

**THE MILITARY CAREER OF
MASTER SERGEANT ARTHUR E. PELKEY
(UNITED STATES ARMY 1944 to 1956)
(UNITED STATES AIR FORCE 1957 to 1977)**



The Day I was Drafted into the Army - June 21, 1944 was a very exciting day in my life as 3 days before I had graduated from Holyoke Trade school as a woodworker but today I am having breakfast with the Mayor of Holyoke, Henry Toepfert. As I was being inducted into the Army today and sent to Ft. Devens, MA by train with 14 other draftees. Upon arrival, we found out that there were other draftees on the train. An officer gave us the oath to defend the United States against all enemies Foreign and Domestic and then a Sergeant marched us to a chow hall for a dinner of pork chops. I was now a Private in the Army for the duration and 6 months, being paid \$50.00 a month, all I could eat, my clothes and a place to sleep, and a possibility of being shot at. Not bad for an 18-year-old kid.

Fort Devens, MA - After dinner, we were marched to a warehouse and we were all told to remove our civilian clothes and put them in a brown paper bag which would be sent home to my parents, because we were issued our uniforms and would not wear any civilian clothing until we were discharged from the

Army. Then they issued our bedding that consisted of two blankets, two sheets, one pillow cover and one mattress cover. Now with all our clothing in a duffle bag and bedding we were marched to our barracks about a mile away. Upon arrival we were all told how to make our beds. One hour later, we had to fall out to go to the chow hall for supper, and back to the barracks. That would be the first night away from home for some of the men and the lights went out at ten o'clock, they play a tattoo on a bugle over a loud speaker system that signifies the end of the day and that was my first day in the Army.

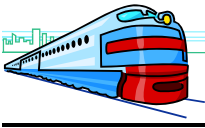
My Second Day - The sergeant blows his whistle at 5:00 am. You have 5 minutes to get up, get dressed and fall out in the street for roll call and revelry. A bugler plays revelry that signifies the beginning of the day and they raise flag. In addition, it is played over a loudspeaker system. Then we went back in the barracks and made our beds, the Sergeant did not like the way they were made. So he tore them all apart and we had to start over after detailed instructions. At 6:00 am we had to fall out and we were marched to the chow hall for breakfast. After breakfast we policed the area...that means spread out and pick up anything that don't grow, meaning cigarette butts, candy bar wrappers, etc. At 8:00 am. We were then marched to the barbershop to get our G.I. haircuts (G.I. for Government Issue). After the barbershop, we went to a dispensary and got our shots for Typhoid, Tetanus, Yellow Fever, and Smallpox. Then we were marched to a classroom where we were given a series of tests to see what we were most likely qualified to do in the Army. They don't ask you what you would like to do, they just put you where they need you. Now it is time to go to dinner again and from now on all meals will be called chow. After chow, we were marched to the theater for a lecture and a movie on Venereal Diseases, and the articles of war. The articles define punishment for different discrepancies such as disobeying an order, missing a formation, hitting any one above you in rank, going away without leave, (A.W.O.L.) etc. It is now time to go to chow again at 5:00 pm., but first we must stand retreat at 5:00 pm everyday when they the lower the flag, so then we are marched to the chow hall and then back to the barracks. We now have about 4 hours until lights go out and bed check at 10:00 pm, end of day 2.

Day Three - Today begins the same as yesterday up to 5:00 am. When the sergeant blew his whistle, we ran out of the barracks and stood at attention in formation. After chow he then marched us to a classroom where we were shown pictures of all the ranks from Pvt. to General and military courtesy and customs, how and when and when not to salute. We are required to salute all commissioned officers and the flag when it goes by in a parade. To salute is to show respect and courtesy. Discipline in the Army is very strict and everyone must obey all orders given by their superiors. For me that would be Corporals, Sergeants and Officers. I also found out today that everything is done on military time. Military time is based on a 24-hour day, and the reason is so that you

cannot get 5:00 am and 5:00 pm mixed up. You get up at 0500 hrs. and afternoon at 1:00 pm, it is 1300 hrs and you go to bed at 2200 hours. It is time to go to chow now as it is 1130 hours, and we will be back in the classroom at 1300 hrs. for more introductions on the military way of life. They give a 10-minute break every hour so that breaks up the day. Here we are back in the classroom and the subjects this afternoon will be reporting to an officer, reporting for pay and other customs. We will be marched back to the barracks, stand retreat, have evening chow and be free until 2200 hrs. and call an end to our third day in the army.

Day Four – It's 08:00 hrs. and we were marched down to the parade ground where many other platoons had been marched. A sergeant was on a raised platform and the corporals and sergeant's on the ground would ask the sergeant for so many men for a detail and then march them away. They then were all marched back to the parade ground and the original sergeants would take them back to the chow hall. They do not have jobs in the army they call them details and may consist of any type of work, like raking leaves or painting. I was picked to work in the mail room transferring mail that had come in for recruits that had been sent out to another post for basic training. I did this for the next 4 days until I received orders to go to basic training.

Permanent Post (except such installations as arsenals, depots, general hospitals and airfields) are normally called "Forts." Places temporarily occupied by troops are termed "Camps". I got a pass to go home for the weekend and that was the last time for next 17 weeks.



Leaving Ft. Devens, Day Five - After the breakfast instead of going to the mailroom, we were marched to a building where they were calling out names. Then we were told to get in a different group then that group was marched back to barracks and told to pack all of our belongings in our duffle bag and we were marched to the rail station where a train with sleepers was waiting and we got aboard. We did not know where we were going and the Sergeant in charge did not know either. We would be on this train for the next 7 days. On the second day we were told that we were going to Camp Hood, Texas and two days later we were told that we were going to Fort Ord, California. Then on the sixth day we were told us that we going to Camp Hood Texas again. During the 7 days we ran around a city block some where in Ohio and went for a hike somewhere in Arkansas. Next stop we were at Camp Hood, Texas for 16 weeks of basic training



Camp Hood, TX, Basic Training - There were 30 recruits from all over the country assigned to the 1st. platoon, company "C" Co. 136th. Tank Destroyer Training Battalion, North Camp Hood, Texas. Our platoon Sgt. was Sgt. Kalway and his assistant was Cpl. Hinkle. For the next 16 weeks, they would be our mothers and they did a good job of it. Robert Delude and I were the only ones from Holyoke.

We were all quarantined and this meant that we could not leave the company area for the first two weeks without the platoon Sgt. or Cpl. marching us to the P.X. (Post Exchange) of our basic training as Tank Destroyer personnel, which consisted of a special training to be Armor Artificers or how to take care of all small arms in a unit such as rifles, pistols, machine guns, rocket launchers etc. We also had the basic military training such as how to lay out our foot locker for inspections and all our clothing and equipment for field inspections. march and drill correctly, qualify with all the weapons, map reading, cover and concealment, first aid, how to wear the different uniforms, there are 4 uniforms, winter class "A", summer class "A", winter and summer class "C" without ties and fatigue or work uniform

Our living quarters were barracks and they were made of 2x4s and tarpaper. 2-pot belly stoves for the winter months, and about 30 double bunk beds and a room in the end for the Sergeant and Corporal. There were about six 50-watt bulb's lights hanging down at intervals through the barracks, and a fountain at the end, not a cooler. There are no toilets in the army, they are called a latrines and it was a separate building not in the barracks. The latrine had about 15 sinks, 15 commodes and 1 room with showers coming out of three walls, no stalls.

The company area consisted of ten buildings 4 barracks, four latrines, a supply room and an office where the first sergeant and the company commander run the organization is called, The Orderly room or the office. Four platoons were fed in the chow hall was bigger than the barracks with about 100 wood picnic tables. Remember that this is July in Texas and the temperature is in the 90s + and no buildings had any air conditioning as there was no such thing as air-conditioning anywhere. SSgt's and Cpl's have privileges to set at separate tables and have their own rooms in the barracks. You hear people say R.H.I.P. (Rank has is its privilege). Every thing in the Army is done by the numbers, which means don't do anything until you are told to do it.

Our training started by marking all our clothing with the initial of our last name and the last 4 digits of our serial number, thus "P-1206" was in a certain place on each piece of clothing, this is called a laundry mark. We would put our dirty clothes in a bag called a barracks bag that hung on the bottom of our bunk with our name stenciled on it. On Monday morning we would turn our bag of laundry in to the supply room and on Friday we would get them back. I think it cost \$1.50 cents a month.

On Friday after training all day and chow we would have a G.I. Party, which consisted of cleaning the barracks, dusting, and moping. Everything had to be spick and span for a Saturday morning standby white glove inspection. Our footlockers would be open and we had to have everything in a special place. All our uniforms that was hanging in the rack had to have all the buttons buttoned and we had to have a haircut, clean shaven, shoes shined and uniforms perfect for an inspecting officer. He would gig us for any minor infractions, which would result in an extra detail on Saturday afternoon instead of having it off to do nothing.

We were each issued an M-1 Carbine rifle by serial number that we had to remember. The rifles were kept locked in a rifle rack in the barracks each night. When we fell out for training in the morning we would take our rifle and carry it all day, then each night we would clean our rifle before putting it back in the rack for the night. In addition, if you dropped it during training, you put your rifle in your bunk and you slept on the floor that night. After chow we would have to clean our webbing equipment of mud, we had leggings back then. Next, we were taught the commands used in marching, such as right face, left face, about face, forward march, to the rear march, halt, double time, quick time, right oblique and left oblique. Then we would march for hours until we got it right. We had one man that could not stay in step, so when he got out of step the Sgt. would give the order to double time and we have to run for a while then march again until he got out of step again. We would make him march after duty hours trying to get him to stay in step so we would not have to run.

In my platoon, we had three squads with the tallest men falling in on the right and they would be the squad leaders. We would play a game called O'Reilley Says. The platoon Sgt. would call out orders, O'Reilley says," right face", or O'Reilley says," left face" etc. but if he said right face without the O'Reilly and you did it, you would be disqualified. The whole idea was to teach us to pay attention to the orders. The last man standing would get a privilege not to do something like sit out the next marching drill. I had a great platoon leaders in Sgt. Kalway and Cpl. Hinkle.



Basic training is a way of converting you from a civilian to a military man with discipline to react to orders without questioning why I have to do this. We would march out from the Co. area a couple of miles to a creek bed that was dry and have our class there because of the shade provided by the trees on the banks. Many hours were spent just sitting on benches listening to the instructors with flip charts. There are many subjects that are covered in basic training, they are; Military Courtesy (sometimes we would get drowsy and nod our head and the Sgt. would break a smelling-salt capsule under our nose and that will wake you up.); Customs (wearing the uniform); Marksmanship; Map Reading; First Aid (One day while having a first aid class the Sgt. asked how many of us had seen a Black Widow Spider and since most of us came from the north and had never seen one, he told us to stand up and turn our benches over and Black Widows were everywhere and told us to sit back down...no one got bit); Cover and Concealment; Leadership; Training on all of the weapons including their care and cleaning; Field training; and finally training on the Tank Destroyers (driving, firing and as a crew member). I feel that I was very lucky to be assigned to the Tank Destroyers. There are many types of units, Field Artillery, Infantry, Ordnance, Transportation, and many others. In addition, there are many career fields within each unit.

I was trained to store; maintain and repair all the weapons: Rifles, Pistols, Machine Guns both 30 and 50 cal. Bazookas, and Sub Machine Guns. Some instruments such as compasses, watches, gun sights and weapons that I was not authorized to repair would be sent to Ordnance for repair.



The Bivouac - With three weeks to go before we were to graduate, we went on a two-week bivouac. It started at 0500 hrs. with a full field pack, which was everything we owned, rifle, helmet, gas mask, canteen, entrenching tool, shelter half (pup-tent), blankets and all our clothes. We hiked 25 miles out into the Texas desert and along the way we were gassed and had to don our gas mask for about 2 miles. We would be simulating combat, eating field rations and getting our water out of a lister bag that hung on a tripod in the sun all day. The training consisted of map problems day and night and running the infiltration course both day and night in all kinds of weather. One time the dust and sand

was four inches deep in the afternoon and then we had a downpour and we had to do it again in about 6 inches of mud. The infiltration course is 100 yards long with shell craters and barb wire going across the course about 18 inches off the ground. At one end there is trench and on the other end are 30cal. machine guns that fire toward the trench about 24 inches off the ground. It all begins with the platoon marching into the trench. When the Sgt. blows his whistle, the machine guns start firing, and the platoon starts crawling on their stomachs with their helmet, rifle and canteen toward the guns. All this time there are charges of dynamite going off in the craters...this causes a very exciting 30 minutes. When you get past the guns, you can stand up, scrape the mud off and then they march you back to your pup tent for a very short night. The Sgt. lined us up on this dirt road and spread us out 50 yards apart and said, "In 30 min. there will be a tank coming down this road, you will dig a fox hole deep enough to get in while the tank goes down this road." You stand up and throw a simulated molotov cocktail at the tank. Did I mention no showers for the two weeks?

Then there are obstacle courses that are very tough and long, and ranges called KD Ranges (Known Distance) of 100 yards, 200 yards and others where you walk through a field or woods and targets pop up out of the ground and you shoot them while walking toward them. The map reading problems are a lot of fun too. You break up into teams of three men and are given a compass and a map, a piece of paper and the directions for the first leg of the problem. When you find your destination, you get directions for the next leg. This goes on for 4 legs. Then you will find you are home at your tent. The bivouac ends with a 25-mile forced march back to the company area for a hot meal and a long hot shower and a soft and dry bed.



The last week we started processing. We got our uniforms ready by sewing Tank Destroyer patches on. We got our orders for our next assignment and most of us, after a 7-day leave, went to FT. Meade, MD. There were some tests we had to complete, turn in all our equipment to supply, we had a Pistol belt, suspenders, canteen and cover, first aid pouch, tent pole and pegs, shelter half, steel helmet and liner, entrenching tool and your rifle. If you had lost any item, you had to sign a statement of charges and they would take it out of your pay. All we had to do now was picking up our orders, get paid and sign out. This is the end of basic training. I had been converted from a civilian to a soldier in 16 short weeks.

The Period Between Basic and Going Overseas - After my leave, I reported to Ft. Meade, MD and was brought to the parade ground where there were

hundreds of men from all over the United States reporting in. It was announced over the loud speaker that in three days we would be on-board a ship going somewhere. After a lot of name calling, a few of us were left and we were all Tank Destroyer trained men. A Sgt. came and had all the T.D. men fall into a formation. He then marched us to a barracks to draw bedding and then we went for chow. The next morning he told us that we would be there for a while and that he was told to keep us busy, which he did.

It was the middle of October and the Germans were beginning to giving us a hard time. They wanted to keep the Tank Destroyers together for the big push. As it turned out the Battle of the Bulge began in the mean time, so troops were being processed for overseas shipment, in and out in one day, by the thousands. They were using us to pull K.P. and other details to help in the processing and when we were not on detail, we would have a 25-mile walk on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and an inspection on Saturday morning. If you were lucky and got a weekend pass, you could leave the Fort. I would go into Baltimore and take a train to Springfield, Mass. to see my parents but had to be back on post for 0600 hrs. Monday morning roll call. I did this for 10 weeks then got orders to go to Fort Dix, New Jersey where we were given more training that included going through the infiltration course again and the rifle range, and other courses, many hikes and physical training (PT). I went home on a 3-day pass for Christmas and then I reported to Camp Kilmer, NJ on January 15, 1945, to process for overseas shipment.

Processing consisted of physicals, dental checks, records check, clothing checks, and shots. When we had all checked out that we were ready to go overseas, we then went on alert. This meant that we had to wear our helmets with a number on it and were assigned a shipping order. We could go to the movies and the PX (Post Exchange) but could not leave the post. I had a birthday on January 25 and turned 19 years old. This completed my first 8 months in the Army. On January 31, 1945, I boarded a liberty ship in New York Harbor going overseas for an unknown destination. We sailed away from the U.S. on Feb. 1, 1945.



My 11 Days Aboard a Liberty Ship - The next 9 days was aboard a liberty ship. We were taken down two decks (no floors on a ship) to where our racks (beds) were. They were 6 high and I got the top one. Then we were given a life-jacket and were told where we would go in an emergency. Shortly after all of the ships sirens sounded for a boat drill and we all went up the ladders (there a no stairs on a ship) to the main deck. They then took roll call and assigned us to a lifeboat. After the boat drill we were assigned a time for chow as we only

got fed twice a day and if you missed your time you had to wait for the next time you were assigned (no food or drinks machines were available). We were not allowed to stay below and sleep except at night and all we could do is watch the skyline for another ship, and if we saw one we hoped it was not German. This was a day aboard ship.

We landed at Liverpool, England on 8 February 1945 at about 0800 hr. but my turn to get off was not until about 1700 hr. as there were about 3000 men aboard.



My 24 Hours in England - We went from the dock to a train station and went aboard a train. Some Red Cross girls gave us tea and doughnuts, and a K ration for supper. The next morning we were in South Hampton, England and went from the train to a Landing Ship (LST). We left South Hampton, England under the cover of darkness about midnight to cross the English Channel and arrived February 10, 1945 in Le Havre, France to an Army Depot. We were then served a hot meal in a huge chow hall that had a big band playing all the songs that we now call the World War II songs. The past two days we had not seen a bed; it was sleep when and where you could setting up. After the meal, we were marched to a train station and a train of boxcars was waiting for us.



MY TRIP ACROSS FRANCE IN A BOXCAR - My next 7 days were in a boxcar that they used during World War I, which was designed to hold 40 men and 8 horses and was therefore called a 40 & 8. During World II we didn't have horses so they put 15 men in one car, there was a car with a kitchen that we could get hot food when the train stopped. The train was so slow that we would jump off to go to relieve ourselves, then run, and catch up.



We arrived in Givet, France and an Army Replacement Depot where we got a chicken dinner & all the fixings, milk, strawberry shortcake and ice cream. The first night I was there, 1000 B-24 Bombers flew over going to Germany....I am glad they were ours. We stayed there two days and went by truck to Metz, France for one night there and then a member of the 774th Tank Destroyer Battalion came for us. Cpl Carl Albright was the truck driver and took us to Battalion Headquarters in Saarburg, Germany.



I AM NOW A MEMBER OF THE 774TH. TANK DESTROYER BATTALION -

March 1, 1945 Cpl. Carl Albright came to Metz, France to pick us up in a Duce and an half (truck) there were about 10 recruits that had just arrived from the States and around 17:00 hrs. we arrived at the 774th Tank Destroyer Battalion Headquarters in Saarburg, Germany. As we got off the truck one of the recruits' asked a Sgt. Where the latrine was and the Sgt said, "Soldier, you're in Germany, you can p... anywhere you want too".



That night I slept in a schoolhouse on the floor and the next morning when I got up and went outside, on the street was a truck full of German soldiers that had been captured during the night. They were being loaded on trucks to be taken to a stockade somewhere in the rear of the front line. I asked someone, "Where do we eat chow"? and was told to go down the road to a barn and in the barn a kitchen was set up. The cook asked me how I wanted my eggs cooked? That was a surprise and the last ones for a long time. From then on, it was rations or what we could find in the farms. A lot chickens were killed and eaten and even some cows. Some of the farmers had smoked meat hanging in the smoke house and if someone else hadn't taken it, we would. I tried to keep a 5 gallon water

can of wine with me at all times as the water was not pure or safe. You did what ever it took to survive.



MY FIRST TEN DAYS IN COMBAT - Later that day I was taken by jeep out to a house that had been occupied by about six or seven men, all scroungy looking after many months of combat. One of the men was Adolphus Murphy and he came in with a helmet full of potatoes and onions that he had found in a garden and was going to cook them in his helmet. Another man had a pair of pants in a helmet on the stove trying to get grease out of them. The other men that I remember were Sgt. Pappy Downey who was from Connecticut and Cpl. Richard FiField was from Vermont. I being born in Vermont latched on to FiField to be my friend because I was scared of my surroundings. After the jeep driver left, things got quiet and we sat around talking about how things were back in the states. Just about the time it started to get dark, my first shell came in and exploded near the house, I looked around and there was no one there except me. They had all run down into the cellar to be safe, but it did not take me long to learn what to do, there was about 10 shells that landed, but no damage. All the beds in the house had been thrown outside to make room for us to sleep on the floor.

I was beginning to get hungry, and I was told there was a box over by the door with our rations in it and to help myself. There were 4 kinds of rations: C-RATIONS, K-RATIONS, A CHOCOLATE D-BAR AND A BOX CALLED 10 IN ONES this meant that there were rations for 10 men in one box. The RATIONS are explained at the end of the document.

After we ate, we cut the cards to see in what order we would have guard duty, outside, in one-hour shifts. I got the 2:00 to 3:00 hrs shift. After the guard duty was decided, they started to play cards (I did not know how) so I watched them. They had a light bulb from a jeep, on long wires coming from a jeep outside. It was hanging down to about 2 inches from the tabletop because they did not want the light to be seen from the outside by the Germans. The next morning the harassing shelling started again about 5:00 hrs. About 10 rounds of 88 MM. shells but again no damage. We were shelled whenever some German felt like it. When I was on guard duty I saw something streaking across the sky so I got someone to come out to see what it was and he said, "That it was a BUZZ BOMB going to England" and that was the last one I saw. This same routine went on for about nine or 10 more days and then we finally moved. I do not know to this day what we were doing, other just waiting for orders to move out.



One of the units had captured a village that day and we going up to it when a halftrack threw a track. A Sgt. assigned 4 other recruits and I to guard the vehicle all night in the rain and mud and we could see the muzzle flash and hear the guns in the distance. The next day we got the track back on and continued until we came to German tank that had been hit and burnt out, I climbed on top of it and looked in and saw my first dead Germans. I have never forgotten that sight.



16, 1945 March - "A" Co. was relieved from the front line duty to back into France and get the unit converted from a towed gun unit to a self-propelled unit with M-36's Tank Destroyers. After 5 days of orientation on the new 90mm gun and some welding racks on to tie our bedrolls and duffel bags on, then back to the front line, but not until we all got a hot showers and some good hot chow.



21 March 1945 - "A" Co. completed the conversion to self-propelled M-36's with 90mm gun and moved near Otterburg, Germany. "C" Co. destroyed a 150mm artillery piece, one armored personnel carrier and one half-track. Sixteen of the enemy were killed and eight taken prisoner.



22 March 1945 - That's me and James Lovely "A" Co. reinforcing the fires of the 919th Field Artillery Bn. (which I would serve with from 1949 to 1955) and placed in secondary mission position in Frankenthal, Germany.



I got promoted to Private First Class. It was pretty much the same until 1 April. After eight months of continuous combat employment with the Third Army in the drive across France and terminating with the capture of Ludwigshafen. We were now attached to the 94th Infantry Div., XXII Corp, 15th. Army at Huls, Germany



The Month of April was pretty much the same with a lot of harassing missions some direct fire at observed targets, capturing a lot of prisoners and chasing the retreating Germany Army.

27-28 April 1945 - Capt. Ingram was appointed battalion DP Officer (Displaced Persons) and set up a DP Camp.

29-30 April 1945 – Forty five prisoners were taken. Our DP Camp and begins to operate and approximately 300 DP's were moved in by captured vehicles to this area. Approximate strength of this camp was estimated at 1500 with an estimated capacity of 5000. A former Gestapo member was sent to CIC for screening. 500 DP's were taken to our large DP Camp.

1-7 May 1945 - Attached to the 301st. Regt. of the 94th Infantry Division, we were assigned the responsibility of occupying and governing an area of about 250 square miles consisting of Orts of the Landkries and Dusseldorf-Mettman. Our area of responsibility was the northwest corner of that Landkries. Civilian population of this area was estimated to roughly 40,000 including 5000 displaced persons.

Our Battalion Commander, in order to adequately cover the assigned area, divided it into four equal sectors and placed one Company in each. To control the sector our Battalion Executive Officer with all the staff members at his disposal was designated the Military Government. Also in each Company, a military Government Officer, who received his instructions from Battalion, was appointed. It was learned that it was an impossible task for courts of the Military Government detachments to try all the cases arising in the area. So by proper authority, our G-2 appointed a Summary Courts Officer with jurisdiction over our area. Because of his knowledge of law and proper court procedure, he was capable of handling all the cases in our area. The principle civilian offence was violation of the imposed curfew regulation. The most pressing problem confronting us in this area was assembling and caring for 5,000 displaced persons, living throughout the area in small groups, depending for food on the fruits of their pillaging and looting. These persons were living under conditions best described as deplorable. We were fortunate in finding, in our area, a vacant Military Camp in good repair that would house all the displaced persons in the area. To guard and patrol the area we were using over 300 men daily.

I and another soldier would get on a truck loaded with GI's and personally go to Germans farms out in the country each night. Two GI's would get dropped off at each farm to protect them from being looted by the displaced persons from sun down to sun up as they were not allowed to have any weapons. We would sit and try to talk with the Germans and drink tea or coffee and eat black bread until about 22:00 hours then the folks would tell us to go bed with big thick down covers as they would get us up if anyone came around to loot and steal whatever they could. Nothing happened on my farm.



8 May 1945 - VICTORY IN EUROPE DAY, THE WAR IN EUROPE IS OVER. Little celebrating was noted, duty was the same as before.

We remained in this area until Germany was split up into the Russian, French, British and United States Army Zones of occupation. I was assigned to a Barons house to live, which was really nice as I had bath tub in my room and I had to build a fire in a water heater with wood for hot water. There was a nice wine cellar too. I don't recall how long we were there until one day a British soldier came into my room and said, "I say Yank may I sleep in here," as it was a very big room. Days later we loaded our Tank Destroyers on a train with our destination being Czechoslovakia. I believe that we were there until August 1945, when we came back to Nuremburg, Germany. We took over the Nuremburg Stadium, where the 3rd Army Track and field Championships were to be held.

I was told to fall out in a class "A" uniform and was given a pair of white gloves as I was to be an usher at a baseball game. General Patton was expected to attend and he came close enough to me that I had to salute him. Ewell Blackwell was pitching and he later became a major league pitcher. That was great day for me. All the other days I sold beer for .25 a bottle at a stand on top of the bleachers.

I served almost 2 months and 8 days in combat and a total 7 months with the 774th Tank Destroyer Battalion. It was formed on December 15, 1941 and it disbanded in Nuremburg, in September of 1945. 57 years later I became the President of the 774th Tank Destroyer Battalion Association. **IT WAS A GREAT OUTFIT AND IS STILL GOING 68 YEARS LATER!**

Sgt. Downing picked up a dog in France and named him Stupid because he did not reply to English. 1 point was given for each month of service in the states, one point for every month overseas and 5 points for each battle star and 5 points for each medal you were awarded. The point roster was posted and the man with the highest number of points on top. When I looked down the list, came to Stupid, who had 32 points and I only had 28 points. I was a replacement with only 2 battle stars and no medals so I was last on the roster. Being a replacement, I didn't have enough points to rotate so I was assigned to the 15th Tank Battalion and their assignment was to guard the political prisoners that were to be tried at the Nuremburg trials prisoner camp outside of Nuremburg. That was a very monotonous guard duty, 2 hours on and 4 hours off, around the clock. This lasted about two months when I was promoted to Technician 5th Class



One day I was told that I would not have guard duty but be ready to travel. That night I was awoken and told to get my shaving kit and a change of socks and underwear. I was taken into the prison, to where a special prisoner was sleeping. We got him up, dressed and took him out to a truck where other GI's did the same thing. When they all were there we took them to the railroad station where we put them on a train and went down by the Austrian Boarder. There we put them all in another prison. With this detail complete, I returned back to regular duty. This guard duty lasted about two months, then it seemed to me that all we did for the next couple of weeks was go on road march as a show of force because other unit's would pass us going the other way

I went on a lot of unannounced raids looking for anything that was American, such as equipment, weapons or any kind and any black-market products

By this time it was April 1946 so I signed up for a 7 day leave to Switzerland, which was a great 7 days and trip.

May 1, 1946 - I started getting ready to rotate out and left from Bremerhaven, Germany on May 20, and arrived in New York, June 1, 1946 at Ft. Dix, NJ. I went home to Holyoke, MA for the weekend and returned to Ft. Dix NJ. I was discharged after 1 year, 11 months and 16 days of active duty on June 6, 1946. I was awarded the American Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal, European, Middle East and Africa Medal with two Campaign Combat Battle Stars for Central Europe and The Rhineland campaigns, the Victory in Europe Medal and the Occupation Medal.



I joined the enlisted reserve the next day there was no activity until 1949. I was then assigned to "C" Battery, 919th Field Artillery Battalion, 94th Infantry Division.



I was a T/5 and over the next 5 years I was promoted to M/Sgt. and became the First Sergeant. After 9 yrs. 6 mos. as a civilian in the reserves on December 15 1954 I requested 2 years active duty and I was reduced to S/Sgt without prejudice and reported to FT. Dix as a Staff Sergeant on 6 January 1955. I was assigned to a Causal CO. and had nothing to do for 3 days. At 01:00 the CQ (Charge of Quarters) woke me up and told me to go to the bus station and bring back a group of draftees that came from White Hall Street, Brooklyn, NY. I found about 50 of them with ducks-ass haircuts, black leather jackets and suede shoes all wise guys. I was now their mother and had to process in along with them in drawing clothing, hair-cuts, dental checks, shots and tests for the next 3 days and then they were sent to another Co. for basic training.


I was sent to a CO. that had two weeks left of their basic training as an instructor and when their two weeks were completed, I was given 150 men to prepare for shipment to the Panama Canal Zone as infantry men. I had now been assigned to an Ordnance unit so we left New York 1 Feb, 1955 and arrived at the Canal Zone 11 days later by the way of Puerto Rico.

I was assigned to the Atlantic Division Ordnance on the Atlantic side of the Panama Canal as N.C.O.I.C. (Noncommissioned Office in Charge) of the Small

Arms Repair Shop and had to repair and inspect all weapons on the Atlantic side of the isthmus. I was there for the next 22 months and rotated out, arriving back at Fort Dix, NJ. 15 December 1956 and was released from active duty 21 Dec. 1956. I completed almost 4 years of active duty and a total of 12 years of Army military service.



31 December 1956 - I was sworn in the United States Air Force at Westover

Air Force Base Mass. as an E-5  and assigned to Strategic Air Command (SAC) the 99th Avionics and Armament Squadron, 99th Bomb Wing. My duty was to prepare bomb racks and load atomic bombs aboard B-52 Aircraft. I had no experience on this type of equipment and did not like the responsibility that went along with it. This went on for about 6 months and one day a Sgt. asked for a volunteer, I did and my new duty was as an Expediter on the flight line in a bread type truck. My duty consisted of keeping a maintenance board up to date with all maintenance going on 45, B-52 aircraft and Job Control. The night planner would schedule all the maintenance when the aircraft would land. We would check with a crew-chief to see how a repair was going or if he needed anything or required a new job submitted such as a hydraulic leak or a fuel leak as we had radio contact with job control. This was an interesting job and I enjoyed doing it. One day as I was checking my board to see if it was like their board in job control and I said, "Boy you guys have it made up here." This went on for a few days and one day the Chief said, "Sarge do you want to work up here?" and I said yes, you guys have it made". That afternoon at 16:00 hrs I got a call to report to the Squadron Commander and he told me to report to Job Control the next morning in a class "A" uniform. I then worked on the Avionics and Armament board, which was working between the flight line and the maintenance squadrons. I did that for about 2 years.

Then they made me the night planner. I would watch the schedule to see what time the first aircraft would be landing and then I would go to duty. When the last one would land and I planned the maintenance for it, I would go home after about 4 or 5 hours of work. This lasted about 3 years.

I then crossed trained from a Weapons Loader to Aircraft Maintenance Analyst. This required that I go to school, so I went to Chennault Air Force Base at Champaign, IL for 8 weeks of training. My new duties were analyzing maintenance that had been performed on the aircraft and look for high failure

items, excessive man hours expended, overtime, how many hours each aircraft flew, ground aborts, late takeoffs, air aborts, special studies as required. I would make reports to higher headquarters, and brief the Chief of Maintenance every day on the status of the aircraft. This was a very interesting job.

After 9-1/2 years at Westover Air Force Base, I volunteered to go to Germany or Alaska. Being in SAC I knew that I would not go to Germany as I had wanted to go to Alaska and that is where they (SAC) would assign me. So on 15 November 1965, I left Westover Air Force Base in route to arrive at Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska. I arrived on 1 December 1965 and was assigned to the 6th Strategic Wing as an N.C.O.I.C of the Air Craft Maintenance Analyst Section. We had RC




135 and KC 135 aircraft and I was promoted to Technical Sergeant and would remain there until 1 June 1970. This was a great tour of duty as I hunted for the big brown bears on Afognac Island, went North of the Arctic Circle and out to Symya Island, plus some great fishing trips with some great guys to be with.

My next assignment was to 93rd. Bomb Wing at Castle Air Force Base, CA. on 1, August 1970. Again I am an Aircraft Maintenance Analyst but I am just another analyst doing the same job as before because there was Chief Master Sgt. as the N.C.O.I.C. I received orders for Udorn, Thailand but protested because I had not been in the States 1 year as required. One year later, I then received orders for Osan, Korea. In September 1971, I left for Osan Air Force Base, Korea and was assigned to the 51st Air Base Wing as NCOIC of the Maintenance Analysis Section and had many types of aircraft. I had two Korean's assigned to me; one was an analyst and the other as a key punch operator.



I received my first Air Force Commendation Medal for Meritorious Service for my duty with the 6th Strategic Wing in Alaska. After 13 months I received orders for Langley Air Force Base, VA. Arriving at Langley Air Force Base in November 1973 I was assigned to the 48th Fighter Interceptor Squadron as NCOIC of the Analyst Section. We had F-106 & T-33 Aircraft.



I received my second Air Force Commendation Medal for Meritorious Service with the 51st Air Base Wing in Korea. I was promoted to Master Sergeant  1 April, 1974.

After a year had passed, orders came down that someone in the squadron would go to Chennault, Air Force Base, IL for the (MMICS) Maintenance Management Information Control System School, and I was chosen to go to this school. This was a 6 week course and when I returned I was put in charge of this new Maintenance System that was to be done with computers. I had to train all the sections on how the system worked and how to submit their information. The planning section had to give all the aircraft ID numbers and all the ground power equipment. The training section had to give each man an ID number. Job Control had to keep track of all the take-offs and landings and Supply Liaison had to keep track of all parts on order and all of this had to be put onto key punch cards. My job was to get the remote computers installed on dedicated circuits and order the paper as this was before screens (CRT)...it used a lot of paper.

Each Maintenance Squadron on base had an N.C.O.I.C. for this project and I had to do this. When this information was all gathered and ready to be loaded in the main computer at Data Automation we had close to 2 million of these key punched cards to load. We started on Friday at 16:00 hrs and worked until 08:00 hours Monday morning. The main computer had to be shut down and we were the only ones on it for the weekend. We did this for 3 consecutive weekends and then all the sections had to keep all their data up to date. From then on it was my job to make sure that the system was working correctly. I had no information in the computer. Today, I would be known as a System Analyst. I could retrieve information on any subject, like aircraft status, parts on order, the training a certain person had. The Chief of Maintenance would ask me for information I would ask the computer and the data would print out and would tear it off and give it to him.

I was also sent to Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas for a 1 week course in Cost Management and to Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida for 1 week to observe and monitor the MMICS system, as it was the first base in the Air Force to implement that system. I did this until I retired from the Air Force after 33 years of service to my country. On 1 June, 1977 and received my 3rd.Air Force Commendation Medal for Meritorious Service at Langley AFB, VA.



I enjoyed my military career, the places I have been, the great people I served with and have no idea what my life would have been had I not decided to make the military my life. Since I graduated from the Holyoke Trade School as only a wood worker and 9 -1/2 years later I was discharged in 1946 with no future to look forward to until I requested active duty. Now I am President of my WWII unit, the 774th Tank Destroyer Battalion Association which is back where it all began in June 21, 1944.

THE FOUR RATIONS AVAILABLE DURING WW II

C-RATIONS - On page 10, I explained the different kind of rations we had to eat in the field. Below are C-Rations in which you got 4 cans for each meal and the Accessory Pack. Most of the time you didn't get a choice, it was whatever the Sgt. would hand you as you went through a line. These were mostly used by Infantry units because they didn't have a way to carry any other type, but everyone ate them at one time or another. We would heat them on a block of a vehicle if one was available, otherwise you eat them cold or heat them anyway you could find.

B-1 Units	B-2 Units	B-3 Units
Meat Choices (in small cans): Beef Steak Ham and Eggs, Chopped Ham Slices Turkey Loaf	Meat Choices (in larger cans): Beans and Wieners Spaghetti and Meatballs Beefsteak, Potatoes and Gravy Ham and Lima Beans Meatballs and Beans	Meat Choices (in small cans): Boned Chicken Chicken and Noodles Meat Loaf Spiced Beef
Fruit: Applesauce Fruit Cocktail Peaches Pears	Crackers (4) Cheese Spread, Processed Caraway Pimento	Bread, White Cookies (4) Cocoa Beverage Powder
Crackers (7) Peanut Butter Candy Disc, Chocolate Solid Chocolate Cream Coconut Accessory Pack*	Fruit Cake Pecan Roll Pound Cake Accessory Pack*	Jam Apple Berry Grape Mixed Fruit Strawberry Accessory Pack*

Breakfast
Beef Steak
Applesauce
Crackers 7
Peanut Butter
1 Kind of Candy
Dinner
Beans and Wieners
Cracker 4
Cheese Spread
Fruit Cake
Supper
Meat Loaf
Cookies 4
Cocoa Beverage Powder
1 Jam

A meal consisted of 4 cans - 1 with the meat, 1 with fruit, 1 with crackers and jam and 1 with the accessory pack.

*Accessory Pack

Spoon, Plastic
Salt
Pepper
Coffee, Instant
Sugar
Creamer, Non-dairy
Gum, 2 Chicklets
Cigarettes, 4 smokes/pack
Winston
Marlboro
Salem
Pall Mall
Camel
Chesterfield
Kent
Lucky Strike
Kool
Matches, Moisture Resistant
Toilet Paper

One ration consisted
1 can with the meat
1 can with cracker or bread
1 can with desert
1 can with the accessory pack

You would not know what kind of cigarettes
you got or gum you would get.

They were not the best tasting food you ever ate
but they were high in calories.

When you read this REMEMBER THAT
FREEDOM IS NOT FREE and what the
military went through so YOU would be FREE.



This is a can opener that came in the big box that the rations came in. I still carry one on my key ring to this day and would not be without one, it reminds me of days gone by.

TEN IN ONE RATIONS (10 RATIONS IN ONE BOX FOR 10 MEN) These are the Ten-In-One Rations that are used by Tank and Artillery crews and anyone that had a way to carry them.



FIGURE 2. Breakfast—10-in-1 ration.



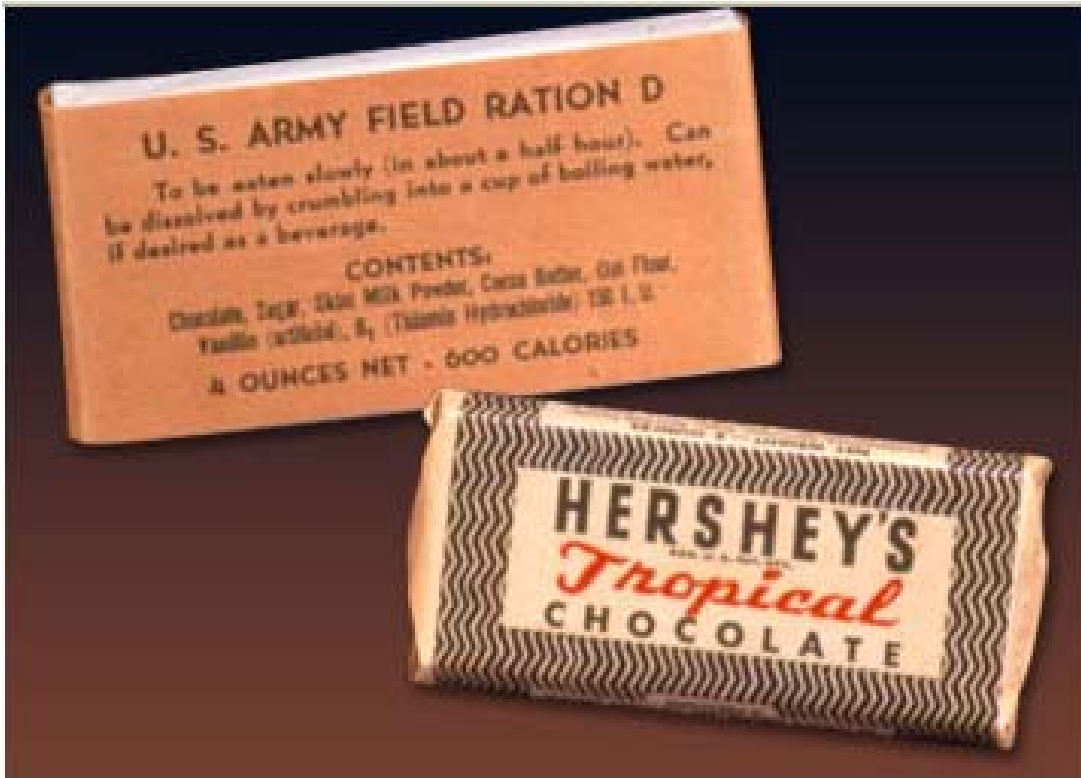
FIGURE 3. Dinner—10-in-1 ration.



FIGURE 4. Supper—10-in-1 ration.



D-BAR – It was like eating a cooking chocolate bar. They were pretty good, as real chocolate candy bars were no where to be found. So these were the next best thing. They were also hard to find unless you could get one off an infantry man.



The Ration D Bar

The U.S. Army's requirements were quite specific. For troops engaged in a global war, they needed a ration bar that weighed about four ounces, would not melt at high temperatures, was high in food energy value, and did not taste so good that soldiers would be tempted to eat it except in an emergency. This last objective in particular was certainly a new one for the Hershey Chocolate Corporation. Nevertheless, its chocolate technologists came up with something that passed all tests.

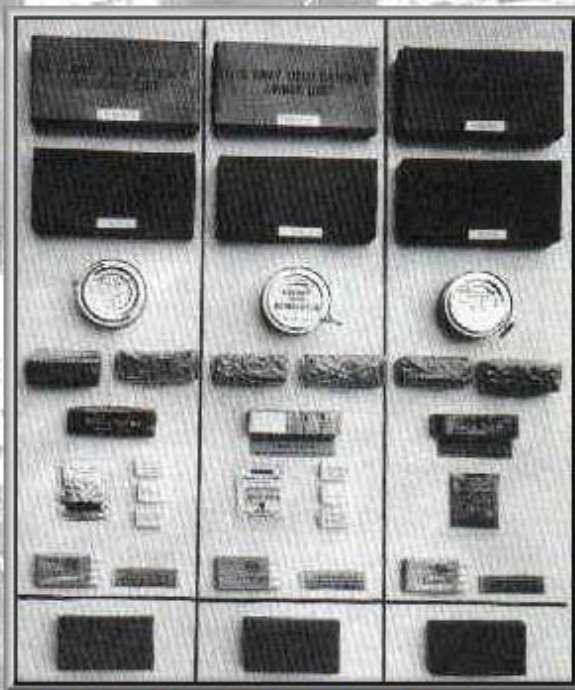
U.S. ARMY FIELD RATIONS K

"The K - ration contained three thousand calories and was designed to be light in weight, to be carried in the soldier's pack and to be consumed only under emergency conditions when no other food was available. This decision to send the men into combat with the prospect of inadequate daily caloric intake was not sanctioned by the doctors and was to play an important part in the poor strength and general health of the Marauders."

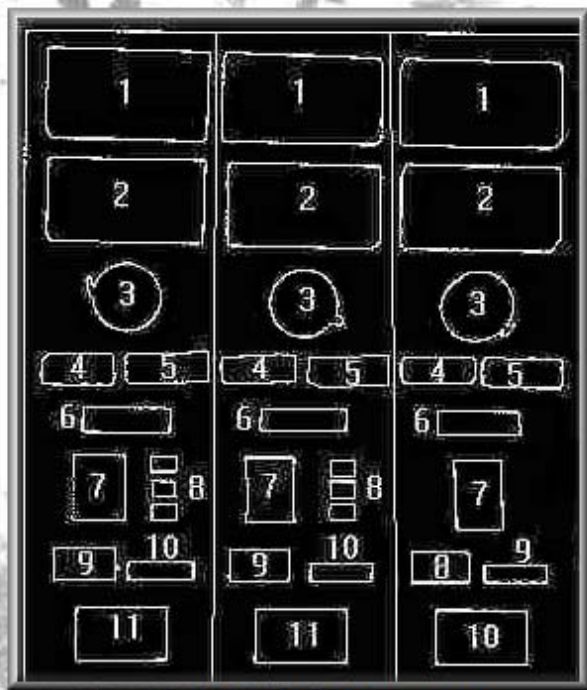
(James E. T. Hopkins MD. - Spearhead - 1999)

After a battle "our other enemy took over: hunger. We were perpetually famished. Not only were K rations lacking in bulk, but every fourth or fifth day we ran out of them. We had two conditions -- one in which we felt unfed, the other in which we were unfed."

(Charlton Ogburn Jr. - The Marauders - 1956/1959)



BREAKFAST - DINNER - SUPPER



SEE DISCRPTION BELOW

K - RATIONS

Left: US Army field ration K breakfast unit

1. Outside box; 2. Inside box; 3. Chopped ham and egg; 4. K-1 biscuit; 5. K-2 biscuit; 6. Fruit bar; 7. Soluble coffee (5 grams); 8. Pressed sugar tablets; 9. Four cigarettes; 10. Chewing gum; 11. US Army field ration D: to be eaten slowly (in about half an hour). Can be dissolved by crumbling into a cup of boiling water, if desired as a beverage. Ingredients: chocolate, sugar, skim milk powder, cocoa fat, oat flour, artificial flavoring, C. 45mg, Vitamin B (Thiamin Hydrochloride).

Center: US Army field ration K dinner unit

1. Outside box; 2. Inside box; 3. Pasteurized process American cheese; 4. K-1 biscuit; 5. K-2 biscuit; 6. Malted milk - dextrose and destrose tablets...15; 7. Lemon juice powder (synthetic); 8. Pressed sugar tablets; 9. Four cigarettes; 10. Chewing gum; 11. US Army field ration D: to be eaten slowly (in about half an hour). Can be dissolved by crumbling into a cup of boiling water, if desired as a beverage. Ingredients: chocolate, sugar, skim milk powder, cocoa fat, oat flour, artificial flavoring, C. 45mg, Vitamin B (Thiamin Hydrochloride).

Right: US Army field ration K supper unit

1. Outside box; 2. Inside box; 3. Chopped ham and egg; 4. K-1 biscuit; 5. K-2 biscuit; 6. US Army field ration D. 2 ounces net; 7. Bouillon powder; 8. Four cigarettes; 9. Chewing gum; 10. US Army field ration D: to be eaten slowly (in about half an hour). Can be dissolved by crumbling into a cup of boiling water, if desired as a beverage. Ingredients: chocolate, sugar, skim milk powder, cocoa fat, oat flour, artificial flavoring, C. 45mg, Vitamin B (Thiamin Hydrochloride).