



703rd Road Block



Vol. III, #2 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion Association Newsletter June, 1992
BROTHERHOOD FORGED IN COMBAT

Business Meeting May 20, 1992
Edward McIntyre (A) chaired.

REUNION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The membership wishes to meet in two years. That decision developed in the face of the difficulty of finding leadership to carry on the time consuming work of the association. The policy adopted was that proposals for the location of the following biennial reunion must be made with assurances by the time of a reunion. If the membership approves a proposal, the proposers of that location would assume the leadership of the association. Fred Hunt (Hq.) and Merle Goodrich (Hq.) proposed Springfield, Missouri as the site for our 1994 reunion (to be held, May 17-19, 1994). Air travel is convenient and the hotel rate will be \$54 per night (no meals). After full discussion of the members, Merle and Fred's proposal was accepted and they were voted into the leadership of the association.

It was voted by the membership that the new officers would be given thirty days to submit their candidate(s) for the secretary-treasurer post(s). Fred and Merle have asked to offer their candidate(s) to us at the Third Armored Reunion in Omaha in September.

Next Reunion:

Third Armored Division Association
Omaha, Nebraska, Sept. 9-12, 1992.

Next 703rd T.D. Association Reunion
Springfield, Missouri, May 17-19, 1994.

Fred intends to make it the biggest 703rd reunion ever! Contact him at 2447 Wallis Smith Avenue, Springfield, MO 65804 1-417 886 3590.

Normandy Northern France The Rhineland The Ardennes Central Europe

REUNION EARNINGS

Schutt's Corner

The bus trip to Indiantown Gap ended as a "break even" deal, well worth it! "Split-The-Pot", "Free Room" raffles and "T" Shirt sales have added some revenue.

We now have 80 members. Only half the men in the directory pay dues. With more paid up members we could lower the life membership from \$100 to \$75.

The membership voted semi-annual publication and distribution of the 703rd Road Block. (June and December), and that there will be no distribution of the newsletter to anyone who does not contribute the \$10 subscription unless there are valid reasons to do so. The association will respect requests for free subscriptions for members who explain why they cannot pay. Fred, via a letter, asked that for the present, the widest distribution continue.

703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion Association FINANCIAL REPORT (9/15/91 - 5/16/92)

9-15-91 Balance Forward, C.D.	1000.00
Checking Balance	145.58
Late Dues 1991	100.00
1992 Dues @ 10.00 (84 members)	840.00
66 voluntary, for <u>Road Block</u>	660.00
Donations to date	85.00
Dues for 1993 and <u>Road Block</u>	<u>30.00</u>
Income	1860.58

Expenditures

Everett Stites for <u>R.B.</u> plus	700.48
Nathan Goldberg " " "	27.86
Bob Schutt--Stamps at P.O.	88.21
Directory, net expenses	125.49
Jim Roberts--Reunion refreshments	300.00
"T" shirts and screen printing	205.08
Reunion Deposit Sheraton Hilton	<u>200.00</u>
Total Expenses	1647.12
5-12-92 Check Acc't Balance	213.46
5-15-92 Placed in checking	<u>1000.00</u>
TOTAL ASSOCIATION ASSETS	1213.46

BANQUET

It was a grand evening of lovely ladies and handsome gentlemen. We heard the greetings of Colonel Showalter and expressions of hope for the future of our association tempered by the realities of our physical and financial problems. There were thanks for the officers and editor, and well wishes for Fred Hunt and Merle Goodrich who are taking over. Appreciation was expressed to those members who helped on special assignments. Decisions made at the business meeting were repeated. The retiring officers promised their support in their role as trustees, asking that all of us help their successors.

The membership applauded the presence of members of the Reading Chapter of the Third Armored Division Association.

REVEILLE AT THE READING REUNION

HEADQUARTERS CO.

Showalter, W.E.
Hallabrin, P.
Perry, Seaton
Krupnow, F.
Williamson, J.W.
Hickman, S.J.
Falk, N.

"B" CO.

Caine, N.C.
Czajkowski, J.
Carlson, O.
Laughing, T.
Johnson, C.S.
Roberts, J.
Cerrito, J.

"A" CO.

Luczynski, M.
Pieplora, G.
Toma, G.
Goldberg, N.
Santino, J.
Schutt, R.
McIntyre, E.
Miller, F.
Steinhart, R.
Straub, L.
Murray, C.

"C" CO.

Backus, S.
Bornstein, C.
Paulson, H.
Ligatti, R.
Marchewka, L.
Taberski, J.
Caloura, E.
Tomkins, A.
Mitch, J.
Strahosky, J.D.

RECON

Malinowski, S.

54th E.A.

Hamilton, L.Dole

MISSEDREVEILLE

Balmes, J. (A) Wagoner, W. (A)
Green, J.R. (Hq.) Gosch, H. (C)
Stites, E.C. (Rcn) Wittler, L. (A)
Silva, E.P. (B)

EDITOR'S NOTES IN READING, PA.

Illness to Marie Stites and in the Gosch family explain two of the above absences.

Wish I'd Taken a Picture!

Sitting at a table in the hospitality room, as relaxed as three adjutant generals were Oscar Carlson (B) all the way from Astoria, Oregon, Clyde S. Johnson (B) from nearby Ohio, and Norm Caine (B) from E. Haven, Connecticut. If I ever saw three gentlemen looking as if they owned the King Ranch in Texas, ---there they were!

News of Members

Roland Anctil (B) 1402 Waterbury Rd., Thomastown, CT 06787 is feeling much better after very serious illness.

Ernest Caloura (C) corrected my error in an earlier newsletter. "Tippy" Giovino (C), not "Ernie", had the by-pass operation.

Phil Hallabrin (A-Hq.) has the enthusiasm of a sideshow barker, remembering many incidents in and out of his army life. He truly made the hospitality room come alive.

Our wives did a good deal of shopping because the mill outlets were that inviting--- low prices and great selection. Marge Miller led the shoppers in aches with her infectious humor. Maybe at the next reunion your editor will slip in on their hospitality room talk so that I can learn the problems they have with their "hombres"! As ever the ladies helped give "class" and support to the reunion.

The evaluation of the Indiantown Gap excursion by the busload who went was very appreciative. Learning, memories, and companionship were gained that day.

"In the mid-50's I was in contact with Victor Ruggeroli (A). His name is now, Rogers. Victor still lives in the Detroit area. He said Major Cole (A) had called him from the R.R. station and wanted him to pick him up. Cole had just been released from an Army hospital." Bob Schutt

I sure would have liked to be in on the exchanges between the men around Tom Laughing (B) and John Czajkowski (B) just outside the hospitality room. When you see everyone intent on the "gab", you can bet they had something to talk about that should be included in the history of the battalion.

The men of "C" Co. certainly have much to talk about, although "Charley" Bornstein appears to have the most fun. I certainly want to sit in on their "yarns" at a reunion.

Your editor has come to the conclusion that most of us express ourselves now, in the character of our behavior then. Nevertheless, can we say that three years of army life, combat experience and a long life as civilians have not changed most of us in important ways? I did not find many answers at the reunion. What say?

The more we have watched Ed McIntyre (A) and "Hap" Paulson (C) operate in this association, the more we appreciated their ability to lead, to lay it on the line!

"Jay" Suttief Hickman (B,Hq.) should have been given an award for his sociability around the hospitality room.

Ralph L. Henderson
1st Lt. F.A.- A.U.S.
"A" Co. 1st Platoon

Before an enlisted man can describe and evaluate whether his immediate officer is competent and fair, he should first relate what he felt were his obligations to his platoon leader.

First and foremost the soldier should do all he can to stay in one piece so he can play his assigned role in the platoon as well as know how to take the role of others, even of ranks above when the casualties develop. Thus he must have tried to absorb his training in many combat areas. The soldier often accepted the old saw, "Do what you're told!" He would always do well to have given his officer what information he had so that orders directed to him would be issued and accepted with more confidence.

The platoon leader owed his men the duty of fulfilling orders given him after he has informed his superiors of what he has known concerning his men, the progress of the fight in front of his platoon, and the situation in relation to making clear what could be next assigned to his men. He had to train, understand, represent his men in what he believed was their situation. He had to be fair, order with firmness and "be there"!

"Henderson" ranked right up there, although not so that his men ever had volunteered compliments for him except when asked. He was there! He relayed and gave orders so that his men knew what they had to do. He kept that distance from men that was essential if he was to be obeyed. "Henderson" knew the rules governing military relationships. He tried to shout but once within my hearing. He made up for volume with firm, quiet, Oklahoma diction. I quickly suspected that he might have been more comfortable as a platoon sergeant, but worked hard to fulfill his rank. Subsequently I learned that he was as distant from fellow officers as he was from his men. He was approachable on what had to be done. He was regular army, more comfortable in artillery, a family man, I believe. Despite the many changes for officers in the history of our battalion, he led the 1st platoon from Camp Pickett to war's end.

"Henderson" ordered me to tell a destroyer sergeant [Cook ?] to get ready to pull out of position in Belgium in mid-January. I never got to deliver the message because an enemy shell sent me all the way back to the U.K.

"He got the job done!" Ever the best to him. Editor

T A P S
George Soutar (C)

Death occurred 6-5-1991 after George had suffered from emphysema for many years. He had many memories of his time spent with the men of Co. "C" and avidly read every issue of the Road Block". His wife, Kathleen, sent our association a very fine donation. She will continue on our mailing list at P.O. Box 452, White House Station, NY 08889

John Vernellis •

We were told of his death in 1/1992 by his wife, Bertha at 2930 Manning Drive, Trenton, MI 48183.

Henry Kuch (A)

Jim Santino (A) attended his funeral. Henry's address had been P.O.Box in - Bridgehampton, NY 11932.

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"The Bug House
24 May 92

THE ST. REGIS-MOHAWK FROM "B" CO.
Thomas and Ellen Laughing
P.O.Box 1
Rooseveltown, NY 13683

"-----, AMONG THE DECEASED:

Winfred Welshapl, if I recall, checked out in 1954. His wife wrote me at the time. He was a wheat farmer in Herndon, Kansas. He used to move so slowly we called him, 'Lightning'.

Joe Haselrick (A) died of a heart attack. Don McKiernan (A) might let us know more.

John Brown- John Balmes (A) saw him last in a hospital.

James Whitehead (A)-last address I had was Concord, New Hampshire.

Frank Skwierc (A)- came from Van Dyke, Michigan.

Hubert and Herbert Kitchen (Hq.)-the identical twins came from Saginaw Rd., Mayville, Michigan. They both came home. I came with Hubert; the only time they were separated.

Frank Miller (A)

We sent a busload of our men and women to Indiantown Gap during the reunion. They remembered the "fifty-three" we lost over there. Leonard Straub (A) reminded me that on Memorial Day, he and others in his Chicago chapter of the 3rd Armored Div. Assoc. would pay tribute at graves. In earlier Road Blocks we gave you the location of the graves of the 703rd men killed overseas. Please visit a cemetery near you, if possible. No tears. A flower, a few pebbles at the grave. Reflect.

"Hap" Forgot The JUICE!

John D. Goodin (B 32nd AR) had another letter to "Hap" Paulson, 4-6-1992. "Thoroughly enjoyed your poem, "Treasures" in the March, 1992 Road Block. It's great, but you left out that sour unsweetened grapefruit juice, they forced on us!----

I have been by our old Camp and felt like one of my good 32nd buddies who, while driving an 18-wheeler, pulled into Indiantown Gap and went up to his old barracks. He said he started thinking about all the boys who didn't come back, cried for two hours and left, but has felt better ever since."

On the Thursday of the reunion, Florence and I were having dinner with Nate and Bea Falk (A, Hq.) at the hotel. Just after giving our order, a thin, short fellow wearing a 703rd name tag, his wife, a young woman and two tots ordered dinner in a booth nearby. I did not know him, yet felt the urge to greet him, to possibly lead up to an item for the Road Block, and especially, to help him feel comfortable. Introducing myself, I learned it was Tom Laughing (B). He had brought Ellen with his granddaughter, who had done much of the driving, and two great grandchildren. Tom and Ellen have three children. He asked me if other "B" Co. men were at the reunion, and was very pleased he would be able to share with fellows he had known. Tom came down from the Massena, N.Y. area on the St. Lawrence River, bordering Canada, and lives on the reservation of the St. Regis-Mohawk tribe of which he is a member. What with a tribal, unitary, family life, the Laughings are many on the reservation. Tom grinned as he told us there were many Laughings on the reservation that were not in his family. Over the years he had worked for ALCOA, and in the tourism industry connected with the reservation, and had been elected to serve for two years as tribal chief.

The Mohawks live on both sides of the St. Lawrence River, thus occasioning jurisdictional problems involving Indians and both countries. There are intertribal quarrels, such as over having casino gambling. The basic struggle is over the right to run their own reservation.

Tom mentioned the energy crisis in the early '70s that involved a shortage of gasoline. That scourge destroyed the very significant tourist economy of the reservation.

The Mohawks are divided on how to solve their problems, tending to lead to threats of violence. The war cry of one faction would sound like, "Freedom, not subsidies!" which it had refused to accept, They insisted with force that Indians must not accept "hand-outs", since that would delay the day when Indians would have sovereignty over the land.

On departure morning many of the couples were exchanging good wishes for health and to see each other in Springfield, Missouri

1994. Tom shook my hand ever so firmly; his light blue eyes had that outdoors brightness. Tom had brought not only some of his family to Reading; even more he had rejoined the families of his comrades with part of our national experience, that of the American Indian. Let's hope we keep in touch with the Laughings so that our association is even more a brotherhood continuing in fairness and peace.

Editor

Keep Pitchin' In

For years Dick and Lydia Ligatti (C) have been exchanging Christmas cards with Wassel Kosylo (C), but whenever we send Wassel mail, the P.O. can't find him. The Ligatti's won't quit. We sure wish you would try contact members of our battalion that need urging to join. Give it the Ligatti Twist! Here is what they wrote Kosylo this year.

"Wassel, our outfit during the war would like to have you join us at our reunion which meets every other year. We have a great time, dine, drink, laugh, talk about almost everything. They all know you and ask about you. Think about this! We want you with us. Please, have a heart and answer our mail.. Don't just sign a Christmas card. Say something in your card. It'll be great to have you with us once again for old times sake. Say you will join and do it. Don't let us down!"

Henri Register, a historian in Liege, wrote, 12/6/91, to acknowledge a letter that he received from Haynes Dugan (Div. Historian) with a narration of the activity of the 1st platoon, "B" Co. in "The Bulge," "--two T.D.s to prevent an enemy penetration along a river between Trois Ponts and Grand Halleux." Register responded that he had heard of the incident from Haynes for the first time, and that neither General Gavin or Hugh M. Cole's official history mention the incident.--"It would be interesting to have more complete documentation about that unit that was also attached to the 3rd Armored Division."

In response Haynes sent him a copy of the 703rd Journal for 12-20-44 telling that "B" Co. was sent to join the 82nd Airborne. At 1640 on the 22nd, Everett Stites (Recon),

liaison, came in from "B" Co. to Bn. Hq. reporting the 1st Plat. near Trois Ponts. On the 23rd, at 1630, the Bn. Exec. Officer, reported "B" Co. successes and casualties of the action. Haynes sent me copies of what he sent Register. See our Road Block, Vol.II #3 for 9/91, right column, p.5. Bill Crochetiere was there and added to the account.

Raphael d'Amico-Gérard of Liège, another inquirer, has sent pictures and writes to your battalion association. Register will be a guest at the Third Armored Division Reunion in Omaha next September.

A PERSONAL LETTER THAT HAS TO BE SHARED

28 February 1992

Herr Goldberg:

Received your Road Block and note yesterday and can make no potent suggestions because the newsletter is well done and chatty. Comments and vignettes from the membership are read with much interest, these including "Hap" Paulson's poetry. The good 'ol boy ain't going to win any Pulitzer prizes with these, but the verse pleases.

In my files there are a number of letters from Haynes Dugan [3rd A.D. Historian]. Although few of these mention the 703rd. One day when I get ambitious, I will go through these and see what might fit the Road Block nicely.

Over the coming weekend (tomorrow and Sunday) I'll try whack out a little "remember-when" and post it to you promptly.

Doubt that I'll make the 1992 bash,-- would like to, but am still a mite sore in the left wing [Winter fall]. One thing you must take into account; a good many of the 3rd Armored centurions are getting old, often plagued by aches and pain and stitches. While I have done pretty well with scribbling and am financially ambulatory, cost of such junkets will deter some of the faithful, none of whom would want to admit that times are tough and belts are being tightened.

Frank Miller calls or writes every now and then, as does Andy Barr and a scattering of others. Usually I reply immediately after my P.O. delivers, yet ancient footbones sometimes drag because of other things that are immediate action. Didn't know that Schutt had been under the knife; sounds like a cataract operation of which I've sampled in both eyes. A majority of people come through this with

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At The Reading, Pennsylvania Reunion
May 17-19, 1992.



Ellen and Tom Laughing (B)



Lora and Bob Schutt (B)

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At The Reading, Pennsylvania Reunion
May 17-19, 1992



Edward McIntyre (A), President. 1990-1992



Jean and Charles Bornstein (C)

success. Miller has and declares that his vision is vastly improved. Frank's trouble is a sort of trick back that affects his legs.

People always ask about my health and I tell them; "Well, I'm dying but hope it will take another ten days." Actually, aside from the annoying left shoulder, the Docs advise me that I need not seek any ticket to a tombstone for awhile.

Be good and may both of you and, "die faithful frau", enjoy health and happiness for another turtle's age. I'll try get back to you in the very near future. Best,

[See below] Frank Woolner (A)

WINTER VACATION !

Circumstances alter cases. Thus, when Hitler launched his do-or-die offensive in Mid-December, 1944, I rejoined A-703rd, and remained with that potent little unit until all of Der Führer's supermen were hunted back across the Rhine. Our battalion had been my alma mater, and I served with the tank busters until we blasted through Germany's Siegfried Line.

With some surprise and admitted pleasure, Hq., 3rd Armored, then ordered a new mission for this soldier, to become an ex-wearer of the Tiger Patch, I became a Public Relations Specialist and Combat Correspondent in the division's G-2 section. I served there until late 1945, with one memorable exception.

As soon as it became apparent that a climactic battle royal was shaping up, it seemed logical to me, at least, that guns were more important than typewriters. In order to volunteer for line action with the 703rd, however, it was necessary to acquire high level permission. Col. Andy Barr, Division G-2, agreed, with the stipulation that I must continue to submit material for "Stars & Stripes", "Yank" and stateside publications.

Therefore, I hustled to see whether Capt. Cole could use an extra messenger boy or a fairly-well-trained hired gun. As cool and relaxed as always, Cole figured another Buck Sergeant wouldn't gum up the works, so he welcomed me back to the fold. The result an ex-wearer of the Tiger Patch got to running company missions again, dodging some wickedly accurate German fire and "cussing" the bitter cold while performing a few somewhat "heiny" jobs. Of tremendous benefit was

the fact that I knew a majority of officers and men in "A" Co.

Things "hotted-up" immediately, and for about ten days the Krauts seemed capable of providing nasty lessons. To say that confusion reigned supreme in the beginning would be putting it mildly. For example, it was strictly forbidden to shoot at a low flying German aircraft between dusk and dawn. These enemy machines flew at near stalling speed, close to treetop level.

One murderous night Frank Miller and I were together when a searching bomber coursed directly over us. There must have been a bit of moonlight since we could clearly see the pilot and his crew gazing down. Range was minimal, so Frank and I itched to bag the airplane driver with our Garands--but we'd been around since baptism in Normandy and understood the need to obey orders. No shooting! A hostile air crew could certainly see the dark bulks of our M-10's and other vehicles below, but they didn't know whether the stuff was ours or theirs. Miller and I obediently refrained from disclosing our position, and they kept their fingers off the bomb release tits. Both sides were wary, probing for advantage. There were, for instance, a number of occasions when the "Hermans" (Ralph Steinhart always called them that) used captured "Sherman" tanks in the forefront of their own highly dangerous Panzerwagons while attacking.

Fun and games? Like hell it was !! It was a mutual cat and mouse series of maneuvers and lethal shooting where a mistake meant sudden death. Our intelligence was superb, considering that this all happened when opposing forces had yet to boast modern electronic eyes and ears. Our air forces were still largely limited to daytime operations while the German invaders ruled night skies, never very effectively. In pitch darkness one could almost always hear the typical drone of big hunting birds; all of them seemed out of synchronization as though they had lost a couple of cylinders.

In those early days of our final "blitz", and later, we suffered too many KIA's and walking wounded, but so did Steinhart's "Hermans"--and they couldn't stand it. None of the combatants got much rest, day or night, yet both were laboring under terrific pressure. As everyone in our allied camp knew, but couldn't openly admit for security reasons, Hitler's scraped up panzer armies

boasted formidable soldiers. They gave us a bloody hard time all the way toward the Meuse River, where a decorated swastika point unit finally got itself clobbered and reluctantly dug in to plan a fighting retreat.

The situation remained fluid, but it was still a full measure of hell during a lengthy slug-fest to a soon to be defeated Third Reich. As this German exodus began and everyone other than incurable fanatic Nazis knew that the war was lost for them, bitter cold and waist deep snow of an Ardennes winter escalated. Counter-attack progress on our part was slow and costly.

Personally, I happened to be blessed with a sort of dumb luck and suffered no serious wounds,--nastiest narrow escape was a strained back when a Kraut artillery shell all but buried me in house bricks at General Boudinot's C.P. There followed one week in a field hospital after which medics posted me back to the action. Young guys mend quickly. Unfortunately a sad share of buddies never had the chance to grow old and stuffy like Miller, Steinhart and me.

At the time, we took our losses, and had become a sub-species of man called fatalists. A majority of us had concluded that it would be a miracle if the war ever ended before we'd bought a Journey's end mattress cover and that final award--a slap in the face with a shovelful of mud. On the day Das Reich was within hours of unconditional surrender on the Elbe, and we were ordered to fall back until the mutter of artillery was just an ominous growl beyond a clean horizon, it was quite amazing to realize that a nightmare was over and done with.

Okay, after the Bulge, our Spearhead, "The Big Steel Cutting Edge," a soubriquet I'd coined as a junior public relations writer, eventually led the way into Cologne where resistance had dwindled to that which we considered a pittance. For a mighty short time we leaguered there and I know that most of our weary warriors sought out everything alcoholic and remotely drinkable.

Col. Barr, who could virtually read the minds of his G-2 eccentrics, or maybe it was Maj. Haynes Dugan, Andy's canny public relations chief, hammered out a brief order. In substance, almost to the letter as I recall it, this communication read: "Woolner, get back to Hq. Your vacation is over!"

Frank Woolner (A)

DISCHARGE TICKET

Florence and I moved uptown recently. Up in our attic we had a metal clothes cabinet into which I must have looked three times in thirty years, and Florence saw to it that it was regularly fed moth balls. There was my Eisenhower Jacket. She insisted I try it on, and I squeezed in. The incident quickly reminded me to look carefully in back of my desk drawers for memories of wartime. There was not only the retirement pen-pencil gift set, but my medals, ribbons and campaign pins. With them, and clearly recalling a few, moving and pleasurable hours, was the discharge ticket of the Boston and Maine Railroad which gave me the short ride home from Camp Devens to Boston.

John Prior (A) was with me, and to our surprise, Joe Mercurio (32nd A.R.), who had basic training with us at Camp Polk, joined us. Joe was driving tank as his last assignment, but meeting him at the time of being discharged was no time to discuss what had happened in the years since his transfer. We were civilians and that was exciting. Joe had a set of dark, full brown eyes in a swarthy face, within a short, bulky frame. Most characteristic was his simple sincerity. Before we reached North Station he argued that we should spend a few minutes together, and have a drink. After all, fate had separated us through the many months of war. North Station was gloomy getting off the train, and my long moment of reflection turned toward Boston Garden, and the Bruins hockey team. It was a very gray, wet fall day. The short walk through narrow streets sided with wholesale equipment stores, restaurants, then turned into the narrower, almost-alleys of the area bound by Atlantic Avenue and North Washington Street,---the Italian North End. Joe opened an old door; there were a few guys at the bar, and the "barkeep" shouted, "JOE"! Before we could start to sit, each of us has had a full glass of whiskey in front of us, pats on the back, and quiet smiles from folks close by. I sipped more than half that glass. I soon was growing more sober in thought, more aware! We had few words for each other; no memories exchanged of what had happened to us. Joe then pressured us successfully to come meet his folks.

As we walked past the workaday world of immigrant and service businesses, the gray streets narrowed into an alley, shaded into darkness. The essences of Italian restaurant

cooking lightened the mood. We entered the hipwide, even duskier staircase, with me trying to pick out the delicate difference between mortadella, copocol, garlic, and onion bread as we climbed to the source of the aromas. Later I recalled those moments when I read Thomas Wolfe as he described the great cities of the western world individually, by their distinctive smells.

The door above opened as Joe was showered with shouts of greeting, hugs, and, when his folks saw who was with Joe, apologies for neglecting us for an instant. The darkness had disappeared with not only the joy of having back a loved one on faces young and old in that devoted family, but around Prior and me were furnishings, pictures on walls, carpets, family knickknacks, that let us know that here was a beautiful home, for whoever experienced it. I was confident that here were people whose work had brought the success of love.

It was not hard to turn down Joe's folks invitation to eat with them. John and I were not forgetting that our folks wanted us at home, and the environment of Joe's home made us wish even more for our own.

"Please, come again!" The Mercurios meant it! John was not going my way. I was not to see him or Joe again.

I had the usual change from train to bus in City Square, and took a long look at "Old Ironsides" and the Charlestown Navy Yard. It is a short walk from Prattville, through that little park, up hill and round to see the pillars in front of our home. I was very sober, and even more within myself.

"Nathan, it is so very wonderful to have you home!" It was a Sister from the nunnery across the street. She had come through the shrubs and small gate. The warmth of her smile took me back out of myself. I realized that the mothers of the lads in the neighborhood had told the Sisters of their hopes for us. I tried to thank her for her greeting.

"We prayed for your safety." --I blushed in gratefulness with a stumbling phrase, and took the stairs by two and was home.

I CANT REMEMBER!

Just a line to say I'm living, that I'm not among the dead, Though I'm getting more forgetful and mixed up in the dead.

I got used to my arthritis, to my dentures
I'm resigned,
I can manage my bifocals..but, God! I miss
my mind.
For at times I can't remember, when standing
at the stairs.
Must I go up for something or, have I just
come down from there?
Beside the fridge so often, my poor mind is
filled with doubt,
Have I just put the food away...or come to
take some out?
And there is time when it is dark, with
nightcap on my head,
I don't know if I'm retiring, or just
getting out of bed.
So if it's my turn to write you, there's
no need for getting sore,
I may think I have written....and don't want
to be a bore.
Just remember that I love you, and wish that
you were near,
But now it's nearly mailtime, and I'm
starting in to fear...
As I stand beside the mailbox with a face
so very red,
And instead of mailing your letter....
I have opened it instead! Anon.

IN A DEACON'S HEART!

As it was just past dawn off the Normandy beach, the 1st Platoon, "C" Co., could see the devastation left by those Americans who hit the beach before us,--then the ruin of the German installations that appeared to us to have been impregnable. I was the platoon leader. It was the tension that made us feel that the distance we moved inland was of miles. Our first bivouac was hardly close to the action. We dispersed in a field enclosed with trees and hedges, and were "on the ready". There was military movement of all sorts near us giving me the confidence I needed to move about, to ask questions of leaders of other U.S. units.

Quickly it came to mind that it was Sunday. There was a church spire in sight. I told Sgt. Goldman, my Platoon Non-com, that I would go to see if Mass was being held. If needed he'd find me there. While in church, to my surprise, I met "Chet", a G.I. who was a school chum of one of my sisters. A truly chance meeting,--a laughing embrace just as services began. I also met there a Noncom from the 113th F.A. Bn., 30th Inf. Div, who

knew a former roommate in my old outfit who had been hit on the beach, but would soon be back.

This "small world" soon widened. After Mass, speaking to "Chet" outside, I learned he was in XIXth Corps HQ. nearby. I showed him where my platoon was located, and we promised to share a bottle together soon. He didn't catch up with me till in New York City, well after the war

It was early in July, not long after numerous shifts of position and assignment, that my platoon moved into the fight for St. Lo. Near St. Jean de Daye, Captain Evan Rigas, (C) his Jeep driver and I reconnoitered, looking for information as to enemy positions, and on the following day the platoon watched as a retriever tank pulled out of the way an M-20 armored car alongside our position. An enemy round had pierced its steel skin. We looked at the body of the soldier inside, unrecognizable, his face melted like wax upon his collar and shoulders. My men were "scared", checking weapons, equipment,--being alert!

In the last week of July, after a most massive air attack west of St. Lo, and learning of the death of General McNair by "friendly bombing", my platoon was with a Third Armored Division task force. We moved through the gap created by the bombers and secured by infantry, into fire fights and taking casualties.

My platoon mission, as with all line platoons of the 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion, was, primarily, to "ambush" enemy armor at road blocks, or more likely, "support" our tank columns from cover, e.g. "in defilade".

We did become involved in the street fighting at Marigny shortly after the breakout in Normandy. We could see enemy infantry running into houses and used armor piercing, then high explosive ammo effectively convincing the Germans to look elsewhere to stand their ground. Past the town we spotted a German artillery piece, a "75 ?", being hauled into position from which they could delay us. I sent Private Smith up into a house from where he could direct fire for one of our destroyers. His directions led to a direct hit. When I carefully became acquainted with my men during training, Smith convinced me he was a leader having many competencies of an officer, but he hated war and shied from accepting the role of an N.C.O.

"Hurry up and wait" incidents were dangerous in the face of enemy action. When our task force columns jammed, tank destroyers were to be the road block support especially important in protecting the stalled column. On one such occasion my destroyer was behind ambulances, and could not get into a useful position. We were unable to move. Behind sandbags on the back of my destroyer were Melvin Rand, from my security section, and my Jeep driver, Ernest Richards. Their own vehicles needed repair. The imminent danger to us on a narrow road was frustrating enough let alone the men asking me the caliber of the small arms fire whistling around us. I asked them whether they wanted me to catch a bullet for them. "Grow up", I called, and urged them to keep low behind the sand bags.

Just then from our left a tank round cracked its deadly signal over our heads, but we spotted no muzzle flash. I ordered Tony Ambrosia to twist the tank to the left hoping for a target. There would have been vision across an open field,----we were their target as they bracketed us with a short round. We could not evade the third, an armor piercing disaster that ripped through the sandbags, through Ernie above his left hip, on through his right lung, exiting his upper chest wall and on to killing Mel, instantly, cutting him in two. I tried to give morphine to Ernie, but was utterly distraught, my eyes were filled with tears. Dick Wieboldt asked and administered the powerful narcotic pain-killer. We put Ernie at roadside. He was picked up by an ambulance, but expired some-time later. Leonard Marchewka (C)

(To be continued)

YOU'RE IN THE ARMY, NOW!

It was early in the year of '41,
The draft had only just begun.
Bewildered, stunned, with a little fear,
What would they be doing in this training
year?

Into the army the rookies came,
To lose their inhibitions and sense of shame.
They first were ordered to remove their
clothes,
Then sent to the doctor in dozens of rows,
To be poked and probed and given shots,
Psychoanalyzed and who knows --t.

703rd Road Block-12-

"Short arm inspection"-I said, "If you don't mind."

Mom said if I do that, I'll go blind. But the doctors were adamant in their stand. At last I found a place to put my hands, A problem, don't laugh or mock it. I'd been nude for hours, no pants, no pocket.

My hands had shifted to cover my parts, My front, my back, my head, my heart. My attempts at modesty was like a game- And the other guys were doing the same. They finally told us we could get dressed, Eliminated some and swore in the rest. Then a Sergeant shouted with all his might "Line up alphabetically, as of height!" Amid the laughter, confusion did reign, But they finally marched us to the train. Four hours and three short arms--no time to get nervous, We reached the camp- we were in the service. "Hap" Paulson (C)

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