

18 December, 1943. Was in Naples for the 3rd time on the 15th, 16th, & 17th. Spent the 16th going over the ruins of Pompei. Henningsen & Covellio were with me. We had an excellent guide who explained things as we went along. We took many pictures of the ruins, and of Vesuvius. We have been processing our own film. I figure I will start getting good results any time now, having made all the possible errors known to man, and developing a few of my own.

Mohagen and McIntyre, as well as the Captain and Mishkin, are the main fanatics. My trip to Naples was originally to conduct some Company affairs, but the Captain was liberal with time. We purchased much camera equipment. Most of it was quite reasonable, but a case for the Captain's camera could be purchased only on the "black-market", & cost \$15.00. Film, size 120, procured in the same manner, sells for \$1.00 a roll,

or 80 cents a roll if 40 rolls are purchased. I left my newly acquired Tenax at the Zeiss shop to be repaired. For the folks at home I purchased some albums of paintings & photos. I hope they pass the censor. Henningsen took 3 rolls of ortho-film, & I took a few with hous 35mm for outline. The 36 in my camera of Pompei were on panchromatic film, which I ruined when trying to develop the 60 inch strip in total darkness.

→ 19 Dec, Went down and had Dutton look my teeth. He filled two. Came back and worked with Lou in the dark-room for five hours. The weather is fairly warm, & it has not rained for four days. Received my 20th Christmas package today. 16 are from the folks. Lou has been having trouble mastering his 35mm camera. He was in quite a temper with himself this morning. We sat around until late, having quite the discussions. We are in good moral

shape. Moral is high. Rumor has us making another amphibious landing. We may as well see it all I guess.

20 December

Stayed close to the house. Sent Jensen and two other men to Naples. Lou & I ribbed one another about the respective merits of the Cornet vs. the trombone. His biggest item was whether I had a mate. We expected to be relieved from the 2nd Maroc, but were not. They lost the crabs just to the north.

21 December

Lou won the round with his 35mm today, but it still will be a good fight. Dutton & Brantly came up for med. inspections today. Developed some prints. Read "I am thinking of my darling", by Vincent McHugh.

22 December

Took over at the guns. It rained. No firing.

23 December.

Up at 0300. Relieved at last! Moved back near

Alife. We have a nice ^{area} ~~new~~ ^{new} error. Brants says, "It is an act of God; the result of two 'screw-ups'". (I was afraid I might?)

Christmas Eve.

Bill Shirley & I bet Lou ten dollars apiece, even up, that the battalion will not be in Europe, England, or French North Africa at midnight, October 28, 1944.

December 25, 1943.

The day has been spent in intensive work on our weapons. Many new carbines were issued, and the collected weapons inspected, listed, and made ready to turn in. Weapons are well cared for, but small items and tripods, and extra barrels must be watched more carefully. Tomorrow we must be ready to stand an Ordnance inspection on armored vehicles, arms, and instruments. The meal today was excellent. Like Thanksgiving, except for the atmosphere, the meal was

Christmas day, 1943.

) 1st Platoon roster

Lt. Cole .

³/₅ Sgt. Haywood .

¹/₄ M. Furness (Hosp.)

) ¹/₅ Jenson .

Cpl. Black ✓

1

Sgt. (Britz hosp.) Scott ✓

) ¹/₅ (Gunner) Willingham ✓

Pvt. Riddle ✓

Pvt. N. Roberts (Radio) ✓

) ¹/₅ Banner (driver) ✓

2

Cpl. Burton ✓

¹/₅ McCulloch ✓

) Pvt. Freihage ✓

Pfc. Reed ✓

¹/₅ Franco ✓

#3.

Sgt. Hannenberg ✓)

Pfc. Edzackie ✓

Pvt. Gilbert ✓

Pfc. M. Pederson ✓

T/S Wuttke ✓)

#4.

Cpl. Sorkilähti ✓

T/S (Detack, hosp.) ✓ McEntyre)

Pfc. Davanport ✓

Pvt. Hanson ✓

T/S Wilhelmi ✓)

just like being home. I hope the folks had a merry Christmas. Sgt. Buchman & Corp. McIntyre really did a lot of work today. We all remained sober, which is a shame. I figure we are making ready to hit Cassino. We listened to the radio, and turned in early. Lou was called down to see the colonel at 0215. All the captains were gotten up. (The colonel gave them a drink.)

26 December

It snowed on the very near slopes last

night. It is very cold. We had an ordnance inspection & turned in all but 12 rifles & 12 sub-mgts. The carbines are all issued today. We are to keep the pistols & revolvers. Then we are to turn in the revolvers. Then we are to keep them, so we re-issue them. We are functioning like a bunch of recruits. The officers and ~~staff~~ sergeants met tonight. We killed a pair of quarts of cognac & read the company history. Jess started today. I am going to

loan my Tenax to Dotson.

27 Dec.

Developed some negatives. Checked equipment. Wrote Dewey. in "Hers To Hold" Good.

28 ~~July~~, Dec.

Bet Mishkin \$10.00 that the war will be terminated (with Germany) by midnight the 15th of July, 1944. Developed nine rolls of film, and made some prints.

29. December

(Received a nice package from

Gloria Cowan. (1739 Wooster St., L.A.)
Also received a card from Dot. Clapsen
Route I, Box 735, New Orleans. Carol & Dad
each had a letter for me today.)
Lou & I went to Caserta on business.
It is cold. We picked up some Med.
developer, and Lou was able to buy
some "cartridges" for his 3.5 Kera. . . .
Made some prints after dark. . . .
Ran out of paper. That is the end of
the Italian stock. The negatives we

developed yesterday were very good,
except Sgt. Lundy's roll.

30 December.

Jess took out for New Year in Naples.
Peter went along. Some records I want
when I get home include Pavanne, The
Hebrides Overture, Yablochko (from "The Red
Poppy Ballet".) Am writing letters. More music:
"Why Do I Love You?" & "Make Believe".

4 January, 1944.

The 31st and New Year's day were spent
very soberly. We sat around the C.B.

developing film, and trying to keep warm. The house we lived in was a real treat. New Year's Eve the storm broke so badly that tents were blown down, olive trees uprooted, and the frozen wind blew snow and sleet almost parallel to the ground. On the second of January the storm abated enough for us to have our turkey dinner. As on Thanksgiving & Christmas, the food was delicious.

It was on the 2nd that we received word that we might again move up. On the 3rd the situation was still vague. We fired all of the new carbines. The men seem to be well satisfied with them. I shot the P.38 & Slot. Apparently the Germans have two 9mm loads in the same case. One may be for their machine pistol. About 1500 we were told to be ready to move tomorrow

morning at 0500. Much packing & throwing away was done. Jensen bid adieu to the laundry girl & we turned in. This brings the book up to date. This morning we arose at 0330, had coffee, warmed the motors, rolled up our bed rolls, and left. Jess said his mother probably would not approve of all this. It was very black on the road, so we

stalled a bit. Just south of Pratella Hannenberg bogged down in a by-pass, and at Pratella Sor Kilanti dropped out. The bolts in his sprocket (driving) were loose. We crossed the Bailey on the Volturno once more & went into an assembly area. The ground is frozen, but with tarps, straw, tile, bed-rolls, electric light, & radio we are able to make out quite well. The kitchen

served a late breakfast. Everyone is in but Sarkilähti. We are not as far North as we were last time. The idea is - we are in west of Venafro this time. Stanfords order still stands. Quote - "I don't ever want to hear German tanks reported, but what I also hear that you are there" - Unquote. As I see it now, our week in a "rest area" was a fraud. We worked like the

devil on our equipment. We cleaned this, turned in that, and drew something else. We changed to the new T.O., and got rid of four 8 balls. Several good accounts took reductions rather than be transferred. Our personnel is now reduced, reducing the AA Sgts. to nothing. All destroyer commanders went up to Sgt. I hear we are going to have a good steak dinner tonight. Good, I

am hungry!

5 January, 1944.

At 0500 artillery preparation began. At 0600, under a rolling barrage, the infantry jumped off. Day cold but not freezing.

6 January, 1944.

Attack progressed about one mile on a ten mile front extending west from Venefra area. Developed film in the tent after dark. Faint moonlight through top of tent slightly fogged film. Day very

cold; below 0°C . Fixed up our dark room equipment in one compact unit, building a new compact printer to fit the print-frames Henningsen brought back from Naples.

7 January, 1944.

This cold at 0700 is making me unhappy. The day is crystal clear and cold. Air activity has been heavy, but except for one curious guy taking photographs it has all been friendly. The attack has progressed until we are now within range of only

their heavy artillery, and none of that is landing within a couple of miles of us. We are practically rear area kids now. After dark last night "B" Co. moved out of this assembly area on 20 minutes notice to direct fire positions supporting the attack on San Vittore. We worked until 1230 PM on film last night.

8 January, 1944.

Up at 0700 as usual. Went up 13 miles of mountain road past 7 knocked out M-4's

to San Pietro, and beyond. This area compares to the lines held in the last war. The Germans have lines of fox-holes 8 feet deep, lined and covered with logs. Our artillery has pounded S. Pietro, S. Vittore, and that area to nothing. The ground is pocked and scarred; the trees are frayed & broken, their branches blasted bare of leaves. The towns were strongly held by A.T. and mg., as well as

infantry. About 100 Germans were taken in S. Vittore. Of these, three were officers. The German command is apparently quite concerned over the possibilities of an amphibious landing near Rome. Air is active in the Cassino area. Both sides have planes up, but they do not seem to bother one another.

Took some photographs.

9 February, 1944.

Sent the drivers over the road we

are going to have to move out on last night. Henningsen received a letter from ^{my wife} Nell. She is using a Frisco APO number, and says, "This is letter number one". Etler is wild. Hutchens returned from Naples with reports on our various men in the hospital. His report was not encouraging. Right off, Lou needled Hutch about his "many" fountain pens. The subject has become so sore that he wrote home for two pens &

loaned another. When Lou "needled" him
he roared. We developed some film.
Dotson's first roll with my Tenax was
pretty good. Lou had one good roll
and one was completely black. (?) We
developed a roll for one of the men that
turned out very well. I received a
tentative offer for my Contax III, Sonnar f.2,
of \$245.00, from Willowby's. Will see what the
others offer & sell to the highest bidder.
Then I shall buy a new camera when the

post war situation becomes stable.

10 January, 1944.

Lou left for Sorrento early this morning.
I went along with Col. Barney, Shirley,
Wier, and Welch up to see Oakley. The
area is still being shelled. Last night one
man was slightly hit, but shocked. The
medic said, "I don't mind working on
them, but I hate to have to run
them down." Five men were sitting
near an M-10, when one of them

thought he heard an incoming shell. He dived under the vehicle. After a few moments of silence one of the other four beside him said, "What are we doing?" Coming back we passed two large, fresh pools of blood. The road is pounded often. Hale rode with me. - Back at the company we are sitting around talking. The conversation has turned to the evil things in war. Newly captured towns or areas with no

movement or firing rank first.

11 Jan.

Reading & Dec. 6, 1943 "Newsweek", I noticed the casualty figures: Dead, 25,742; Wounded, 35,907; Missing, 32,881; Prisoners, 26,820. - Someone has started a rumor that the "Lone Ranger" is dead.

12 Jan., 1944.

"We have been together through thick and thin, but when it gets this thick it's time to thin out!"

Went up on a lulu of a recon. with Jess, Henningsen, Peter, & the platoon sqts. Stumbled over a couple dead U.S. Infantrymen & a pair of "dutchmen". Air got us out of the peep 3 times. The ground is terrible. Saw a B-25 get a bomb hit by German flock. She really broke up! The ground, trees, & buildings around S. Vittore have been eaten by some monster with an insatiable appetite. Or perhaps

it is eaten with disease. The earth is pocked as by small-pox. The shell holes overlap. This Cassino valley is like France in the last war. The fox-hole lines the Germans have are harder to break than trenches. Got back to the company in the Venefro valley to find them all packed up, ready to go. God, but I'm tired! We really did a lot of walking. Moved out at 1715. We are

going to move in along-side "B" instead of La Chiaia. M. Porchia is ours, but M. Trocchio is theirs. It looks right down our throats. The road is narrow, and winds along the mountain precipice. As we passed 2 1/2 T. trucks loaded with men we would shout, "12 tanks behind", as a warning. Their remarks were varied, but usually profane, and always full of concern. We pulled in without mishap, put up the nets by

moon-light, and sized up various HE proof shelters. Culp of "B" invited Peter & I to sleep in his house, which we gratefully did. Artillery riddled the area. Great luck was with us. No one was hurt. One man was very indignant. His cigarettes were all shot up. One destroyer got "skin bruises".

13 January, 1944.

Up at 0600 to see if any vehicles need moving. Moved Sarkalahti under

protection of fog. later we were ordered into indirect fire positions. Everyone had to regroup. The fog was gone so our precautions were nullified. The WP ordnance made for us arrived; 32 rds per company. ^{with the security of} Kang came up, so my men will not have to stand guard tonight. No enemy aircraft over today.

Jensen went to the hospital. This area is now thick with heavy equipment of several calibers. Turned

Blue ink note added 3/9/61. C.O.

in at 2030.

14 January, 1944.

About 8 rds. came in last night. I slept through it, but some of the men say the people on our right called for medics. We are waiting for the fog to lift to do some shooting. A-20's came in & bombed. They are very close. I hope they know what they are doing this time. An ME 109 just came in (1400) and dropped a "butterfly". He came in over the mountain ridge to the north & was gone before anyone could fire.

Sgt. Martin Olson ⁴²⁸
37 General Hosp., APO 763.)
Harold Sidebottom, Pvt.
37 General Hosp., APO 763
John Britz, Sgt.
78 Station Hosp., (763 APO)
Cpl. Westly Sprague
70 Gen. Hosp., APO 421

) Long moves down one terrace
each night. Claims shells
follow him.
) I jump in hole to avoid
) strafing. Jump right
out again. Hole was
full of HE (mortar) shells.
Shell falls. Lou, Etlan,
) & I are lying on terrace.
Lou says, "Wouldn't it be
hell if they made a 100
) yard shift." The thought
was so painful that
we crawled down
) terraces & moved to
) the right. Next 170 ym
round, H.E. falls where
we were. Lou says, "Can
I call them!"
● Night 18-19 Jan.
Barrage 170 ym awoken

us last night. Previous two nights nothing was able to awaken me. This was something! I remember rolling over onto my stomach so that my eyes would be protected, which is ridiculous, of course.

S. Pietro, San Vittore, Cervano, M. Chiaia, & M. Portia were hard to take. The hill behind us was defended by 165 Germans. 35 got out.

Trivio: Saw two dough-foot searching a headless German for souvenirs.

Walked for lot lately. Heine hit a mine. Lost a leg. Blew his half-track to pieces. Recon. swept for, & removed,

mines. Coliano (Sp?) drove 10 Ton wrecker in & hit 3 tellers. He was killed. Holter got "his hair parted" by fragmentation. Is back to duty. These reconnoissances are bad. Lou said, "At least we are getting in condition" I said, "Yeah, bad condition!" Knopf seems to be in a hurry these days. Cassino is right under our tubes. It is $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles distant of a much lower altituden. (St. Benedict - Montecassino - August 4th 529) An abbe 1400 years old is on the mt. behind it. Cassino is deserted, but neither side does touch it. Observation is perfect for them & for us. We had to watch our movement. Why are we always on a point? The 34th Div must be

superior to all. The British have been bashing around the Granglione R. The past two nights. I understand that they have several bridge-heads ^(Have b-h. on coast. Couldn't make it here) Life is rather precarious these days. The ridge behind is littered with dead.

An American radio station blatantly proclaiming itself to be the voice of "one of the United Nations" described the "capture of M. Trocchio" American Fifth Army troops, in a fierce bayonet charge, stormed the slopes of M. Trocchio, driving the Germans from concrete pill-boxes in fierce hand-to-hand combat. Trocchio was evacuated by the Germans. There are no pill-boxes.

The steep sides make upward movement so slow as to be a crawl. The "crawl" started at 0600 after a heavy barrage. by 0700 it was apparent that the mt. was evacuated. The casualties were six men injured by a new type of personnel mine. The stone mountain was vulnerable to artillery & to an ~~sure~~ envelopment. Though two mts. could have made its mile-and-a-half length a costly thing, the Germans did not leave those squads to their certain death. The American news report lied. I was there. The Rapido R. on the left flank is a different story. It is being strongly held. Patrols always incur mine casualties.