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P 01

Thanks for your letter  
and the excerpts from S. L. A.  
Marshall's book "The First  
Eight Days." I found the  
excerpts so interesting that  
I purchased the book after  
much hunting to locate a  
copy. I agree that this  
is the best account of  
the entire "Battle of the Bulge,"  
that I have seen.

Our M-1P was not named.  
We trained on the M-1P  
in the U. S. A. and received  
new ones at the staging  
area in England, before  
embarking for France  
shortly after "D Day".

although we had money <sup>(2)</sup>  
minor engagements, though  
France and, was constantly  
subject to artillery and  
mortar fire, the battle at  
"Noville" made these incidents  
seem of little consequence.  
The "Noville" fight was actually  
a face to face battle of armor.

It can recall money  
incident which occurred in  
the fight, but have trouble  
putting these in writing.

On the morning of Dec 20,  
when the fog lifted and we  
could finally see what we  
were up against all Hell  
broke loose. Our maneuverability  
and 170° traverse was a definite  
advantage over the enemy  
tanks. It could tell when  
we had knocked one out because  
the crew would bail out.

They were camouflaged with (3)  
white, and, it could hear the  
50 Calibre machine gun  
over my head firing at  
them. This gun was manned  
by Sgt Richard Beater our  
crew chief. Incidentally Beater  
was taken prisoner some time  
between this action and  
the end of the Battle.

Also our regular Driver T-5  
David Wilson was taken  
Prisoner. Wilson was wounded  
by shrapnel the day before  
this battle and the assistant  
driver John Pendzwater  
was driving. He was killed  
when our Destroyer was  
hit.

Contrary to many accounts  
of the 76 mm gun being  
ineffective against German  
armor, our 76 proved

to be very effective, which (4)  
is proven by the fact that  
we knocked out 4 of the  
enemy tanks before being  
hit ourselves.

While in Noville, last  
October I located the woman  
who lived in the house  
which was directly to the  
rear of our gun position.  
She said that the house  
was hit 9 times by the  
German tanks and she  
thought they were shooting  
at us but too high. This  
woman (Madame B. Volvents) was  
18 at the time, and she with  
her family retired to a prearranged  
dugout behind the Hill when  
the action started, and  
stayed there throughout  
the battle.

I have read many (5)  
different accounts of the  
fighting at Noville, but have  
not found where our soldiers  
in volvement was documented.

Shortly after the battle  
there was a very good article  
in "Collier's" magazine which  
described our specific  
des trooper and its part in  
the action. Although it did  
not mention my name, it  
did specify Sgt. Beater's  
des trooper. This was a story  
of the whole Noville defense,  
my wife saved this article  
and, I gave it to the  
V. B. O. B. Historian for their  
Museum. I also gave them  
other newspaper clippings  
pertaining to Noville.  
Perhaps you could obtain

Copies of these if interested. ①

although the incident on  
the 19<sup>th</sup> December when  
we probed out two  
German tanks near the  
cross roads does not seem  
to appear in any of the  
accounts of the battle, I  
was surprised to find on  
my visit to Noville, that  
the Belgians had erected  
a documentary of the  
events. This gives an account  
which is almost ~~identical~~  
identical to my recollection.

This documentary states  
that an American Tank  
destroyer destroyed the  
German Tanks at "Point  
Blanc" road. In this  
action our Platoon C.O. Lt.  
Hagers rode the side of our

destroyer, from our debiladed <sup>(7)</sup>  
Position, and directed us to  
the German tanks. We  
knocked the first one out  
before they realized what was  
happening. The second one  
nearly got us before I could  
get him in the gun  
sight. This was at a  
distance of only about 50 ft.  
I think the documentary  
describes it as 60 meters.

I expect to attend the  
609<sup>th</sup> reunion this fall, and  
hope to find out what happened  
to the rest of the 3rd Platoon  
and also the Co and battalion.  
I think the other 3 guns of  
3rd Platoon had gone in  
support of the infantry. We  
were left in town as sort  
of a rear guard. Our radio  
was "out" so no contact with

The rest of the Platoon. (P)

I know, from reports I have read in different articles that at least some of the 609th went all the way to the end of the war in Germany

am enclosing a few snap shots taken in Noville last fall.

Hope you can read this. Will be happy to hear from you any time.

Yours truly  
Cally Ripper