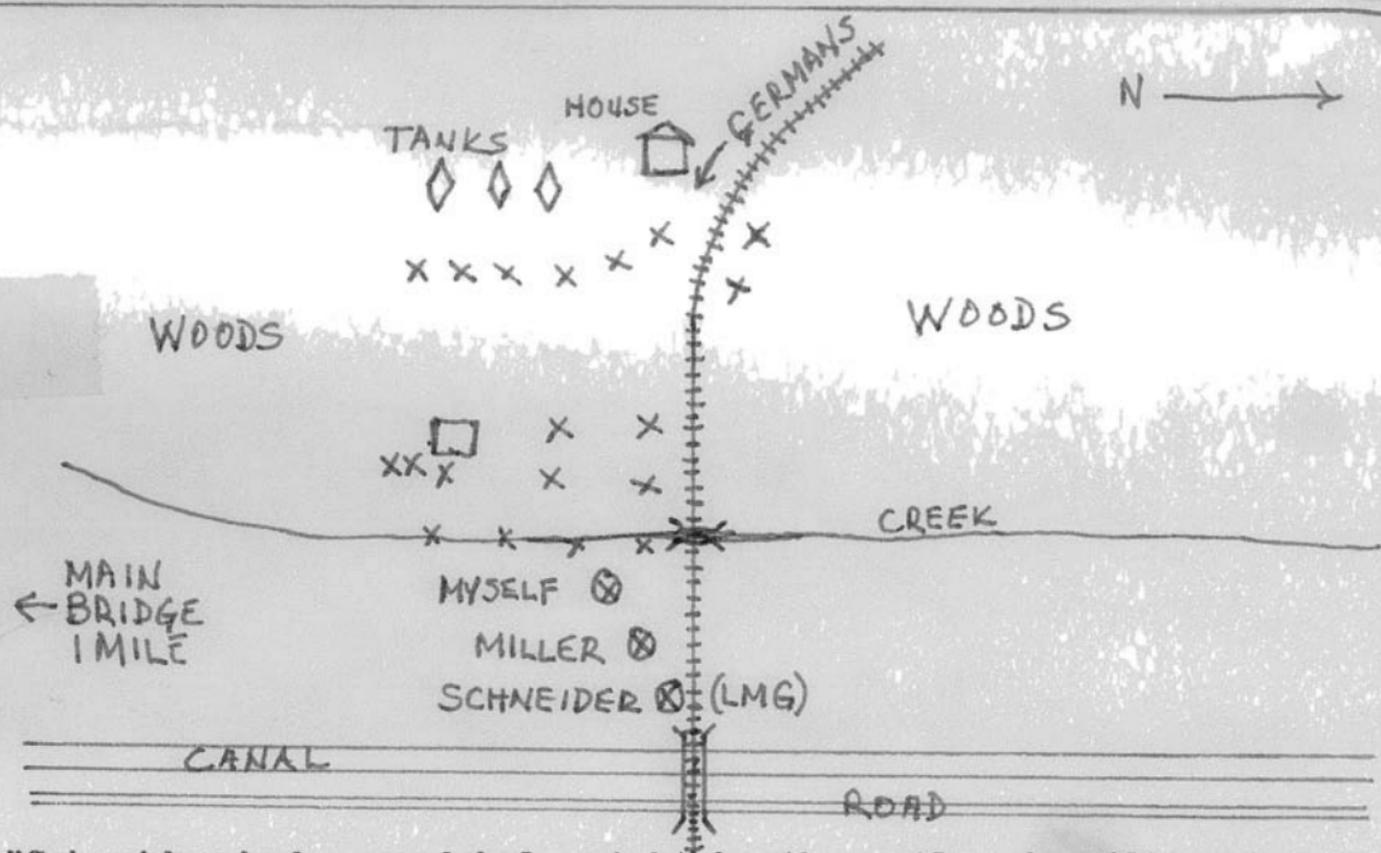
I would guess that it is time to wrap up this overly long (and probably hard to read) letter but I would like to say that I read "The Screaming Eagle" from cover to cover and do not believe it can be improved. I especially like your articles and thank you for the great effort that you put into them.

The 101st was a great division and guys like you deserve a lot of credit for keeping it alive.

I'm proud to have been a part of it -- even for such a short time.

Raymond Geddes, Jr.

[I came upon this letter as I was sorting my papers and looking for material which would be appropriate for your documentary program -- I don't recall ever reading it in its entirety. You asked in our recent phone conversation to respond to the question (s) -- when did you see your first dead enemy soldier? and again, When did you see your first dead fellow soldier? It is apparent that Geddes and I must have been only a matter of yards apart. He may have crawled past the same dead soldier who had been lying dead in the ditch right in front of me at the time I moved forward after being nudged from behind.]



"Schneider had a good hole right by the railroad. Miller and I covered the creek to his front. Machine gun covered all the railroad to the house at the bend. Crosses are where we found dead Germans."